

From The Church Times

2nd April 2010

BFMS's position

From Madeleine Greenhalgh

Sir, — Everyone has sympathy for survivors of sexual abuse, but your correspondent Lucy Huntington ([Letters, 26 March](#)) has no sympathy for parents who are falsely accused of abusing their children decades after the alleged events are supposed to have occurred.

Quite often, but certainly not always, these false accusations arise as a result of some therapeutic or hypnotic intervention.

Far from denying the existence of child abuse, the British False Memory Society and its distinguished scientific advisory board are trying to highlight the dangers of suggestive therapeutic techniques and self-help literature that can lead vulnerable men and women to believe, falsely, that they were abused in childhood when they have no conscious memory of it.

As for her assertion, "That memory of trauma can indeed be hidden for many years," there is no credible scientific evidence to support it. Quite the opposite: memories of traumatic events are usually indelibly etched in the brain and can never be easily forgotten.