Research Report

Behind Closed Doors. Researching Intimacy and Sexuality in Families

Background

Studies of changing family forms have examined everyday understandings and experiences of intimacy and kin-relations (Silva and Smart 1999) and how patterns of intimate relationships have developed over time (Jamieson 1998). The model that has informed most critical debate in the field of intimacy studies is the democratisation thesis with scholarship either extending or rejecting this theoretical model. Thus debate has tended to orient around whether transformations of intimacy have restructured affective bonds (Giddens 1992; Beck and Beck-Gersheim 1995) and the ways that family structures resist or embrace contemporary socio-cultural change (Williams 2004). Analysis of sexuality is implicit to many of these studies, but primarily comes to the fore around same-sex relationships (Weeks, Heaphy et al. 2001) or adult-sexual relationships (Giddens 1992) beyond family (Roseneil and Budgeon 2004). Studies on children and sexuality tend to framed around ideas on 'risk' (Scott, Jackson et al. 1998) and sexual abuse (Kelly, Burton et al. 1996). The sexuality=risk equation is being countermined (for example Sharpe and Thomson 2005), but because research in this area typically focuses on adolescents apart from their families, in youth centres and schools, negotiations around intergenerational sexuality and intimacy remain uncharted. Behind Closed Doors explored where, and in what ways, dominant conceptual frameworks were useful in understanding everyday experiences of intimacy and sexuality and how discourses on 'risk' influence non-abusive family intimacy.

Research Objectives

Behind Closed Doors was a small scale, methodological pilot project that examined families' affective communication. It tested eight different methods and interrogated the utility of mixed-methods in accounting for families' 'private lives'. It explored how parents and children define and negotiate the boundaries of appropriate/inappropriate behaviour and how experiences and understandings of 'family intimacy' are influenced by cultural discourses and public debates on sexuality.

The project had 5 key aims:
1. Compare and contrast qualitative research methods
2. Contribute to mixed-methods research
3. Develop innovative methods for researching intimacy in families
4. Interrogate methods of recruitment to 'sensitive topic' research
5. Begin to explore families' affective interactions

- Compare and contrast qualitative research methods

The original proposal for Behind Closed Doors was designed around a comparative framework. However recent debate, generated in part through ESRC Research Methods Programme, has reframed mixed-methods away from this model, developing a more nuanced understanding of 'triangulation' (Moran-Ellis, Alexander et al. 2006) which involves the 'integration' or
'meshing' of methods (Mason 2006). In light of this contemporary thought, I shifted the analytical focus towards an integrative paradigm that examined complimentarity among data rather than 'discrepancies' between them. Another factor that influenced this decision was that patterns of difference across families were not the defining characteristic of data as participants responded to different methods in different ways.

- **Contribute to mixed-methods research**
  Behind Closed Doors contributes to the field of mixed-methods research, in particular how this approach may be useful when researching the lives of children and 'sensitive topics'. The integration of distinctive methods and methodological approaches produced a rich multidimensional account of everyday intimacy in families. It pulled together the interiority of affective experience, the intergenerational and gendered dynamics of family intimacy, and the affect of external socio-cultural factors on 'private' life. I have established networks (see ‘activities’) with other researchers to discuss and disseminate my findings.

- **Develop innovative methods for researching intimacy in families**
  Research with children has required researchers to be both innovative and responsive (Mauthner 1997) and participatory methods are particularly useful as they empower children (Punch 2002). In Behind Closed Doors I developed a participatory technique – the emotion map method (see appendix one). The method was developed from the 'household portrait technique' (Doucet 1996) and aimed to visually map the affective geography of families and initiate talk around recorded instances of emotion-exchange. A floor plan of the family home was produced and given to each participant along with a set of coloured emoticon stickers, for example 😊 😞, representing happiness, sadness, anger and love/affection. Different coloured stickers were used for each family member and friends and participants placed stickers on their floor plan as and when emotion-exchanges occurred. This method was completed over a one week period. I also utilized a psychosocial approach, the 'free association' (Hollway and Jefferson 2000) or 'biographical narrative' (Wengraf 2001) interview method. Participants were asked to talk about a key emotional event in their life and this allowed the researcher to explore their experiences of intimacy and sexuality across life course, within their own terms of reference, through events which they defined as significant.

