



Abused Men:

What are the implications for service provision of the report on intimate partner abuse of men?



Intimate Partner Abuse of Men Workshop Outcomes Summary

Wednesday 16 June 2010

Q1 WHAT ARE THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE RESEARCH FOR ME AND MY PRACTICE?

Gender Bias within services:

- Need to know primary aggressor, primary victim, retaliatory violence etc, so less likely to wrongly/unhelpfully connect with client
- Be prepared (service-wise) – for the male victims
- Be mindful of differences between males and females in relationships
- Need to raise awareness of the issue with staff
- Educating senior management and ensuring that message is passed on to staff
- Problem of antagonism of some organisations to the research
- Need to question own beliefs, knowledge and assumptions
- Need to be open to developing our own understandings, knowledge and experiences

Male specific Approach:

- Review policy across the board in relation to service provision so that the service can be delivered correctly for men and without discrimination.
- More male staff/facilitators are required in the sector
- Strategies to connect with male clients to facilitate self-disclosure
- Recognise male vulnerability to IPV and abuse
- Men as perpetrators must be given a chance to deeply discuss and examine themselves

Service Delivery:

- Review service practice
- Phone help lines good but insufficient for men who want face-to-face contact
- Critical to hear from victims/perpetrators face-to-face and not have to be dictated to, as a counsellor, by particular models
- Understand how men express their emotions differently to women
- Be aware of IPV also in same-gender relationships
- Proper risk assessment needs – (“common risk assessment tool”)
- Therapeutic programs may need reviewing
- Review attendance issues
- Challenge to the Duluth model
- Creation of public awareness through promotional campaign - development of visual materials (eg posters and brochures) at very least
- Is the service a male-friendly environment?

Women's Services:

- Women's movement has worked very hard to achieve what they have with women's services
- Avoid devaluing of feminist movement and their contributions
- Fear of funding cuts to women's services resulting in a loss of services

Q2 WHAT IS REQUIRED TO BETTER ENGAGE, SUPPORT AND ASSIST MALE VICTIMS?

Up-skilling service providers:

- Increase practitioner's skills so that male victims of IPV feel they can safely step into that created space, which will facilitate self-disclosure.
- Evidence base, including learning from other States
- When couples with IPV issues present themselves – have the skills and resources to offer services to each
- Understand masculinity better and how it affects reporting of IPV

Access Issues:

- List the available male victim services on MAN website
- Services to explicitly advertise their availability to male victims
- Expanding current male services to include male victims of IPV
- Promote help/support seeking behaviour by men in the context of 'men as well as women can suffer domestic violence', i.e. break down gender stereotypes.
- Terminology should be different for men (e.g not "DV") to indicate a specifically male service
- Phone help lines are good but insufficient for men who want face-to-face contact
- Further develop online services to reduce pressure on current services and reduce geographical isolation
- Reduce costs or provide free services
- Services to be made available prior to community awareness campaigns
- Offer 3 free counselling sessions for men who participate in anger management courses as one WA service currently does

Gaps in services:

- General lack of resources and inaccessibility of existing services.
- Increased funding for men's IPV services
- Early intervention/primary prevention
- Recruiting men to work in the social services
- More family dispute resolution services and anger management courses for women
- Services to re-engage fathers with their children during or after their experiences as a victim of IPV
- Refuge accommodation for male victims and their children
- More accessibility to emergency accommodation for men
- Consider issues for CALD, Aboriginal and same sex relationships

Education:

- Improved healthy relationships education, life skills, financial management, communication skills, etc
- Education in schools of healthy relationships, breaking down violence norms as a prevention tool
- Strengths based framework e.g. Respectful Relationships

Q3 WHAT ARE THE IMPLICATIONS FOR THE VARIOUS SECTORS THAT MAY ENCOUNTER A MALE VICTIM, I.E. DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, MAGISTRATES, FAMILY LAW, COUNSELLING, POLICE, HOSPITAL EMERGENCY DEPARTMENTS, DOCTORS, ETC?

