

# FMS Foundation Newsletter

3508 Market Street, Philadelphia, PA 19104, 215-387-1865

May 21, 1992

Dear Friends,

Over one hundred families and almost as many professionals have called the 800 number in the past few weeks. In our wildest dreams, we did not predict such a large response in such a short time. The calls are the result of stories about FMS Foundation members that have appeared in Utah, Ohio and Toronto. In each case, the families sent their stories to local reporters. We thank the writers of those stories and the reporters who found them compelling enough to retell even when colleagues warned, "That's a politically sensitive issue. You're crazy to touch it," and "How do you know they're not guilty?" We appreciate the fact that these reporters were willing to ask in return, "How do you know they are guilty?"

Over 400 families have now told us stories of their "adult-children" who have recovered memories during some sort of therapy, decided that they were incest victims, confronted parents and then cut off contact. Running through all these stories is the refusal of the therapists to consider evidence such as lie detector test results, childhood medical reports or the possibility that the memories might be confused. In most cases the therapists refuse even to meet the parents. In a huge number of cases, the book *Courage to Heal* has been mentioned. The stories we hear are amazingly similar. An example of how similar they are was brought home to us when a parent from Canada related that his sister had angrily accused him of going public because of the story that had appeared in the *Toronto Star*. This parent had never told his own family story to a reporter or anyone else.

It is increasingly evident that the press, the mental health profession, the public are all terribly confused about issues of memory and repression. Many people have the mistaken notion that memories are stored like pictures or like data in a computer. That is simply not the case. *Memory is a creative process. Memory is a process of reconstruction. Memories are reinterpreted.*

People do "remember" unusual things, do have false memories. This week 100,000 mental health professionals received a booklet called, "Unusual Personal Experiences," in which Dr. John E. Mack, a professor of psychiatry at Harvard urges readers to believe patients who recover memories of abuse by space aliens. The booklet tells us that a survey by the Roper Organization indicates that over 2% of the American population now remembers being abused by space aliens. Where is the evidence?

Memories can seem very real to the people who have them, but that does not mean that those memories are necessarily accurate.

Questions that we are asked over and over again are, "Why would people have these memories if they were not true? Why would people make up memories that are obviously so painful to them?" We do not pretend to have an answer to the questions. We suggest, however, that the enclosed April 30 article from the *Pittsburgh Press* which describes the legal victory of a falsely-accused

family in Pittsburgh sheds light on strongly held assumptions some therapists bring to doctor-client relationships. It also describes processes that could lead a patient to believe in memories that are not true. This is a very important case. We trust you will have your own conclusions about why a patient might recover false memories after you read the article.

## Office News

Your FMS Foundation office is about to go into full operation. Today we set up a computer system and next week we will transfer the 800 number to Philadelphia. Booklets of information are being printed. Parents have volunteered to prepare the packets for mailing. When these are ready, we will send out a press release to announce formally our existence.

We thank each of you who has helped to make this possible. We thank all the families that have called and told us their stories because that is how we can document the scope of this phenomenon. We thank those of you who have received and completed the survey. (More will go out soon.) We thank each of you who has sent us dues and additional contributions to pay for the newsletter and the telephone and the office. We thank you for sending articles and keeping us informed of what is going on around the country so that we can share it with members.

There are not words enough to thank Holly Wakefield and Ralph Underwager at the Institute of Psychological Therapies for the loving professional support that they have given to the FMS Foundation to help us become an independent organization. We would not exist without them. Their courage in speaking out, their willingness to use their resources to help us with the 800 number and with the survey have made it possible for us to do what we have done and what we must continue do to put an end to this phenomenon.

