



Centre for Research on Families and Relationships

**Communicating your research
Skills taster session
CRFR International Conference
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Centre for Research on Families and Relationships

- Consortium research centre, based at Edinburgh University
- Key aim - to make research accessible
- **Understanding evidence to action:** build on the current research on how research gets used and ways of thinking about the evidence to action process



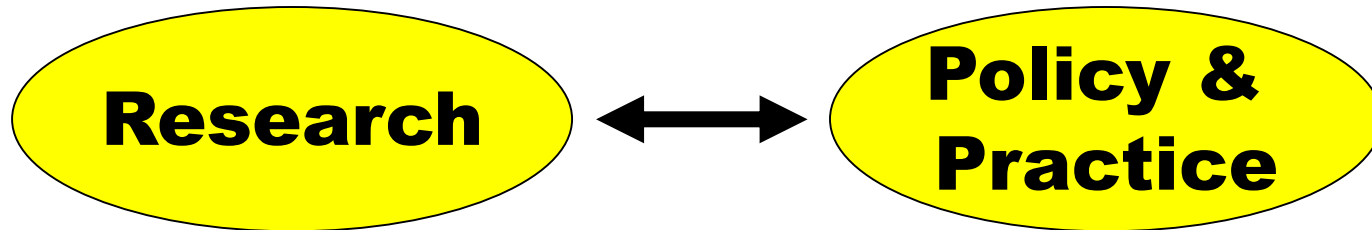
IDENTIFYING YOUR AUDIENCES AND STAKEHOLDERS?

Bridging the gap??