Equal response versus a biased response

- Importance of equal unbiased response to male victims.
- Focus to be not gender specific
- All clients treated equally
- Overcome stereotypes – many men are victims too
- Need to listen! Biases still exist
- Need for baseline standards for perpetrator and victim services
- Deconstruct bias of female-centred health practice to ensure more males seek help
- DCP inter-agency hub to cater for male victims
- Violence Restraining Orders (VROs) to be placed on violent women to protect their partners and their children
- Collection of data (NDCS) and reporting by DCP, hospital emergency and police to include male victims
- Include male victims in the longitudinal study of men's health

Policy Development & Service Delivery

- Raise government and political awareness that male victims exist to shape policy, research and responses in the sector
- Remove systemic bias in policy and legislation (gender and racism)
- Respond to violence from a human rights framework
- Service contract boundaries
- Providing factsheets to male victims (at medical centres, family court, domestic violence court etc)
- Development of brochures and other promotional literature, including information on available services
- Community legal centres to prevent clients registering at more than one centre and thereby preventing the other party from being given assistance
- Connection/flow of information between family violence court and the magistrates court, family court, police, DCP etc needs reforming
- Eliminate system of 'perpetrators' having to plead guilty before being able to access services ... currently a self-perpetuating system
- Consistent approach in the justice system, where the outcome is not dependent on the magistrate
- Family law – dispelling myth of false allegations
- Review procedures to eliminate legal & administrative abuse
- More research on male victims and unresolved issues
- Continue research to understand victims and perpetrators of both genders
- Longitudinal studies required for both male and female perpetrators

Service availability:

- Improve the provision and availability of services to male victims of violence across the community
- Support organisations that are already working with men
- Implementation of a best practice model across service delivery
- Knowledge and training to refer male victims to appropriate services when IPV occurs
- Integrated responses by various agencies
- Regional areas – lack of services for men and women generally
- Provide services for female perpetrators
- Provide services for mutual abuse where both parties are perpetrators and victims
- More support for children and adolescents, including internet & interactive help resources
- Weekend detention as in NSW rather than Prison sentences

Sector Training

- Professional development for the staff of agencies such as police, child support, general counselling and in men's work cultures generally
- Train frontline workers on existence and appropriate response to male victims, which may require an organisational culture/attitude change
- Raise awareness within universities, TAFE and police academy of the existence of male victims
- Men to share their stories
- As minimum response – Screen for IPV for all clients – develop better male victim screening tools
- Recognise the role of alcohol and substance abuse, plus mental health in IPV

Women's Services:

- Much to learn from women's services and research.
- Need to maintain current services for women and provide new resources for male victims without jeopardising already stressed services for women

Q4 WHAT ARE THE IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COMMUNITY AND THE MEDIA?

Ongoing and Non-biased Media campaigns to reinforce positive behaviour:

- Gender neutral DV campaign is required. Close the gap, Measure up, Beyond Blue, Quit, Drink Driving are all gender neutral campaigns
- Domestic violence – zero tolerance (no need to mention gender)
- Media campaigns to provide general information on IPV across all races, religions, gender, sexuality etc
- Use diverse media forums like Facebook and Twitter
- Use media to highlight to the community what the benefits of healthy behaviour are

Specific Awareness of the male as a victim of violence:

- Raise general awareness that men are just as likely to be IPV victims, including non-violent abuse, as women are. “D.V. can happen to anyone”.
- Societal awareness of female perpetrators, leading to research and services for female perpetrators of IPV
- More IPV advertising for male specific groups and services to all parts of the community.
- Need to agitate for funding for media campaigns
- Lobbying and public education by men’s groups
- MAN’s role and other men’s organisations pivotal in the community to help build public and political will
- Steps to get employers (of males especially) interested in and supportive of the issue
- Community forums/public lectures
- Production of an educational DVD to be shown at schools

Acknowledge the media’s role and ability to influence:

- Education regarding IPV issues for journalists
- Accurate media reporting that is ethical, sound and balanced
- Problem of media & movies using IPV, often as a form of humour, to belittle men. This would not be tolerated in it applied to women
- Care needs to be taken in language used with written media when considering domestic violence in contexts involving Aboriginal, CALD, gay men and other groups

Celebrate good fathers and good male role models

- Honour the role of the father
- Positive trend towards men as better fathers and partners
- On-going need for good male role models for boys and young men
- Need for more men in public education system