Pamela

For Help Call 1-800-568-8882

## What if?

One of our members wonders if the "adult-child incest survivor" phenomenon is undermining the very situation it purports to address—namely trying to stop the sexual abuse of children. Desperately needed legal, financial and mental health resources are being drained in cases in which no children are in danger and in which it is highly probable no abuse ever existed—given what is known about memory. She wonders if the motivation of the "adult incest survivor" movement as described in its bible, *Courage to Heal*, is not "misguided" rather than an effort to address the very real and very serious problem of child sexual abuse. Newspapers report that incidents of child abuse are ever increasing in spite of all the publicity.

"Statistics on health care, day care, income level, and educational opportunities for children indicate that as a nation we really do abuse our children," said our parent. We deplore that and we deplore the fact that far too many children are also physically, sexually and emotionally abused. Our parent wondered what might be accomplished if instead of focusing on the "recovery of the repressed memories" of highly educated financially successful "adult-child victims," the resources of lawyers, judges and courts, the resources of law enforcement agencies, the resources of psychiatrists, psychologists, social workers, therapists, and counselors, and the resources of television talk-show hosts and reporters were focused on preventing abuse that is verified to be taking place to children in our country right now. "Is it because children can't pay for long-term psychotherapy or for lawyers?" the parent asked. We thought that the parent raised interesting points.

**WHERE DO 413 FAMILIES LIVE?**

AK(1)	AR(3)	AZ(6)	CA(32)	CO(5)
DE(1)	FL(7)	GA(4)	IA(2)	ID(2)
IL(9)	IN(8)	LA(2)	MA(4)	MD(3)
MI(15)	MN(4)	MS(1)	MT(1)	NC(4)
NH(18)	NV(3)	NY(15)	OH(25)	OK(5)
OR(5)	PA(96)	SC(2)	TX(11)	UT(46)
VA(2)	VT(1)	WA(12)	WI(20)	DC(1)
Canada	ON(33)	BC(5)	ABROAD(1)	

Her job was stressful and required extremely long hours. During this time she met her fiance but they had some difficulty getting along.

My daughter called home almost every day, usually crying. I encouraged her to seek counseling, which she did. The therapist there suggested that some traumatic incident in her childhood must be the cause for her depression. She called home often asking about her past. Her condition became worse and we talked her into flying home. We took her to the hospital for tests to explore a chemical imbalance. She tested normal in everything. Her physician recommended a psychiatrist. Neither of the

doctors believed that the chronic mono exists due to a lack of scientific evidence. In most of their patients, they explained, it turned out to be an emotional problem.

In the following weeks the doctors prescribed Lithonate, Klonopin, Wellbutrin and Prozac all with extreme negative reactions. After the second week of outpatient care, the doctor called me into his office and informed me that he thought my daughter should be admitted to the hospital immediately.

I visited her nightly and soon was met with anger and hate. Her fiance flew in each weekend. Through talks with him I learned that the doctor had advised my daughter that her condition was a result of how we had raised her. He said I supported her career because it fulfilled my needs and that I had used her. He said that she and I were codependent and should attend CODA meetings. It was suggested that if I didn't I might never get to have a relationship with her again. He told me I needed therapy. I asked him how did he know since he had never talked to me. The social worker at the hospital called me and told me I needed therapy.

It was suggested I bring childhood pictures to the hospital for them to review since my daughter was having trouble remembering. The doctor told her he could tell by looking at the pictures that she had been a depressed child.

My daughter told us "I didn't know what you guys were doing to me until it was explained." "I've gotta get tough with you guys." And regarding the mounds of bills we were paying.."they got me this way..they should pay for it."

The doctor told me she could never get well if she stayed at our house and encouraged her to seek a place of her own. She found a room nearby the hospital but was desperate about how she was going to pay for it. She was unable to work and was scheduled to enter the hospital program. We were told not to call or contact her.

Her fiance quit his job in another city and moved here to take care of my daughter.

### Reaching Out

We welcome the assistance of all our members, but we ask that you please check with the office before taking action on our behalf. Not only is it important for us to know what is taking place, but we may also be able to help guide you in your efforts. At all times our collective efforts should reflect the dignity of our position.

