Figure skaters and their families: Tensions and reflections

NASSS 2016, TAMPA, FLORIDA

CATHY MILLS (UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA)

LARENA HOEBER (UNIVERSITY OF REGINA)

Familial relationships

◦ The purpose of this paper is to examine the complexity of familial relationships both at home and at skating.

Narrative inquiry with former figure skaters

- **Narrative inquiry** (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000)
  - Sociality
  - Temporality
  - Place
  - Tensions

"Moments of narrative tension can provide insight into times when psychological and sociocultural factors interact or collide" (Carless & Douglas, 2013, p. 703)
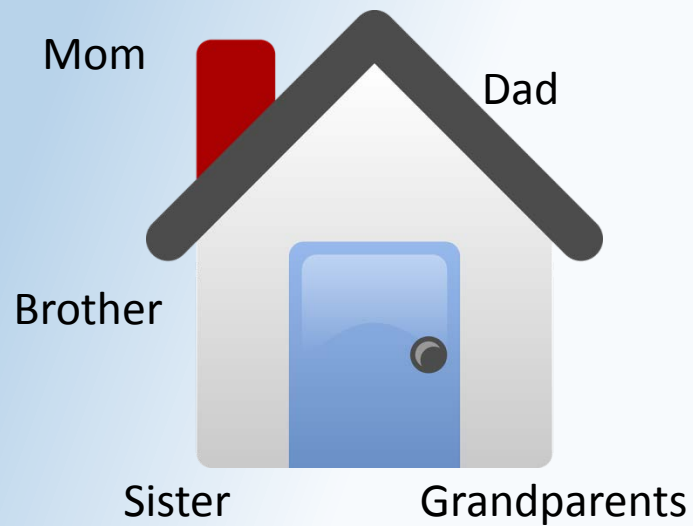
Participants

- Former figure skaters
  - 4 female & 3 male
  - Senior competitive level
  - 3-4 interviews each
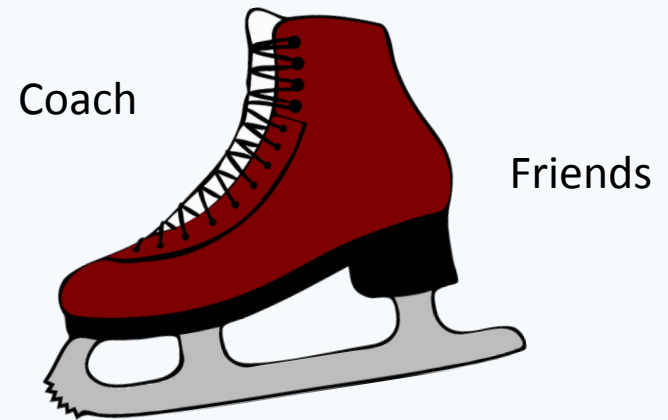
Families

'Home' family

'Skating' family

Narrative representation
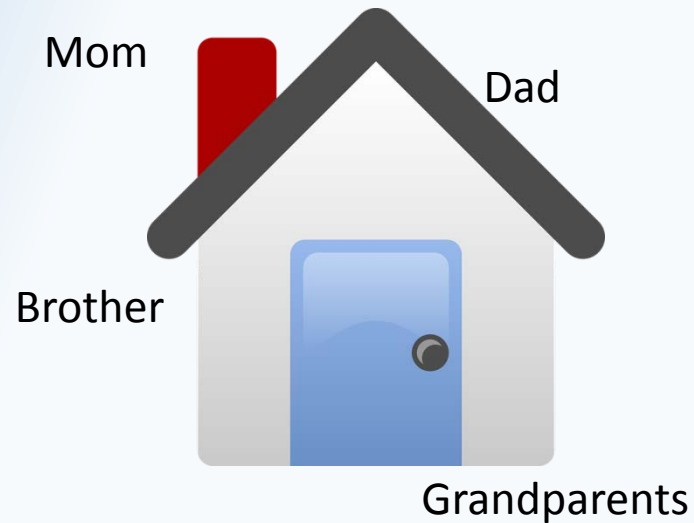
- We think with stories (Richardson, 2000)

- 2 amalgamated stories

- Not representative of every participant's stories

Home Family

Jackie's 'Home' family

Reflecting on 'Home Family'

SOCIALITY

- Conditions surrounding Jackie's participation
  - Support

- Strained relationships
  - Pressure to succeed
  - Siblings
  - Guilt

TEMPORALITY

- Ideas of support varied over time
  - Liked parents being around
  - Felt parents supported her
  - Also felt pressure from parents

- Reflecting on relationships
  - Moving away from brother
  - Yelling at her mother

Skating Family

Coach

Friends

Nathan's 'Skating' family

Reflecting on 'Skating Family'

SOCIALITY

- Skaters' experiences at the arena were social

- Bonds based on shared experiences & prolonged time with others
  - Limited relationships outside of the sport

- What if the coach leaves?

- What if your friends leave?

- What if you leave?

TEMPORALITY

- Perceptions of family changed over time

- Skating family may be temporary

Conclusions

- Two families
  - Home family
    - More tensions throughout
  - Skating family
    - Temporary / potentially more dramatic ending
- Educating parents and athletes through narratives

Thank you!
millsc1@douglascollege.ca