
This framework suggests that we situate men's behaviour change programs within a tertiary response, which means that men's behaviour change program cannot be seen to be single handedly responsible for the elimination of male family violence. If Governments are serious about prevention, they need to prioritise and support initiatives within both the primary and secondary responses.

Other presentations will have addressed some of the issues relating to the primary intervention strategy in addressing community awareness. What I would like to look at now is, when we undertake our work with men to prevent re-occurrence of male family violence through men's behaviour change programs, what do we know about how we need to do this.

Defining men's behaviour change programs

Firstly, I think that it's important that we have a shared understanding of what men's behaviour change programs are. NTV defines these as:

Group programs which are aimed at preventing family violence through:

- *changes in the attitudes and behaviour of male participants*
- *challenges these men can go on to make to the attitudes and behaviour of other men and*
- *challenges these men can go on to make to the overall community response to violence.*

It is important to stress that these programs are not anger management groups and don't focus on enhancing men's individual anger management and impulse control skills as the means by which to address their choice of using violence against their family members.

Philosophy and Principles for Working With Men Who Use Violence

No To Violence believes that there are some key principles that must underpin working with men within this framework (for more detail see Appendix 1). They are:

1. Understanding male family violence

- *Male family violence is largely about the misuse of power and control in the context of male dominance*
- *All forms of violence are unacceptable and must be challenged at all times*
- *Men are responsible for their use of violence*
- *Men can change and challenge other men to work for change*

2. Appropriate community responses to male family violence

- *The community response needs to be consistent and integrated at all levels*
- *Everyone affected by male family violence is entitled to support services*
- *It is valuable for women and men to work together to prevent male family violence*
- *All work to prevent male family violence must be non-violent*

3. Appropriate ways of working with men for change

- *Change is about choice and responsibility*
- *Men need to be supported and challenged to take responsibility*
- *Men require education about violence and the opportunity for personal exploration*
- *The change process is gradual and takes time*
- *Information is available from a range of sources about how to facilitate change.³*

Key Elements of Working With Men Who Use Violence

As a result of seeking to implement these philosophies and principles there are a number of primary elements of this work which we must consider. A snap shot of these includes:

1. Safety

Safety must remain the paramount concern of any men's behaviour change program – safety of the man's current or ex-partner, his and her children, and the safety of the man himself. And when we talk about program, we are talking about more than a group of men which meets once a week with professional facilitators. We are talking about key aspects such as the contacting of his partner on a regular basis to:

- Ascertain the safety of partners and children;
- Ascertain other support and information needs of partners and their children;
- Give accurate information to partners about the group program and the man's participation;
- Provide the group facilitators with information about the man's progress and any issues they need to address with him;
- Contribute to holding a man accountable for his ongoing behaviour.⁴

2. Whole-Of-Family Approach

We have recently seen a whole-of-family approach developed by a number of service providers which extends beyond partner contact to include the provision of an integrated and comprehensive range of services to all family members in contrast to an approach of separate individually streamed services. These approaches incorporate men's behaviour change programs as well as therapeutic and support groups for women, adolescents and children using either an intra-agency (i.e. 'in-house' within the agency) or inter-agency (i.e. in collaboration with one or more agency) service delivery model.

Consultations with service providers offering a whole-of-family approach indicated that the benefits of this approach were that they were better able to target specific individual needs of family members whilst complementing work being done with other members of the family. Thus they were able to avoid a number of agencies working with the family members in isolation from each other.

3. Practice Standards

It is important that there are clear and transparent standards defining quality, responsible and accountable practices and that there is an equally transparent process for the monitoring of adherence to these standards. Standards should address areas including program length, content, (ex) partner contact, assessment, qualifications for group facilitators, mandatory clients, evaluation, networking, and the development of reference groups. Standards should not be so stringent as to obstruct a range of approaches that may be beneficial to men and their family, but to provide a clear framework to avoid the dangers of working with men inappropriately.