We know how important you feel that is to reach out to other families who may think that they are alone in this tragedy. It is FMS Foundation policy that this be done through appropriate media. A notice in a newsletter or a paper is appropriate. Flyers on personal property are not. Thank you.

### **A Mother's Story**

My 26-year-old daughter, while attending a prestigious university several years ago, became very ill and was eventually diagnosed as having "chronic mononucleosis." A doctor associated with the university looked at her medical records and confirmed she did indeed have a severe case of chronic mono. As months went by, she did not return to her normal health and she had difficulty functioning. Refusing to accept what we were told, that she might never be better, we started seeking alternative cures. She was tested and found to have some food and other allergies. There was a slight improvement with her new diet.

With limited activity my daughter managed to graduate and began her career in another part of the country.

night. Sisters fondled her constantly. Hazy - brother sexually violated her at 3 years."

Other categories included fondling, masturbation, emotional abuse (having to have ballet instead of skating lessons) and pornography.

*After reading the vague, improbable, bizarre accusations our "incest surviving adult-children" are making, perhaps the responsible professional community will better understand why parents have been sufficiently alarmed to feel the need to form the False Memory Syndrome Foundation. There appears to be a mindset among a very large group of therapists and adult-children that classifies the world into those "in recovery" and those "in denial." There appears to be no rational middle ground for doubt or discussion. That alarms parents.*

\*\*\*\*\*RECOMMENDED READING\*\*\*\*\*

***I'M DYSFUNCTIONAL,  
YOU'RE DYSFUNCTIONAL,***  
by Wendy Kaminer, Addison-Wesley, 1992.

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**SUPPORT IS NEEDED**

Your membership dues have gone a long way to get us up and running but our needs will continue to grow. If you know of anyone who would like to make a charitable donation -- perhaps your friends or extended family or interested professionals -- please ask them or let us know and we will send them information and extend the opportunity to donate. FMS has applied for non-profit organization status to which all contributions would be tax-deductible.

*False Memory Syndrome Foundation*  
Annual Membership \$100.

Checks may be made to

FMS Foundation  
3508 Market Street  
Suite 128  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19104

**PHILADELPHIA AREA - VOLUNTEERS NEEDED**

If you can help with basic office assistance in mailing, telephone, filing, copying, etc., please send us your name, address and phone number or call the office at 387-1865. Special help needed for preparing packets for new families, getting out the newsletter and working with all phases of the survey.

**Meetings Scheduled**

**New York Area**  
**May 28, 1992**  
6:00 P.M.

for information call Renee at 718-428-8583

**Southwest Area**  
**Saturday, June 27, 1992**  
1:00 P.M.

Holidome Inn West  
Meridian and Highway # 40  
Oklahoma City

Persons may make own reservations  
405-942-8511  
Ask for FMS Foundation Southwest rooms  
(\$49. outside of Holidome, \$59 inside)

Agenda being developed.  
Lynn, one of the young women who has restored her real memories, will share her experiences.

**Toronto, Canada area**  
**Meeting is being planned.**

For details call  
Paula, 705-522-2809

**Northwest area (Washington)**  
**Meeting is being planned**

For details call  
Chuck, 206-364-4711

**Utah area**

**PLEASE NOTE CHANGE OF DATE**

**Thursday evening June 25**  
**Speaker: Dr. Raskin**

Call Helen at 801-537-7401 for details

**Philadelphia**  
**Saturday, June 13, 1992**  
1:00 P.M.

Same location as past meetings.  
Call office if you need a map.  
215-387-1865  
Committee Updates  
Guest Speaker

The doctor diagnosed her fiancé as having the same problem as my daughter but said he would not need hospitalization. He gave them Bradshaw videos, had them attending CODA, Adult Children of Alcoholics (we don't drink) several times a week. Her fiancé called his mother blaming her as they had me. He suggested that his mother had been too affectionate.

Nearing the end of my daughter's hospitalization she appeared to be having drug withdrawal. The doctor and staff told her it was a result of repressed anger that she felt toward her mother.

