

Scientific & Professional Advisory Board

Professor Robert J Audley
Professor Emeritus of Psychology
University College, London

Professor Sir Patrick P G Bateson FRS
Professor Emeritus of Ethology
University of Cambridge

Dr Hamish Cameron FRCP FRCPsych DPM
Consultant Child Psychiatrist (Retired)

Professor Martin Conway
Professor of Cognitive Psychology
City University, London

Professor Christopher C French
Professor of Psychology
Goldsmiths, University of London

Dr Fiona Gabbert
Reader in Psychology
Goldsmiths, University of London

Dr Cara Laney
Visiting Assistant Professor of Psychology
Reed College, Portland, Oregon

Mrs Katharine Mair
Consultant Clinical Psychologist (Retired)

Mr David Morgan
Child, Educational & Forensic Psychologist
London

Dr Peter L N Naish (Chair)
Visiting Reader in Psychology
The Sackler Centre for Consciousness Science,
Sussex University

Scientific & Professional Advisory Board *continued*

Dr James Ost
Principal Lecturer in Psychology
International Centre for Research in Forensic Psychology
University of Portsmouth

Dr. Gavin E. Oxburgh
Consultant Forensic Psychologist
Newcastle University

Mr Karl Sabbagh
Writer & Managing Director of Skyscraper Productions

Dr Bryan Tully
Chartered Clinical & Forensic Psychologist
London

Dr Kimberley Wade
Assistant Professor of Psychology
University of Warwick

Professor Larry Weiskrantz FRS
Professor Emeritus of Psychology
University of Oxford

Professor Dan B Wright
Professor of Psychology
Florida International University

Useful definitions

"No evidence exists for the repression and recovery of verified, severely traumatic events....."

"There is no reliable means of distinguishing a true memory from an illusory one other than by external confirmation."

From BRANDON, SYDNEY *et al.* 'Recovered memories of childhood sexual abuse'. *British Journal of Psychiatry* (1998).



Serving People and Professionals
in Contested Accusations of Abuse

British False Memory
Society
P.O.Box 172
Stockport
SK6 9BP
UK

Phone: 01225 333654

e-mail: bfms@bfms.org.uk
www.bfms.org.uk

BFMS

BFMS (British False Memory Society) was founded in 1993 in response to an epidemic of false claims of past child abuse by adults in therapy. The accusers believed they had 'recovered' unconscious memories of a hidden past, but scientific evidence demonstrates that rather than being the recall of genuine experience, the process described was one of the accumulation of false belief – hence the term 'false memory'.

Such allegations are not a new phenomenon – they have been known to arise under certain cultural conditions for centuries. However, flawed therapeutic trauma theories and investigative systems have aggravated the problem over the last twenty years with the result that there is now a widespread problem of poor differentiation between true and false allegations of child sexual abuse. This is particularly the case with uncorroborated retrospective allegations that have created the greatest problem in recent times.

Naturally the BFMS acknowledges and abhors the fact that there are many genuine cases of child abuse that require the application of the criminal law. However, the circumstantial reliability of testimony needs to be properly investigated to protect genuine victims and exonerate the falsely accused. As it is, many families and individuals have their lives devastated through the destructive effects of false allegations. It is not uncommon for a whole network of family relationships to be destroyed through false allegations made both in and out of therapy.

BFMS has a Scientific and Professional Advisory Board and is the leading charity addressing the problem of false accusations of child abuse.

The Purposes of BFMS

- BFMS aims to promote accurate differentiation between true and false allegations of child sexual abuse through raising public, professional and policy maker awareness; organising conferences and seminars; disseminating relevant information through newsletters and academic research and assisting the media, where appropriate, to produce suitable articles and programmes.
- BFMS incorporates a telephone helpline to support families and individuals affected by false memory and false abuse accusations. BFMS also offers advice and access to legal assistance. However, we do not offer counselling services nor do we have in-house legal advisors, although both these matters are open to general discussion.
- BFMS provides information and advice to mental health, welfare, criminal justice and legal professionals. In addition it can provide an individual case analysis service in relation to criminal and civil litigation on a reasonable fee basis.
- BFMS aims to improve the understanding of false child abuse allegations including false memory by encouraging, sponsoring, conducting and publishing academic and professional research.

BFMS is a Registered Charity,
No. 1040683.

The Society is registered under the Data Protection Act.

FRONT COVER: unidentified artist

Management and Administration

Madeline Greenhalgh, *Director*
Carolyn Dutch, *Administrator*

Board of Trustees

Sally Thompson (Chair)
Bernard Reed OBE
Anne Noble
Andrew Entwistle
Sarah Bennett

Membership

The BFMS warmly welcomes as members all those who support its aims.* Benefits of membership include a newsletter, attendance at the AGM with voting rights, and preferential rates for conferences.

Full details and application forms may be obtained from the address given. Prospective members may be assured that all information given to the Society is treated in the strictest confidence.

* In order to safeguard these aims, the BFMS does not accept applications from followers of any organisation where sexual relationships between adults and children have been encouraged or condoned, or from anyone who holds or has held such views.