4. Multiple Pathways For Men's Entry

There should be a diversity of pathways by which men attend men's behaviour change programs, including those within the criminal justice system. As well as the criminal behaviours of male family violence being dealt with as the crimes that they are, there is also the need for men to be directed for assessment for suitability to attend a men's behaviour change program in addition to any sentence imposed. If not assessed as appropriate, the man could be ordered to attend an intensive response program (which may include a number of one-to-one counselling sessions) to address his motivation and acceptance of responsibility for his actions. If following this program the man is subsequently assessed as suitable, he should be ordered to attend a men's behaviour change program.

Pathways should also exist for men served with Intervention Orders, as well as being incorporated into case plans developed by Child Protection Units or as ordered by the Children's Court, with entry processes similar to those above. Men within the prison system may not be able to be ordered to attend a program as part of their sentence, but programs should be provided within the prison system.

5. *Accountability*

Men's behaviour change programs must be accountable to the women's and children experience of violence. Such accountability can occur through a range of means including:

- Accountability to the (ex)partners and children who have experienced the violence from the male group participants through partner contact, partner nights, etc;
- Transparency – in terms of development of recognised standards and monitoring adherence, jurisdictional endorsed assessment and evaluation frameworks;
- Establishment of reference groups, co-ordinating committees, networking, liaison with women's domestic violence services;
- Accountability to the male client: the practice of limited confidentiality with the man, where safety overrides confidentiality, which men must agree to before attending a program;
- Mixed gender co-facilitation given the centrality of gender issues to work in the programs;
- Professional supervision;
- Organisational accountability, from line-management to Boards of Management accountability;
- Accountability to Government through established funding guidelines and reporting practices.

6. *Case Management*

Research has suggested that an effective case management process is “the glue that holds together an efficient and effective family violence program”⁵. Core functions included are assessment, planning, linking and monitoring. The practice of case management relates closely to the implementation of the whole of family approach.

7. *Evaluation*

Whilst NTV acknowledges that evaluation is an essential element of men's behaviour change program delivery, the reality is that evaluations are very rarely undertaken by providers due to a lack of funding and the complexity of the task. To date Governments have shown little interest or commitment to the development of evaluative frameworks either nationally or at a jurisdictional level. Unfortunately, there is insufficient space within this paper to go into the great number of methodological concerns relating to program evaluation which have been identified internationally.

8. *Access and Equity*

The principles of access and equity need to be addressed in the provision of men's behaviour change programs. Within Victoria there are no men's behaviour change programs operating for any culturally and linguistically diverse communities nor for indigenous men. The approach to these population groups has been ad-hoc and inconsistent.

Likewise, there have been no program responses for men with additional needs, such as managed drug and alcohol problems, intellectual or psychological disabilities.

Further, the issues of access to programs by men in rural and remote communities has received little attention. In one region of Victoria, the Loddon-Mallee region ranging from Bendigo to Mildura, there is no Government funded men's behaviour change program for men to access.

There is also the issue of inequity in the funding given to existing programs. For example, one program in a Melbourne metropolitan region may receive the region's total funding of \$45,000 yet

four other programs in another metropolitan region may be sharing a total regional funding of only \$26,000.

9. Professional Training

Working with men's violence in the family can be difficult and complex and workers require particular expertise and experience. The aim of behaviour change work with men is to prevent violence. Unless done in an appropriate manner, interventions with men have the potential to further endanger women and children, men's behaviour change group facilitators and other participants.

Behaviour change work with men is similar in some ways to other types of counselling work but very different in other ways. It carries extra risks to all involved and requires specific skills and knowledge related to family violence in general as well as particular skills for working with men who use violence.

NTV believes that men's behaviour change programs need to be staffed by people with appropriate skills and experience. In response to these needs, NTV and Swinburne University of Technology (Swinburne) developed the Men's Behaviour Change Group Facilitator's Stream of the accredited Graduate Certificate in Social Science (Male Family Violence). The initial Telephone Counselling Stream of the Graduate Certificate was accredited by Swinburne in October 1998.

The new stream will ensure that quality, specialist, skill and practice based training specific to men's behaviour change group facilitation can be made available to workers in the sector. In turn, this competency based training program will assist in the development of consistency and quality of service delivery in the sector.