- **Interrogate methods of recruitment to 'sensitive topic' research**
  Different methods of recruitment to 'sensitive topic' research were tested out with varying degrees of success. These methods included a project leaflet, features in local newspapers, liaison with local groups and organisations, and utilizing the researchers’ established community networks. Several SureStart centres were keen to be involved with the project and these were particularly useful in that groups were already receptive to discussion of parenting and family issues. Targeted recruitment was completed through contact with specific community groups and an advertisement in a lesbian e-newsletter; this increased the diversity in the sample.
• **Begin to explore families' affective interactions**

There were several key themes that emerged from data and these do suggest patterns of affective behaviour. Parents (and children) did aspire towards democratic relationships (Giddens 1992) but disclosing intimacy and reciprocity were not structural principles in families (Jamieson 1998). Parents' responsive mode of parenting often disguised underlying coercion of children, and attempts at openness were typically perceived by children as an intrusion into their privacy. The dialogic ethic often ran counter to parents' compulsion to 'do the right thing', that is to say, to structure intimate and sexuality conduct within the parameters of 'normative' behaviour. What constituted the 'normative model' depended on differences in gender, culture, faith, and/or moral frameworks. Investment in the idea of family and a child-centred approach were typical, something that was to be expected in a self-selected sample recruited to research on this subject. However investment in children was not always altruistic or beneficial for children. In some cases parents' emotional investment in the child was motivated by their needs and the expectation of an affective return on their emotional investment.

**Research Methodology**

*Behind Closed Doors* was a methodological pilot project. In this section I detail the methods used and analysis of results; the data on methods included here are part of the research results. See appendix 2 – 'Participating Families Research Grid' – for a breakdown of recruitment and family composition.

• **Methods of recruitment**

A project leaflet (see appendix 3) was distributed among community organizations and groups visited by the researcher. It was also included in a LEA mailing targeting 500+ families with disabled children. No family contacted us in direct response to the leaflet but many people reported they had heard about the project through the leaflet and so it did raise the profile and accorded credibility to research that was initially perceived by some people as 'suspect' or an 'invasion of privacy'. It also provided families with readily available contact details and the project website address [www.researchingfamilies.co.uk](http://www.researchingfamilies.co.uk). A different working title was used for the duration of the research because 'Behind Closed Doors' was a domain name of other, pornographic, websites and I wanted to disassociate the project from any link with this area. Two methods that directly recruited participants were a featured report in a local newspaper and an advertisement in a national lesbian e-newsletter. The majority of families were recruited through personal contact with different groups in the locality, including faith communities, parent-toddler groups, pre-school nurseries, and women's groups, utilizing the researcher's established community networks to snowball information and generate interest. Liaison with local SureStart centres also generated results and provided another opportunity for targeted recruitment. Diversity among such a small sample is inevitably limited, but nevertheless there were significant differences among families.
**Observations**

Observations were used to examine the texture of family life and families’ verbal and non-verbal expressions of intimacy. Ethnographic methods are particularly suitable for researching 'sensitive topics' (Adler and Adler 1993) and in mixed-methods research with children (Mauthner, Mayall et al. 1993). The authenticity of observation data is questionable as participants can 'act up' for the researcher. In *Behind Closed Doors* this was the case to some extent although less structured and/or incidental observation did provide more candid data. In one family the interview context revealed domestic mess and disarray that mirrored the parents' struggle to manage affective relationships and domestic/employment responsibilities. When families were on 'best behaviour' data elicited the censorship and management of conversation, the policing of interaction among participants, and the impact of the project focus and the researcher's presence on proceedings.

**Emotion maps**

Emotion maps were used to examine patterns of family intimacy. The merits of this participatory method were that it was easy and fun to complete; it was not reliant on prior access to education and it flattened out intergenerational competencies among parents and children. In fact, children's familiarity with 'sticker charts' meant they were extremely adept at completing this method. Some parents found that it showed up patterns of behaviour in their families which they wanted to address, for example kitchen=unhappy/conflict, living room=happy/affection. Their reflections on emotion-exchanges contributed to first stage analysis. The method also illustrated patterns of sleeping arrangements that might be otherwise unavailable as data, and highlighted activities such as parent-child 'bed hopping'. The age and number of children was a deciding factor in where and when potential areas of conflict or affection emerged and where privacy became an issue. Emotion maps were analyzed as data and were discussed with participants in individual interviews.

