

# Men Who Care: Experiences and reflections from male foster carers



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In 2010 the University of Glamorgan's StoryWorks team ran a two-day workshop with a group of male foster carers from across south and west Wales, in which they shared their real-life stories of foster caring from a male perspective.

The stories that resulted from the workshop are published in a book to be used as a training and educational resource. The stories can be read as stand alone narratives or can be used in training or support group settings or within the foster home. There is a brief introduction to each story to set the scene regarding the key issues and two or three open questions at the end to prompt discussion.

## Comments from men who took part in the workshop:

*"By the time the two-day event was over I felt privileged to have shared so many emotional links and bonds with other like-minded people in an environment that felt both welcoming and safe."*

*"Some of us cried at what we were saying, at the memories that we pulled out into the open and some of us cried when we heard the stories that our fellows were sharing with us. It was a very emotional experience I can tell you."*

- The men were recruited and supported by staff from The Fostering Network in Wales, who worked closely with the StoryWorks team throughout.

The **Fostering Network** and the **University of Glamorgan** would like to thank all the men involved for sharing their stories so generously during the workshop and for agreeing for them to be published.

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StoryWorks 



- The book was piloted with a group of final year Health and Social Care undergraduate students at the University of Glamorgan. Three of the men also came into the session to share their experiences face-to-face with the students.

## Here are some of the students' comments:

*"Stories straight from the horse's mouth rather than through dull theory. It was fantastic, interesting, relevant and will better the way I work with foster carers."*

*"It was great reading as a group the emotional stories .... They offered a real insight into their world"*

*"An excellent session! We need a lot more."*

*"It made the reality of what we are studying come to life and more is needed throughout the three years"*

*"Excellent learning experience rather than learning from a text book."*

- Some of the men have been recorded reading their stories. These will be produced as podcasts and be made available on the internet, via The Fostering Network's website.
- Copies of the book have been sent to Local Authorities and foster carers across Wales.

*"The Men who Care book has been receiving lots of praise from those who read it - my mum (foster carer) co-facilitates a skills to foster group and they have found it particularly useful."*

Project Worker, The Fostering Network (Wales)

*"Thank you so much for sending this book. It should come with a warning. I have just spent a most tearful hour reading it. The stories are so powerful and are such a wonderful way to learn and teach about foster care."*

Academic in field of Health and Social Care