10. Engaging Men

A key component of any men's behaviour change program is its engagement of men in the change process. The ability to engage men in a manner and discourse with which they can relate must avoid minimising the impact of their violent behaviour as well avoid colluding in their avoidance of taking responsibility for these behaviours. Research has shown that engaging men to reflect on their violent and abusive behaviour can face a number of obstacles:

- Opposition and resentment because you are perceived as representing criticism, authority and punishment;
- Anger and resentment at you interfering in his family's "private affairs";
- Refusal to talk (eg "It's none of your business");
- Denial that anything happened (eg "Do you really think that I could do something like that?");
- Blaming someone other than himself (eg "She provoked me, it's her that has the problem");
- Make it seem that he couldn't help himself (eg "I just snapped");
- Underplay the extent and impact of his violence (eg "It really wasn't that bad");
- Trying to get you to side with him and accept what he has done as being okay (You know what it's like!).

Research has also identified a number of other factors:

- Men may not fully understand what male family violence is nor its impact;
- In relation to sexual violence, many men focussed on issues of consent and co-responsibility rather than their own power and control
- Men often blamed external factors, such as alcohol/substance abuse and poor anger management skills;
- Many men believe violence is understandable in certain circumstances (eg discovering infidelity, constant nagging)

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- Many men may take on a 'siege mentality', believing they are persecuted and unfairly blamed for all family violence;⁶
 - Men may not locate their behaviour and experience within the family violence discourse that is used to address them;
 - Men may excuse their behaviour on a 'deficit model' arguing that dominant ideas of masculinity limit their ability to communicate in relationships, understand their role in relationships and deal with pressure;
 - Male family violence involves co-responsibility, where the man sees himself as user of violence as well as 'victim';
 - Services have an anti-male approach, are adversarial and punitive;⁷

Practitioners have also identified a number of motivators that can assist men to commence and remain within the change process:

- This is a chance to take time out, to stop and think about what they have done and its impact;
- The potential/real end of his relationship;
- The man's desire not to repeat these behaviours in future relationships;
- Regret for hurting – the man often cares about his family, does not want the incident to happen again, and acknowledges now is the time to seek assistance before it happens again;
- The detrimental impact of their behaviour on their kids as witnesses;
- The potential/real loss of contact with his children (eg children's protective services intervention);
- The men would not want their kids to grow up and behave like them;
- The criminal and legal consequences of their actions (eg charges laid, Intervention Order);
- He is not the only man who has behaved like this and sought help;
- He, like other men, can change;
- Help is available.

11. Peer Education and Leadership

No To Violence believes that men who in the past have used violence, have attended men's behaviour change programs, who acknowledge their ongoing commitment to long-term change and are now demonstrably non-violent in their interactions with partners and others, can provide positive role models for other men who are taking the first steps towards change.

Men's behaviour change groups value and gain from the experience of men who have themselves been users of violence and have worked to resolve their own issues, through men's behaviour change groups and/or other comparable experience. It is acknowledged that such men who wish to be involved in leading ongoing support/discussion groups or in co-leading program focussed groups must be involved in ongoing training and skill development.

Conclusion

And so this brings me back to the title of this conference. I must admit that at first, after being asked to speak at this conference, I thought why should I, as a man, speak at a conference entitled *Australian Women Speak*. But then I thought that when it comes to the issue of men's violence against women, when Australian women speak and their voices are heard on the issue of eliminating men's violence against women and their children, then it is important that Australian men also speak and that men's voices support the voice of women. For not only is men's violence against women and children a women's issue, but it also unequivocally a men's issue and there is

the need for work with men and the need for work by men to end violence against women and children.

References

¹ Adapted from Walsh, D “Domestic Violence in Pregnancy” (2000) Vol 1, Domestic Violence and Incest Resource Centre Newsletter.

² Adapted from Crime Prevention Victoria, Strategic Plan 2001 – 2004, and Crime Prevention Victoria Reducing Male Family Violence Working Group unpublished papers.

