

## ***Trauma and reparation: Adult daughters' meaning-making of their relationships with their domestically violent fathers***

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### ***Abstract***

*The quality of object relating of children who grew up with violent fathers remains complex and overlooked in the broad literature on domestic violence, and has potential implications for the undertaking of psychotherapeutic work with such clients as adults. This exploration into young adult daughters' narratives on their relationships with their violent fathers permits a useful glimpse into the dynamics involved. Psychoanalytic research interviews were conducted with a sample of seven young female university students. These revealed that participants' relationships with their abusive fathers were characterised by emotional distance in fathers and by periods of emotional distress in daughters. However, participants also wished for connection with their fathers. Some reparative processes were evident and involved shifts from more paranoid-schizoid defensive functioning to more depressive position relating in relation to fathers, made possible through acknowledgement of trauma and of memories of benevolence. In many cases, however, participants' romantic adult relationships were significantly influenced by a fear of intimacy and by patterns of anxiety and avoidance linked to the father-daughter relationship in childhood.*