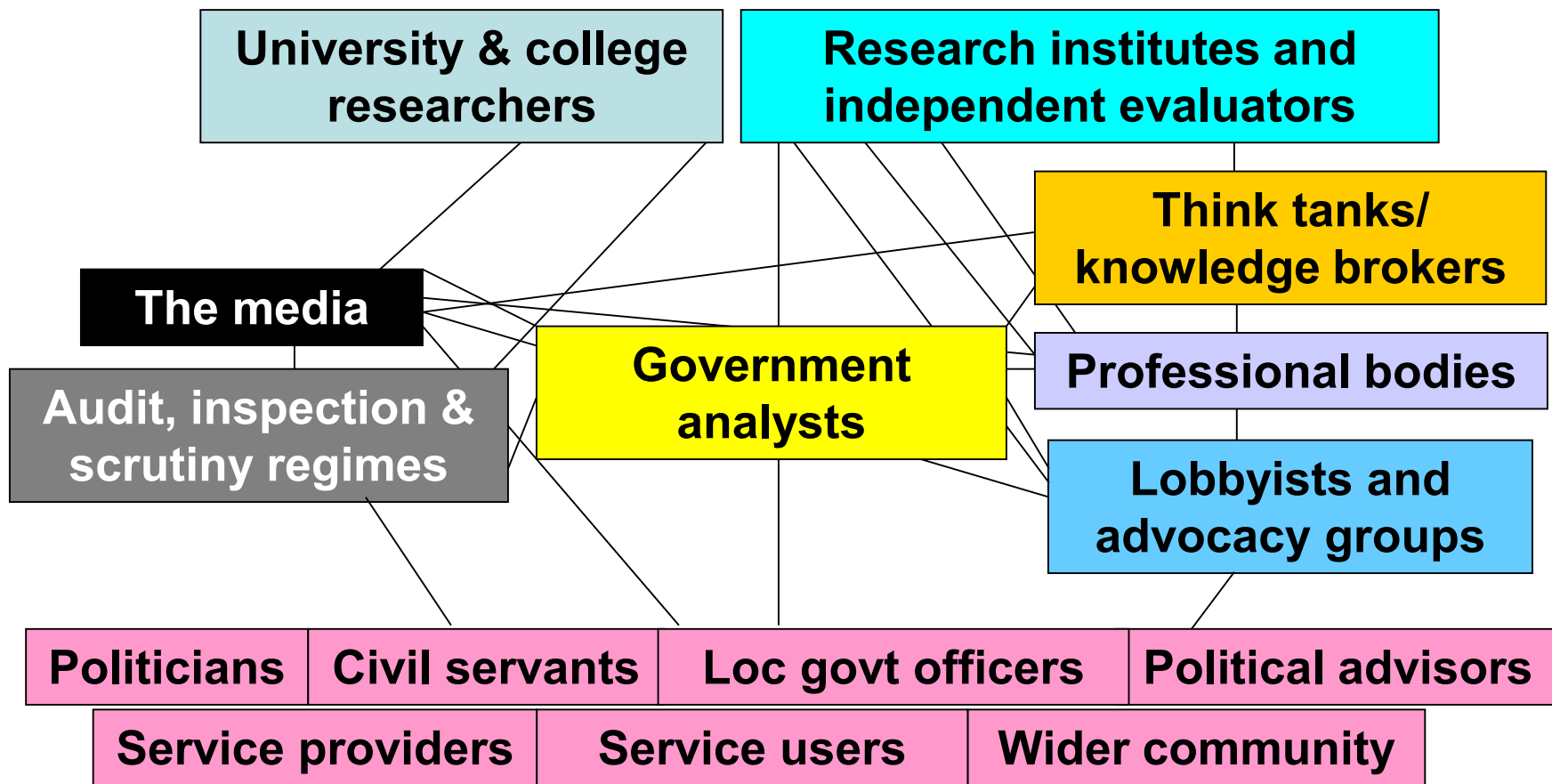
Challenge of linking two worlds



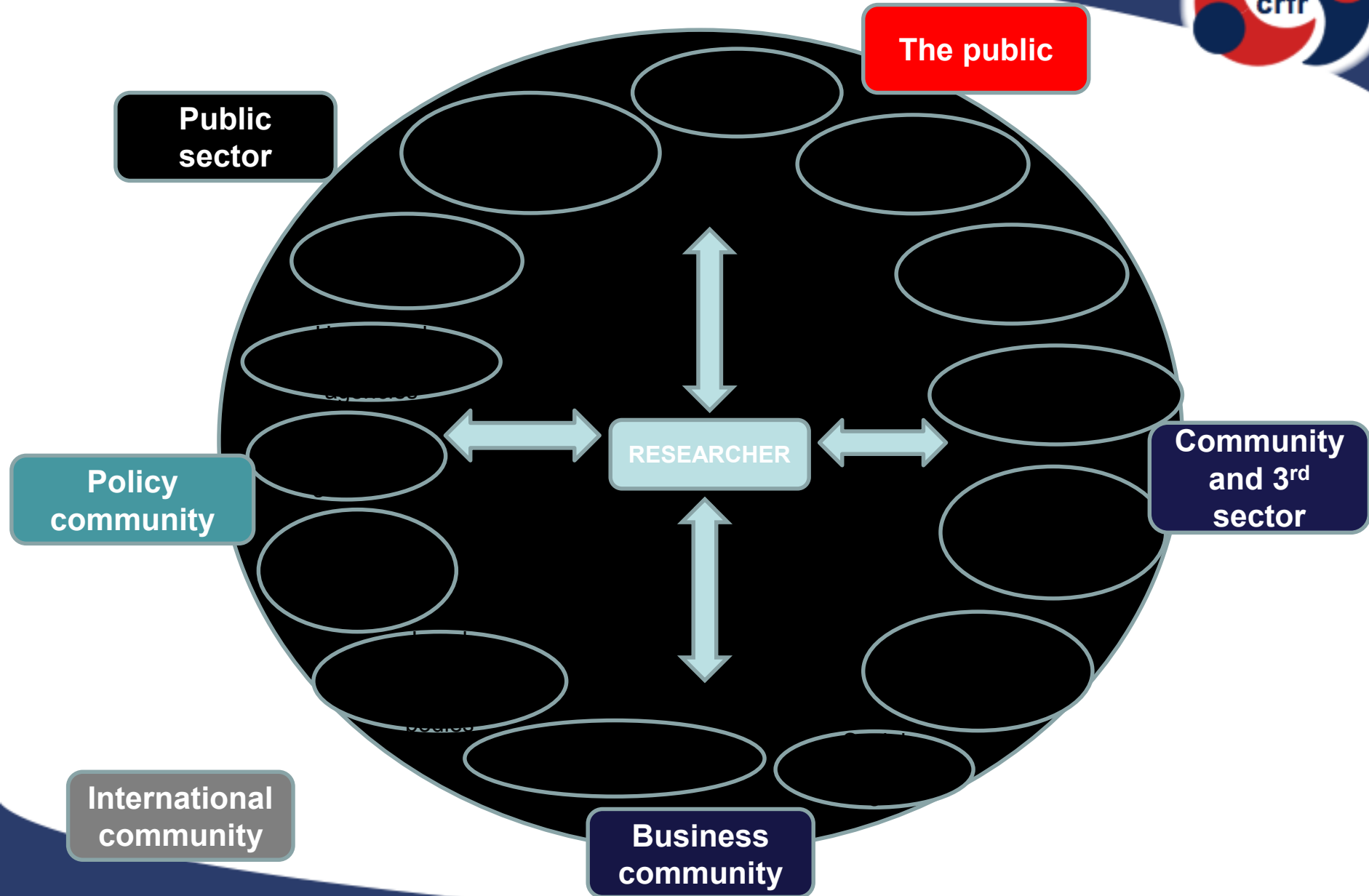
- Divergent:
 - concerns, priorities, incentives, language
 - conceptions of knowledge; time-scales
 - Status and power
- Leading to:
 - communication difficulties
 - mismatch between supply & demand
 - rejection; implementation failure