³ No To Violence Male Family Violence Prevention Association (NTV) Inc. Stopping Men’s Violence In The Family: A Manual for Running Men’s Groups, Volume 1, Context and Standards, Melbourne, 1995.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Terry Melvin, et al., A Study In Hope, The Multi-Site Evaluation and Developmenty of a Better Practice Model for Family Violence Services, Department of Family and Community Services, Canberra, p. 244.

⁶ Freedom from Fear Campaign Against Domestic Violence, Domestic Violence Prevention Unit, Western Australia, 1998.

⁷ Dale Bagshaw, Donna Chung, Murray Couch, Sandra Lilburn, Ben Wadham, Reshaping Responses to Domestic Violence, University of South Australia, November, 1999.

Appendix 1

Philosophy And Principles For Working With Male Violence In The Family

1. Understanding male family violence

Male family violence is largely about the misuse of power and control in the context of male dominance

NTV believes that all behaviour change work with men must be done with an awareness of the social context of male family violence. Violence often involves an attempt to exert power and control. The person using violence does so to impose his will regardless of the wishes of the other person. Male family violence is primarily used by men to control women and children. Although many people have been working for change for some time now, our social history has largely been one of male dominance in all spheres of public life, reinforced by and allowing male dominance in the family. Gender socialisation of girls and boys to accept and continue gender roles has further reinforced male dominance. In this social context until recent times male family violence was largely hidden and private and surrounded by shame and secrecy and this is still often the case. Male family violence is often condoned and colluded with and denial about the nature and extent of it and its effects is widespread. People outside the family have been reluctant to intervene, and the response of the police and the legal system has often further disempowered women by failing to offer them the equal protection of the law.

NTV is aware that there are sometimes factors other than gender involved in choices to use violence. Violence is sometimes used by women, particularly against children, and also occurs in some same sex relationships. There are also other differences in power and privilege between groups divided by factors other than gender, such as social class, race, culture, age and disability, which leave some people more vulnerable to violence. However, the majority of cases of male family violence involve violence by men against women and children, and this is the focus of the work covered by this manual. The principles for working with men's violence against women and children in the family also apply to working with other uses of violence.

All forms of violence are unacceptable and must be challenged at all times

There are many forms of violence which are used to control and disempower. They include physical forms (including sexual violence and witnessing physical violence) to non-physical forms (including verbal, social, racist, psychological or emotional, economic, spiritual and institutional or structural violence) and neglect. Although only physical, sexual and some forms of racist violence are illegal and attract criminal sanctions, other forms of violence can also have very serious and lasting effects on one's sense of self, wellbeing and autonomy.

Men are responsible for their use of violence

The use of violence is a choice each man is responsible for. Although a man may have been socialised to believe in his right to control women and children, or even have been trained to use violence, he can still choose to take responsibility and learn non-violent ways of relating. Some men who seek assistance with stopping their use of violence have also experienced violence themselves. Men's behaviour change group facilitators need to keep separate at all times the issues relating to a man's own experience of being violated and his responsibility for his own use of violence against others. Any excusing, condoning or minimising of his use of violence on the basis of his own pain and difficulties reinforces his use of violence rather than challenging it.

Men can change and challenge other men to work for change

Men can change their attitudes and behaviour and learn non-violent ways of relating. Although men who use violence do so to gain power and control with damaging effects on others, they also report a range of negative effects for themselves. These include shame, guilt, hating themselves for what they do and frustration at not having the kinds of relationships with their partners and families they would like to have. Often they feel powerless themselves and use violence to try to increase their sense of power. Clearly, although it involves giving up the misuse of power and control and the privileges of dominance, men also have a lot to gain from learning to have equal, open and non-violent relationships.

2. Appropriate community responses to male family violence

The community response needs to be consistent and integrated at all levels

The long term prevention of male family violence requires a clear and consistent message from all individuals and social agencies that all forms of violence are unacceptable and will not be tolerated.

Men need to know that their use of violence will not be condoned by anyone and that everyone will respond to protect the rights of others to safety and autonomy. This includes responses from individuals and community agencies as well as the police and legal system. The legal remedies available to protect women and children must be used consistently and be enforced.

Women and children need to know that they will be believed and that their rights will be enforced. They need to have other options available, to know about them and to be supported in making changes in their lives if they decide to do so.