**Diaries**

The diary method was used as a means to research family processes within the context of daily life (Laurenceau and Bolger 2005). Parents and children were asked to keep a 'solicited diary' (Bell 1998) for up to one week noting down everyday interaction and the forms of these emotion-exchanges. Diaries were discussed with participants in individual interviews and were analyzed as data. Diaries were a valuable addition to other methods, such as interviews, which provided retrospective accounts of family intimacy. They provided a relatively safe way into the project as participants controlled the parameters of their disclosure. For some participants writing a diary caused a degree of embarrassment, especially putting certain aspects of family intimacy into words, while others worried about how they might be read or judged. Diaries brought to the fore the shorthand affective-currency of families with phrases such as 'kiss and cuddle' or 'cup of tea and a chat' standing in for longer descriptions of emotion-exchange and/or the complexity of interpersonal relationships. Several participants said the process of reflection made them reconsider how they typically express emotion and deal with conflict.
• **Interviews**

Narrative, open-ended interviews were completed with parents and older children using the psychosocial 'free association' (Hollway and Jefferson 2000) or 'biographical narrative' (Wengraf 2001) interview method. Interviews with younger children were structured around their emotion maps. Interviews aimed to be non-directive. Participants were asked to talk about a key emotional event in their life. Their responses detailed experiences of intimacy and sexuality across life course within their own terms of reference through events which they defined as significant. In some families the interview method worked well and participants talked freely, more reticent participants required prompts and looked to the researcher for direction. It was a fine balance and it is probably fair to say that the technique was used as a starting point and adapted to individual circumstances rather than adhered to as a prescriptive methodology. Participants generally found the interview experience rewarding and several fathers said they had learned something about themselves and their families through the process.

• **Online message board**

An online message board was created on the project website which aimed to provide a virtual space for older children to meet and talk with one another and/or the researcher about intimacy, sexuality, and parent-child relationships. It was hoped that their familiarity with the medium (Valentine & Holloway 2002) and the anonymity which it afforded would overcome some of the problems associated with interviewing children (Buchanan 2000), problems that are exacerbated by the sensitivity of a research topic. Initially five teenagers agreed to take part, however only two actually accessed the message board; this was not enough to facilitate a discussion and therefore the method did not produce any meaningful data. For the method to work a critical mass is required; this is difficult to achieve in family research where involvement is not simultaneous. Logistical problems could be overcome through an increase in sample size and by initiating several small online groups across the research schedule.

• **Vignettes**

Vignettes facilitate discussion about the private in public (Finch 1987) because they desensitize and depersonalize situations (Hughes and Huby 2001). Data revealed the socio-cultural repertoire that framed participants' beliefs and opinions, and, when combined with information from other methods, it was possible to contextualize participants' accounts of everyday experience. Participants were asked to consider five vignettes (appendix 4) and their responses were recorded. Four of the vignettes elicited brief responses from parents but two (vignettes 2 and 4) generated far more engaged accounts. Parents struggled to align their own experiences with wider cultural discourses, constructing 'rules' around their (moral) beliefs and understandings of socially acceptable intimate conduct. Cultural stories of abuse and the need for risk management shaped most parents' responses, however there was no consensus about where boundaries should be drawn and notable differences were evident between men and women. Fathers were far more likely to advocate policing 'risky' behaviour while mothers often recalled personal experience of such a scenario.
**Visual Images**

Visual methods are useful because they can raise issues about the changing concept of family life (Deacon 2000) and open up wider discussion of family relationships (Rose 2003). Parents were asked to consider six images (appendix 5) from existing visual work. Children were shown the first five images of the set. These images raised ethical issues around the representation and mediation of intimacy and sexuality. Participants tended to give brief, almost dismissive responses to the first three images which were seen as ordinary 'snapshots' of parent-child interaction. Images four, five and six, generated more detailed and considered responses with participants framing their responses through cultural norms and social expectations, current experiences and family practices at home, and recollections of childhood experience. Children's age-maturity, the significance of gender, boundaries of public-private intimacy, risk management, comfort or unease with nudity, and children's sexuality were all themes that emerged.

**Focus Groups**

Focus groups have been used in a number of studies to investigate the nature and quality of family life and are particularly useful as an adjunct to other methods (Wilkinson 1998). When fieldwork is spread across the course of a research project, the focus group method does present similar logistical problems to those reported in the online message board. In Behind Closed Doors a focus group was scheduled to run towards the end of the project. However several parents expressly said they would not be involved in 'public' discussion beyond their families, interested participants were dispersed across a wide geographical area, and it was impossible to agree a date where more than three families could attend. In the end the families' focus group, as originally envisaged, was cancelled. In the course of the research, focus group discussion did occur within families and/or involving family friends, these forums provided interesting data on both the research topic and on the dynamics among participants as they talked about intimacy and relationships. Discussion between a father and friend on the vignettes and images was particularly interesting as they struggled to find shared ground and shore up their own 'moral' stance.