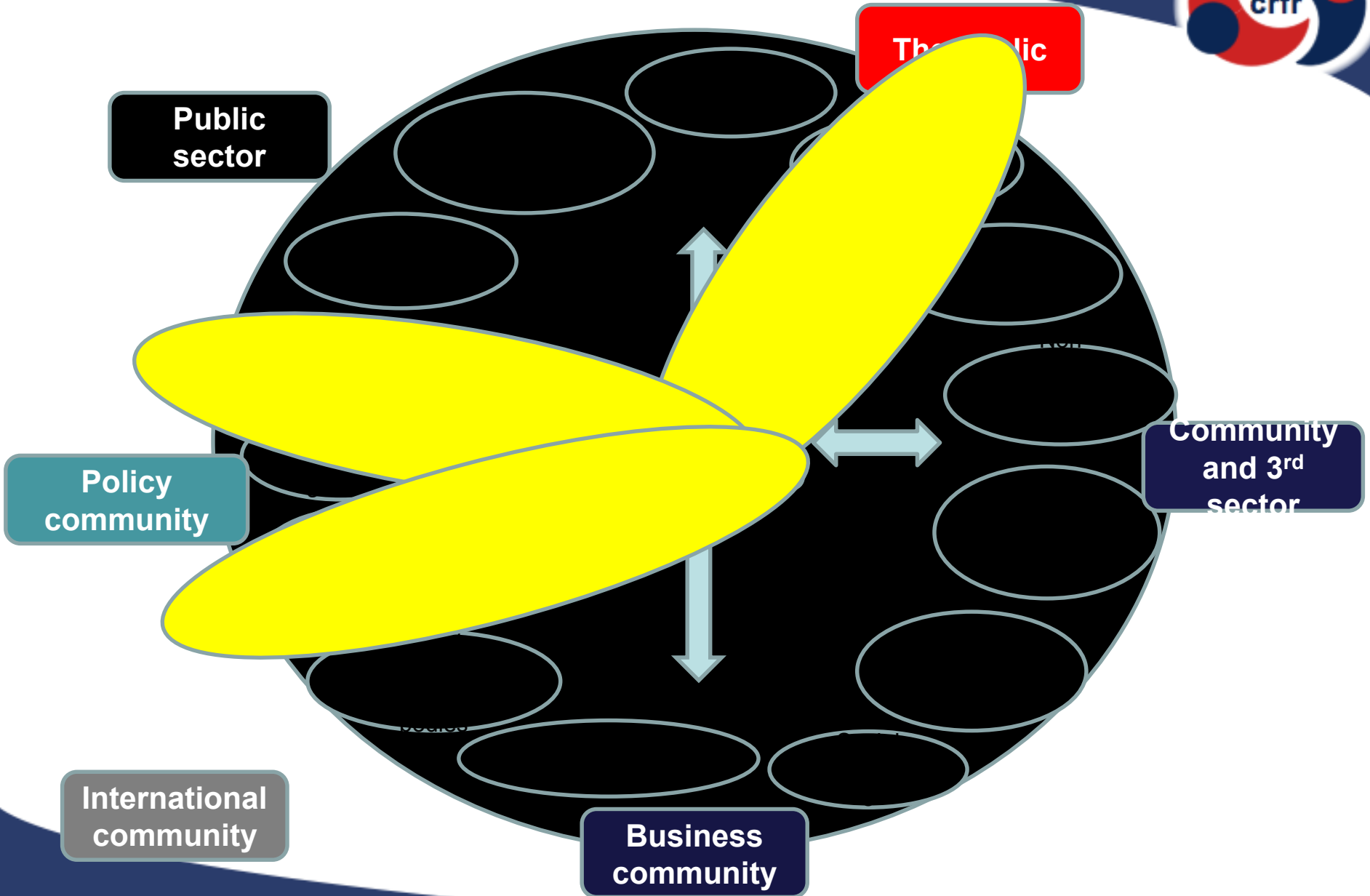
But more than two worlds involved



Stakeholders in research



Stakeholders in research





More than two worlds

**Who might the stakeholders
be for your research?**





Tailoring your message

Your audiences may have different needs and expectations:

Policy makers:

- often not scientists
- move between subjects
- Want to know why it is important & what difference it will make

Practitioners:

- Seek current best practice
- Focus = client
- Want to know how it will improve their services & outcomes for people

Publics

- Want to relate to themselves
- Often have some specialist knowledge



COMMUNICATING RESEARCH



Plain language

What is plain language?

- Writing in a way that is appropriate for your audience
- Clear and concise communication
- Easier and faster to read
- *Strategic aim of CRFR*

It aint:

- dumbing down
- changing the meaning
- getting rid of all long words
- as easy as you might think



Top tips...

1. Aim for shorter sentences

- 15-20 words

2. Be active

- Subject, verb, object: at the most basic

3. Don't use nouns made from verbs

- Avoid 'isms' & 'isions', eg: 'We provide...' instead of 'managing the provision of...'

4. Think of the positive angle

5. Junk the jargon

- Define technical terms and specialised words, if essential



Top tips...cntd

5. Use lists and headings to structure information

- Break up long passages of text
- Signpost key points
- One idea per paragraph

6. Use everyday language

7. What is the point?

- Why is it important to a non-academic audience?
- What do these results mean? Are you addressing the question asked?



Jargon

- What is Jargon?
 - technical words which are specific to your discipline
 - Words that are in common use but used with a specific meaning in your discipline
 - Words that are borrowed to describe or define a specific idea / object etc.
- What happens when you use jargon?



Jargon Busting

- Use simple definitions
 - **Persistent poverty:** means spending three or more years out of any four year period in poverty...
- Make the links between ideas and action obvious to avoid ambiguity
- Use more words if it helps people understand what you are saying.



At the same time, feminists are cognizant that fetishistic engagements with science and technology (for instance in calls to address environmental crises through technological fixes and in assumptions that solutions to world problems such as poverty will come from scientific 'discoveries' such as genetically modified foods) necessitate remembering the majority of humanity, whose poor material conditions demonstrate that techno-scientifically-driven 'progress' is unevenly distributed and can work to entrench existing inequities. These tensions necessarily engage long-standing philosophy of science debates concerning larger ontological and epistemological assumptions, to which feminist scholars have provided significant, timely and diverse inputs.



