

Bio: Antonia Bifulco
a.bifulco@mdx.ac.uk

<http://www.mdx.ac.uk/about-us/our-people/staff-directory/profile/bifulco-antonio>



www.cats-rp.org.uk

www.lifespantraining.org.uk

Antonia Bifulco is a Lifespan psychologist and Head of the Department of Psychology at Middlesex University. She is also co-director of the Centre for Abuse and Trauma Studies, which seeks to combine health, social care and criminological approaches to issues of abuse. Her research over 30 years has investigated the circumstances around childhood abuse, together with the consequences for later life adjustment, relationships and psychological disorder.

The model Antonia and her team use for understanding the consequences of childhood abuse, is an attachment model. This argues that early maltreatment damages trust and leads to greater difficulty in making close supportive relationships in adulthood, through attachment styles which are overly anxious, avoidant or disorganised. However, these impacts can be reversed through positive relationships and treatment. She has a particular interest in women's experience and her research has involved hundreds of life history interviews, most with women, to understand the relationship between social context and psychological disorder.

Antonia is also engaged in getting key research messages to practitioners. Her work is with voluntary agencies and local authority child protection teams and 'Looked After' services to advise on assessment methods and case analysis of abuse.

Recently she has published an analysis of her own Polish (Czechowski) family background which draws on themes of identity, attachment and resilience. She is therefore keen to link up with Polish organisations in London who may want to apply her research themes in practice or community contexts.

References – books

Davidson J & Bifulco A (in preparation) Child abuse and child protection: Research, policy and practice across disciplines and agencies. London, Routledge

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Bifulco, A., & Thomas, G. (2012). Understanding adult attachment in family relationships: Research, Assessment and Intervention. London: Routledge.

Bifulco A & Moran P (1998) Wednesday's Child: Research into women's Experience of neglect and abuse in childhood and adult depression. London, New York: Routledge.