**Ethics**

The project operated within the ‘Statement of Ethical Practice’ issued by the British Sociological Association (BSA) and got ethical approval from The Open University Human Participants Materials Ethics Committee (HPMEC). BSA guidelines stress that any possible negative repercussions of research on participants must be taken seriously. Psychosocial methods pose a particular challenge in this respect because they encourage disclosure and highlight the 'therapeutic value' of talk (Hollway and Jefferson 2000). In Behind Closed Doors psychosocial methods were used with great care and the researcher was highly responsive to participants' sense of ease and emotional comfort. The research focus on families' 'private lives' and interpersonal relationships inevitably raises additional concerns around disclosure (Duncombe and Marsden 1996) because participants are not simply revealing identity to the
outside world but revealing secrets among family members (Larossa, Bennett et al. 1981). To address some of these concerns I gave participants increased control over the research process. The original proposal required that all methods were to be completed by all family members. This objective proved to be prohibitive in terms of recruitment and also it disempowered parents and children. Being less prescriptive meant that I did not exclude parents who were keen to take part but whose partners and/or children were unwilling, and accommodated individual preference, with participants opting in and out of different methods. Informed consent was requested at the beginning of the research and this was negotiated on a continual basis throughout the process (Duncombe and Jessop 2002).

Research results

- **Analysis of methods**

Data has been collected from 10 families using a combination of methods. In total 24 participants took part in the study; 14 parents (9 mothers, 5 fathers) and 10 children. Participants completed a variety of methods, resulting in 102 units of data in total. See appendix 2, Participating Families Research Grid, for a detailed breakdown of the sample and the methods completed. All the data were transcribed (excluding the emotion maps) and coded using NVivo. A description and analysis of different methods is presented in the methods section, here I want to focus on the integration of mixed-methods data. Different methods did elicit distinctive kinds of data. Emotion maps did clearly situate family intimacy, locating, room-by-room, where intimacy occurs. Diaries illustrated affective routines, producing data on when intimacy occurs and illustrating how participants frame these emotion-exchanges – both conceptually and literarily. In contrast interviews presented interpersonal relationships as dynamic processes. Family members and affective exchanges were unpicked and remade by participants as they navigated their way through accounts of emotional events across life course. The method often gave the story behind the story. For example, one mother's keenness to represent a 'happy family' story contrasted with interview data which detailed family conflict throughout her childhood and adult life. The diary of a single father was punctuated with parent-child intimate exchanges and demonstrations of his 'good parenting'. In interview he disclosed how he recently gained custody of his children through the courts and how important it is for him to develop a sense of family, emulating his own childhood. Combining the methods accords insight into where, when, how and why intimacy is experienced in certain ways and produces multi-layered, richly textured, data. This 'mosaic approach' (Clark and Moss 2001) broadens understandings on family intimacy and interpersonal relationships by revealing the dynamic context of family relations. Set within this wider framework a whole picture of the individual and how family members interrelate begins to emerge.

- **Analysis of themes across data**

Findings from Behind Closed Doors illustrate the different ways that families experience and understand intimacy and sexuality albeit that these data cannot be generalized beyond case studies because of the small sample size.
However emergent themes were evident within and across families and these do suggest patterns of affective behaviour that require further investigation. Many parents aimed for a listening and responsive mode of parenting but counterned this through everyday interaction which reasserted their powerful status. The dialogic ethic often ran counter to their compulsion to 'do the right thing', to structure family intimacy and children's sexuality conduct within the parameters of 'normative' behaviour. Even though this 'normative model' was variously defined, parents were sure that they were doing the same as other families, or at least other families 'like them'. This categorisation of families was typically framed around differences in culture, faith, and/or moral frameworks. There were no discernable differences across socio-economic groups or family formation. Gendered differences were marked and acknowledged, and fathers often spoke with regret about their lack of hands-on intimacy with children, especially as they entered into adolescence. However findings question the presupposition that men do not really 'do' emotions. While men often found it difficult to express themselves, fathers did demonstrate affection through intimate-exchanges that were coded, in ways that were decipherable by other family members.