Some claim that technological advancements like genetically modified foods will eliminate poverty. However, feminists are aware that over reliance on technology or ‘discovery’ to address global problems like poverty may actually further entrench existing inequalities. What people call ‘progress’ is often unevenly distributed between different parts of society.



A Developmental Perspective on Underage Alcohol Use

From Alcohol Research and Health

Why do kids drink and what
will it do to them



Writing clear language research summaries

- Titles: clear, self-explanatory, easily found in internet searches
- Bullet list key messages & recommendations
- Lead with findings, not detailed methodology
- Length: briefings 2300 words / reviews 6-8000 words
- Use images where relevant
- Keep boxes, tables etc. simple
- Cite references at the end
- Keep acknowledgements to a minimum

CRFR Research Briefings



A collage of five overlapping research briefing covers from the Centre for Research on Families and Relationships (CRFR). The covers are arranged in a fan-like pattern, showing various titles and abstract designs. The CRFR logo is visible on each cover.

**Centre for Research on Families and Relationships
Research briefing 63 • March 2016**
A 'pockets' approach to addressing financial vulnerability

This briefing paper outlines recent evidence on financial vulnerability among families in Scotland and draws on the Healthier, Wealthier, Stronger case study as an example of actions that can be taken to support families both at risk of, and experiencing, financial vulnerability.

**Centre for Research on Families and Relationships
Research briefing 61 • March 2016**
Financial vulnerability and emotional distress

Financial vulnerability is a broader measure of socioeconomic disadvantage than income, although there is overlap between the two. Financial vulnerability is associated with high levels of emotional distress in mothers, which in turn is associated with low levels of child wellbeing. Screened mothers for financial vulnerability to sign up for advice and information services would be expected to benefit their children's emotional and behavioural wellbeing.

**Centre for Research on Families and Relationships
Research briefing 62 • March 2016**
Social assets, low income and child wellbeing

Social assets is a composite score that measures closeness and support from friends and family. Mothers having high levels of social assets removes the negative relationship between children's social, emotional and behavioural (SEB) wellbeing and living in lone-parent families. Furthermore, children living in the lowest household income have SEB wellbeing that extends above the average for all children when their mothers have high levels of social assets.

**Centre for Research on Families and Relationships
Research briefing 79 • January 2016**
South Asian women's experience of family abuse: The role of the husband's mother

There is substantial evidence that poverty is linked to poorer social, emotional and behavioural (SEB) wellbeing for children, the consequences of which are felt in childhood, through adolescence and into adulthood (Treanor, 2010). Not all children growing up in poverty will experience poor outcomes in adulthood. Children's experiences are complex. Protective factors include relationships within their families and their peer group (Ridge and Wright, 2008). 'Social assets' describe the level of closeness between mothers and their family and friends. A research study to explore the effect of social assets, within the family, at school, neighbourhood, concludes that having social assets within the family is associated with children's health complaints and is associated with levels of subjective wellbeing. Of the three social assets within the family was found to be most important (Eriksson et al., 2012). Further research indicates that parents with greater educational and financial resources are more able to mobilise greater social assets for their children (2006: 4). Knowing that parents with higher socioeconomic status have higher levels of social assets and that this is associated with better child outcomes, it is important to explore ways in which parents with lower socioeconomic status can mobilise greater social assets for their children.

Evaluating the Young Mothers' Service using contribution analysis: lessons learned

For a full list of research briefings visit www.crfr.ac.uk



Some useful resources

Communicating statistics with the media

<https://www.statslife.org.uk/events/events-calendar/past-events-2015/eventdetail/439/-/communicating-statistics-with-the-media>

Food Security Communications Toolkit: Writing effective reports

<http://www.fao.org/docrep/014/i2195e/i2195e03.pdf>

Claire's Clear Writing Tips, by the European Commission

http://ec.europa.eu/translation/documents/clear_writing_tips_en.pdf

Plain English guide to writing in plain English

<http://www.plainenglish.co.uk/files/howto.pdf>

LSE Social Sciences Impact Blog

<http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/impactofsocialsciences/>