



**University  
of Victoria**

Graduate Studies

Notice of the Final Oral Examination  
for the Degree of Master of Arts

of

**KENNETH WRIGHT**

BA (University of Victoria, 2010)

**“Siblings of Young Homicide Victims: Comparisons with a Matched Sample”**

Department of Educational Psychology and Leadership Studies

Friday, August 21, 2015

12:00PM

David Turpin Building

Room A144

Supervisory Committee:

Dr. Susan Tasker, Department of Educational Psychology and Leadership Studies, UVic (Supervisor)

Dr. John Walsh, Department of Educational Psychology and Leadership Studies, UVic (Member)

External Examiner:

Dr. Paul Clements, Division of Graduate Nursing, Drexel University

Chair of Oral Examination:

Dr. Vivienne Temple, School of Exercise Science, Physical and Health Education, UVic

Dr. David Capson, Dean, Faculty of Graduate Studies

## **Abstract**

Does the murder of a sibling affect the health and well-being of siblings over the longer term? Annually, there are 600 homicides in Canada (Statistics Canada, 2013) and nearly 14,000 in the United States (FBI, 2013). Anecdotal report and a small body of literature suggest siblings' lives are impacted by the murder of a sister or brother and that there are lasting effects. For the most part, however, siblings of murder victims are largely ignored by research. Studies that do exist rely mainly on qualitative data from small, non-representative, and mixed samples. This study used a quasi-experimental design to compare data previously obtained from 67 Canadian and American homicide-bereaved siblings with data from 80 comparison participants, matched as a group on age and sex. Groups were compared on measures of SES, overall general health, subjective distress, perceived social support, life-satisfaction, recollections of growing up, and self-worth. Homicide-bereaved siblings reported significantly higher levels of current subjective distress, less perceived social support, and less positive recollections of growing up. Despite ongoing subjective distress, homicide-bereaved siblings reported self-worth and life satisfaction equivalent to comparison participants. Preliminary data support the continued theoretical and applied research exploring the overlap of trauma and grief in homicide bereavement and of intervention protocols. Findings from this study will inform criminal justice professionals, victim service workers, counsellors, family members, friends, and community members supporting those who have lost a brother or sister to murder.