Families express affection and love in many different ways, some obvious and some less so. Some say 'I love you' on a daily basis, others use silence and simply being together as a form of intimacy. Chatting was not reliant on the divestment of significant emotions and/or information-exchange but provided an opportunity to consolidate relationships. Pets were often seen as 'one of the family', and, in such families, provided a source and repository for intimacy. Dog walks provided opportunities for 'couple time' and mutual disclosure. Food was used as emotion-currency in many families, especially by mothers, and parents demonstrated their love for their children through the provision of food; eating together affirmed kin and friendship networks. Conversely mealtimes also tended to be one of the primary sites of tension and disagreements. The inclusion of friends and pets in participants' immediate affective-circle demonstrates how intimacy extends beyond family and questions what constitutes mutuality and reciprocity.

Parents typically worked hard on their parenting skills and their family relationships. Parenting strategies and children's sexuality education were informed by many external sources, including television programmes, handbooks, shared experience among friends, but the most significant factor remained parents' own childhood — a model either to emulate or to reject. Because parents used this lived model as their primary referent they did not measure themselves against an 'ideal family' instead they saw family as a work in progress, something that required the investment of time and energy. There was no quick-fix and intimacy could not be purchased. Parent-child relationships were seen as responsive, changing in accordance with children's growing age-maturity and the socio-cultural context. Family life and relationships were not expected to be always easy. For example, childbirth and family holidays, events that are traditionally associated with happiness and fulfilment, were described by several parents as times of great contradiction and sadness. The needs of children were consistently described as paramount, with the management of affective and sexuality boundaries.
being voiced through the discourses of risk, morality and privacy; but it is unclear whether children are the actual beneficiaries of behaviour and family practices shaped through these concerns. Investment in the idea of family and a child-centred approach were typical, something that was to be expected in a self-selected sample recruited to research on this subject. However investment in children was not always altruistic or beneficial for children. The need to ‘protect’ the child was often used as an excuse to impose parents' rules and codes of conduct. In some cases parents' emotional investment in the child was motivated by their needs and there was an expectation of affective reciprocity. This instrumental intimacy may well place an emotional burden on children in years to come.

Activities
- **Advisory group**
  An advisory group was consulted in the early stages of the project by utilizing the Delphi method, completing a series of iterative questionnaires. A colloquium was held towards the end of the project and participants discussed intimacy, the project, and early findings. The colloquium was attended by advisory panellists and other invited participants.

- **Research papers - presented**
  2006, 'Researching Intimacy and Sexuality in Families', Emotional Geographies Interdisciplinary Conference, Queen's University, Ontario
  2005, ‘Using mixed-methods to study the intergenerational experiences of intimacy and sexuality within families in the UK’, ESA Annual Conference, University of Torun, Poland.

- **Research papers – planned**
  2007, 'Stretched to the Limits? Intimacy in Families', Extended and Extending Families, Centre for Research on Families and Relationships, University of Edinburgh, Scotland

**Networks**
*Behind Closed Doors* is affiliated to the ESRC Centre for Research on Socio-Cultural Change (CRESC), Theme 4: Cultural Values and Politics. I am discussing ideas with colleagues in anthropology and sociology, exploring mutual interests around researching intimacy across cultures.
I am a member of the Centre for Citizenship, Identities and Governance (CCIG) a designated centre of research excellence at The Open University and through this have taken part in research workshops in the ESRC Identities programme.
I am an Advisory Panel member for the 'Young Lives and Times' project, based at the University of Leeds, which is part of the larger ESRC 'Real Life Methods Node'.

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Outputs
Working paper posted on CCIG website – *Reviewing Intimacy* (appendix 6).

A book has been accepted for publication – *Researching Intimacy: Conceptual and Methodological Frameworks for Understanding Intimacy and Contemporary Interpersonal Relationships* (appendix 7).

Impacts
There has been interest both from coordinators of local SureStart projects and from academics working in the area of child welfare to develop one or two of the methods within parenting skills classes, in particular the emotion map method.

A family court advisor is keen to disseminate the End of Award Report and the findings of the project among her colleagues and more widely among the area's child welfare/family services team.

Future Research Priorities
It was anticipated that findings from this methodological pilot project would be limited and that these would serve as a catalyst for a larger substantive bid. What the project has achieved is to test out the utility of various different methods and to refine their application. The findings demonstrate that this is a rich and fertile area of study that has great relevance both in terms of academic studies of families and intimacy and in terms of the wider policy community in the fields of family support and child welfare/protection. A large project is being developed and this will be submitted to the ESRC in late Autumn.

In association with others working in the field, specific aspects of the research are being pursued, including the development of a project on intimacy and interpersonal relationships in adoption and foster carer families.