If the practices of people and agencies at all levels are not consistent, men will know that they can get away with violence, and women and children will be further disempowered and lose access to options other than continuing to live with violence.

NTV supports the ongoing work of many people working for change at all levels. This includes work to challenge and change gender socialisation, to provide services to support and empower women and children, to improve community awareness about male family violence and to improve the response to male family violence on the part of health and community support agencies and the police and legal system. NTV members are keen to work with individual men in an integrated and co-ordinated way with other agencies. They are also keen to share with others their knowledge about how to work with men to facilitate change. NTV welcomes the current policy of working towards regional and statewide networking and co-ordination between services for people experiencing male family violence.

Everyone affected by male family violence is entitled to support services

All women and men are entitled to group programs and other services which are helpful for resolving their experiences of male family violence. They are entitled to accessible services and information about them. This includes people with specific needs such as those experiencing geographical isolation, those who speak languages other than English and those with substance use difficulties. NTV as a peak organisation is available for consultation and training with those who wish to establish male family violence programs for behaviour change for particular groups with specific needs.

It is valuable for women and men to work together to prevent male family violence

Women need to work with other women for support and empowerment. Men need to work with other men to facilitate change. However, men wanting to change need to know the effects of their behaviour on women, and women often want to understand why men behave the way they do.

Women and men men's behaviour change group facilitators can share this knowledge to get a rounded and more accurate picture of the complex interactions in couples and families seeking assistance with change. It is also helpful to hear the other point of view in learning about one's own gender bias and assumptions. This assists all men's behaviour change group facilitators to keep personal issues about experiences of gender clear when working with clients. Gender divisions affect everyone, and change requires communication, co-operation and the development of new and equal relationships between women and men. NTV members are committed to exploring new and co-operative ways of working together for change.

All work to prevent male family violence must be non-violent

NTV expects clients and people in the community to respect the rights of others to live free of violence. If men's behaviour change group facilitators use any forms of violence against clients or other facilitators, they invade their rights and reinforce the use of violence rather than challenging it to facilitate change. However, when necessary men's behaviour change group facilitators will use the social institutions of the police and legal system which have legitimate power to prevent, restrain and punish violence against women and children.

3. Appropriate ways of working with men for change

Change is about choice and responsibility

Men must choose to embrace change; any attempt to force them to change is a misuse of power and control. However, men's behaviour change group facilitators can confront men with the nature and consequences of their violence and the fact that they choose to use it. They can then invite men to take responsibility to stop using violence and learn non-violent ways of relating with others.

Men need to be supported and challenged to take responsibility

Men seeking assistance with behaviour change need to be given support while they explore painful aspects of their lives and behaviour and learn unfamiliar and sometimes threatening new ways of knowing about themselves and others. However, they also need to be given very clear boundaries about what attitudes and behaviour are acceptable. Once they have chosen to join a program in order to change they must be expected to take responsibility for their behaviour at all times, and be reminded when they fail to do so.

Men require education about violence and the opportunity for personal exploration

Behaviour change programs for men who are violent to family members need to educate men about the different types of violence, the misuse of power and control and the ramifications of these. Each man also needs to explore how it relates to his own life and individual change processes.

The change process is gradual and takes time

In order for men to become and remain non-violent they need to change on a number of levels, in their thinking, feeling, attitudes and behaviour. They also need to learn new skills and practise and integrate them in their lives. Once they have begun this process they often need support as they move through different phases to consolidate and maintain change.

Information is available from a range of sources about how to facilitate change

Knowledge of feminist understandings about the role of gender is crucial in male family violence work with men. There is also a need to understand other factors which affect men's lives and choices. NTV members are open to information from other theoretical sources and perspectives which may assist in developing more effective methods of working to stop violence.

References

¹ Adapted from Walsh, D “Domestic Violence in Pregnancy” (2000) Vol 1, Domestic Violence and Incest Resource Centre Newsletter.

² Adapted from Crime Prevention Victoria, Strategic Plan 2001 – 2004, and Crime Prevention Victoria Reducing Male Family Violence Working Group unpublished papers.

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