Only two weeks before she began therapy with the psychiatrist, she had written me a note telling me how much she loved me and that she considered me her best friend. She loved coming home between jobs. Her excitement at being home filled the house.

For over a year now, my daughter has been estranged from her family. The family is devastated but that is not the utmost concern. Our concern is how confused our daughter must be to think her family, the ones who love and care for her, is the reason for her illness. My daughter was loved, protected and cared for properly. I want her to receive the proper medical treatment before it is too late.

Recently she became depressed again. The psychiatrist is sending her to a hypnotherapist .. still searching for the traumatic event that his sodium amytal interview did not reveal.

Who can help my daughter?

A mother

### More Survey Results

What are the actual things that families have been accused of doing? The following information is based on 112 responses to the question "Please describe the specific accusations." Because this was an open ended question, the responses were coded. The coding categories were determined by a group of five adults. Two people then did the coding with interrater reliability of over 90%. Responses could have multiple codings.

*We ask that professionals who have worked with verified child abuse cases examine the accusations of the recovered memories of adult-child victims and compare them with what research has shown to be true about the behaviors and actions of child sexual abusers.*

**VAGUE** -- One third of the responses (N=37) were coded "vague." 33% of the people responding really didn't have much of an idea of what it was they were supposed to have done.

•"We don't know - daughter will not see or talk with us until we admit we abused her. Her words over phone to mother "Until you stop your pattern of denial or divorce your husband, I will have no contact with you."

•"Incest is claimed but our attempts to secure details have been denied. We do not know the specific accusations. She claims father threatened her to 'keep our secret.'"

•"We have not been accused of abuse. In October '90, our daughter told us we could have no contact with her. She had a manic attack which she said was a result of our relationship with her. She stated we did not allow her to grow up."

•"Tore up Christmas check "From your Little Girl" - a book on incest with chapter on father/daughter marked - a telephone call, "Don't pretend you don't know what I'm talking about - Ha Ha. YOU know - click."

•"I have never been told who was abused, what was the abuse, where the abuse occurred or when the abuse occurred. I was just told to confess."

**SATANIC RITUAL ABUSE** -- 15% of the responses (N=17) included accusations of ritual abuse.

"She had flashbacks seeing father, mother, grandparents in hooded black robes. Blood letting, forcing her to drink blood and urine. Grandfather raped her while father put penis in her mouth and grandmother and mothers watched. Grandmother without underclothes sat on her face. Father kicked her with black boots and hung her by heels. Mentioned hot poker, furnace and freezer and washer-wringer.

**WITNESSES** -- 13% of responses (N=14) mentioned that witnesses were present. This is in addition to the satanic accusations which are always group activities. More than 28% of the alleged abusive activity, then, involved more than one person seeing what was going on.

•"Mother accused of abusing sister's children. Father and older brother of incest; Brother-in-law and uncle of rape; Aunt of observing and permitting; Sister of observing and permitting."

•"Father and step-mother participating in group sex. Siblings participating in group sex. Father attempting to drown daughter. Step-father beating with bow and arrow and razorstrip, etc..

•"Father "choked and smothered..sodomized and raped" Mother "saw my obvious pain and terror and did nothing to protect me."

**PENETRATION** - 31% of the responses (N=35) included penetration.

•"Oral, vaginal and renal intercourse every Saturday in her room. Being tied to her bed so this could take place."

•"Father had intercourse with accuser at age 2 with the violation continuing until age 10 with mother having full knowledge of what was going on."

•"As therapy progressed, allegations became more violent - oral sex - choking - shaking - pulling hair - and eventually daughter decided her father was a pedophile"

"As a result of being forced to have sex with neighbor's dog, she had a baby that was half dog. Forced to have sex with brother, bit part of father's penis off. Was touched or fondled by grandfather. Sexually abused by mother with husband."

"Father had oral sex when she was 2 in her crib every