Additional Materials: Appendices
1. Example of emotion map
2. Participating Families Research Grid
3. *Researching Families* publicity leaflet
4. Vignettes
5. Visual images
6. Working paper: *Reviewing Intimacy*
7. Book proposal: *Researching Intimacy*

References:
Appendices
Appendix 1: Example of emotion map
## Appendix 2: Participating Families Research Grid

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Appendix 3a: *Researching Families* publicity leaflet

**How do we say I love you?**

**Contact details**

If you are interested in being involved in the project or want to get more details about the study, then please contact us:

**Jacqui Gabb**

**Melissa Dearey**

Alternatively, for full details of the project, visit our website: www.researchingfamilies.co.uk

We look forward to hearing from you...

**Researching Families**

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**How do children express how they are feeling?**

**Researching Families**

We are looking for families to take part in a study of family relationships
Appendix 3b: *Researching Families* publicity leaflet

**Researching Families**

**Our Project**
There is a lot of research on abusive parent-child relationships, but little is known about how most ‘happy families’ express emotion and affection.

Our project aims to open up debate on what constitutes ‘normal’ family intimacy.

**Methods**
To capture ‘private’ feelings and the complexities of family relationships, the project is using a variety of research methods. The project aims to examine how these methods affect the stories which families tell.

**What will your family have to do**
We will visit you at home, at a time which is convenient for you.

After this we will talk with everyone individually and spend some time with you, getting to know how your family works.

**Confidentiality**
Everything you say will remain confidential.

In any reports and/or publications that may come out of the research, all names will be changed and your family will not be identifiable.

**Have your say...**

**Get in touch...**

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Appendix 4: Vignettes

Vignettes: Parents
Vignettes tell a short story. Can you please tell us what you think the parent and/or partner in the vignette should do?

Vignette 1
Sam and Sue have 3 children. A son (aged 11); a middle daughter (aged 13) and an elder daughter Clare (aged 16). The parents go out for the evening leaving the eldest daughter to baby-sit. On their return, when they walk into their living room, Clare and a young man are on the couch, kissing.

Vignette 2
Christine has one son, Luke (aged 5). When the weather is nice she often takes him to the local park which has a children’s play area. She sits on a bench. When she looks towards Luke she notices that he is sitting in the sandpit playing with his genitalia.

Vignette 3
Tony and Sarah have a son, Mark (aged 14). They receive a letter home from school saying that year 9 will be doing an “activity day” next week which includes sex education. Unfortunately Mark is unwell for a couple of days and happens to be absent when the activity day takes place.

Vignette 4
Hannah is an affectionate and cuddly child (aged 7). She often hugs her mum and dad and gives them a kiss. The family is doing their weekly shop in the supermarket. At the check-out Hannah sits at the end of the conveyor belt passing groceries to her mum. When the basket is empty she puts her arms around her mother’s neck and “snogs” her.

Vignette 5
Suzannah is married to Hugh. Suzannah has a male friend at work who she sees every day and whom she considers to be her closest friend. She acknowledges that he fills an area of her life that her boyfriend does not and that there’s intimacy in this relationship. She has no intention of starting a sexual relationship with this friend but does feel excited and guilty about the situation.
Vignettes: Children
Vignettes tell a short story. Can you please tell us what you think the child in the vignette should do?

All children (aged 11+):
Vignette 1
The Smith family are rushing to go out for the day. Both children, Tom (aged 14) and Lucy (aged 10) need to use the bathroom at the same time. Tom refuses to use the bathroom at the same time as his younger sister.

Vignette 2
Sally (aged 12) and her mum are out shopping in town and they are talking. Sally’s mum says that she’s having a lovely time and puts her arm around Sally’s shoulders and gives her daughter a big hug. At this moment Sally notices a group of children from her school standing across the road from them.

Vignette 3
Jason (aged 13) is listening to music in his bedroom. He has asked that the rest of his family knock on the door before entering. His dad comes upstairs. He taps his knuckles on the door and walks straight in before Jason has a chance to respond.

Children (aged 14+):
Vignette 4
There is an “activity day” at school where all the children in year 9 are put into small groups and receive a talk about relationships and sex education. Mark (aged 14) is unwell for a couple of days and happens to be absent when the “activity day” takes place.
Appendix 5: Visual Images

Fig. 1. Mother and child

Fig. 2. Father and child

Fig. 3 Mother + child

Fig. 3 Father and child

Fig. 5 Family

Fig 6 “Virginia at 4, 1989” Sally Mann