

# Review of Domestic Violence Perpetrator Programmes in the UK

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# Overview

To give a brief overview of the background literature

Present findings of a review of UK domestic violence perpetrator programmes

To discuss the lack of research informed practice in this area

To discuss the implications and future directions

# Feminist Theory and Literature

Cause of IPV is gender; it is a gendered crime

IPV is driven by patriarchal values and control

Not psychopathology or personality but socially and historically constructed control – patriarchy

IPV male perpetrators are different from other offenders



# What the feminist theory and Duluth model ignores

**Risk factors** (e.g. Moffitt et al., 2001)

**Overlap between IPV, aggression and control** (e.g. Bates, Graham-Kevan & Archer, 2014)

**Sex parity and mutuality in IPV** (e.g. Langhinrichsen-Rohling, et al., 2012)

**Perceptions of IPV** (e.g. Harris & Cook, 1994)

**Same-sex relationships** (e.g. Carvalho et al., 2011)

# Issues with evaluations of current UK DVPP

Duluth informed practices in UK lack evidence of effectiveness

Issues with entry criteria and retention/attrition

Lack of attention to situation/contextual factors

Often qualitative and only using victim data

Lack of long-term follow up or lack of effect sizes reported

Small sample sizes and a lack of a control group

Duluth model experiences “immunity” from empirical evaluation

# Review of UK DVPP

Aim of the review was to conduct a review of current IPV perpetrator provision within these areas

The objective of the review was to address the following key research question: what are the characteristics of IPV perpetrator intervention programs within the UK?

This will include reviewing the population they serve (e.g. male or female; age range), source referral (e.g. court-mandated, voluntary/self-referred) and the program characteristics (e.g. curriculum informing the program).

## Method

Questionnaire – developed in US with ADVIP

Recruited from prison, probation, PCCs, online searches and charities

Responses: 21 out of 218 contacted – 10%

Further reviewed accreditation procedures within UK

## Key Findings (Descriptive)

Noteworthy reluctance to engage: “Now I know the source of the research I do not wish to respond”

Range of settings (e.g. groups) and skills (e.g. communication skills, managing emotions)

Majority approach – CBT (85.7%) and Power/control (52.4%)

Variation in length (12-52 sessions to 12-70 for high intensity)

Males only (81%) and LGBTQ specific services (14.3%)

Data: 95% did, 61.9% descriptive, only 28.6% recidivism rates and 23.8% external evaluations

# Key Findings from literature

Accreditation within the CJS; process of validating and approving interventions in a similar way to within the fields of education and professional training (MOJ, 2014)

## Correctional services Advice and Accreditation Panel

- 1) Healthy Relationships problem thinking and attitudes
- 2) Community DVP – community delivered
- 3) Integrated domestic abuse programme – community based, more feminist
- 4) Building better relationships – “provide a flexible, responsive, contemporary, and evidence-based program for perpetrators have resulted in our developing BBR”

# Key Findings from literature

## Few reviews available

### Bloomfield & Dixon (2015)

- $N = 6,695$  small but significant reductions in reoffending
- Many men still went on to reoffend - more up to date evidence around IPV and generally violent offending needs to be adopted into such programs

### Bullock et al. (2010)

- Variety in data collection – only 40/2986 collected pre, post and follow up.
- Their finding revealed there was some uneven practice in terms of program delivery with some adhering strictly to the principle and other deviating.

## Key Findings from literature – Respect

Based in feminist theory and is a strongly gendered approach

Holds men solely responsible, choose violence due to gender based entitlement

The principles here clearly state that “a willingness to choose to use violent and abusive behaviour towards a partner is influenced by learnt expectations and a gender-based sense of entitlement” (p.28)

“...denial and minimisation of abusive behaviour or any justifications for abusive behaviour including the use of drugs or alcohol”

In discussing risk management the assumption is that violence is always uni-directional

At no point is it suggested that women should be asked about their own behavior - significant influence on risk

Respect lobbies the Government and is influential in terms of policy development (Dixon et al., 2012)

# Project Mirabal (Kelly & Westmarland, 2015)

Data from women – interviews or nominal data

Comparing their treatment group with the control group they authors state that they "*largely found there to be no significant differences in reductions in violence and abuse*" (p8).

Claim successful in improvements of respectful communication, women's expanded space for action, quantitative reductions in physical and sexual violence

No pre and post analysis, lack of clarity around sample size, no consideration of women's behaviour, no effect sizes

Claims conclusions that the data cannot fully substantiate e.g. comparing all starters to completers (99 vs. 52)

Selective qualitative quotes used

Failure to ask about women's own perpetration

# Dixon et al. (2012)

Critiqued Respect's mission statement

Focused on key issues:

- Gender as cause

- Majority of men's violence

- women's violence is self-defensive

- Gender is most important risk factor

Debonnaire and Todd (2012) from Respect, wrote a commentary

Introduction of Men's Advice Line – screen of male victims who call helpline

Respect refused requests for an up to date mission statement

# Evidence Based Practice?

Lack of evidence based practice – evidence is not informing DVPP

Lack of methodologically rigorous evaluations – immune from the need

Phillips, Kelly and Westmarland, (2013) state that DVPPs have developed in the UK through “ongoing reflections on a rich diversity of practice, underpinned by a gendered analysis of domestic violence” (p.3).

Feminist models work on assumptions, not functional assessments of behavior for men and women so it is not possible to fully understand and therefore effectively intervene (Dixon et al., 2012).

# New Programmes – Inner Strength

Trauma observed in children and in partner violent men and women

Works on Emotional vocabulary, resilience, perspective taking, DBT - mindfulness, self soothing, radical acceptance, safe place. Trauma focused work, Functional assessment

Large effect sizes: effect in improving emotional regulation and reducing more unhelpful forms of coping

Preliminary findings suggest no evidence could be found to link any of the cohort with Domestic abuse reoffending since release. Ongoing data collection.

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# New Programmes – Up2U: Creating Healthy Relationships

Intervention programme for people who admit to using abusive and/or violent behaviours in their intimate partner relationship

Suitable for: Males, Females, same sex relationships

Integrating research on attachment theory, trauma informed approach, emotional deregulation

Learning from 'What Works' and Risk/Need/Responsivity

Clear assessment of risk and need through motivational interviewing – 6 sessions of assessment and engagement

2015/16 data - 115 referrals - Referrals: 80 M and 35 F

Joint abuse

# Up2U – the story so far....

## Evaluation ongoing

### Evaluation Design – Multi-site

- Random Control Trial
- Process Evaluation

## Female:

•‘I have learned how important my children are to me and that I must put them first before entering a potential domestically abusive relationship. I understand that my main trigger is trust and being lied to, so I am now making every effort to be less defensive and let people in’

## Male:

•‘I am able to control my anger and change my negative thoughts into positive thoughts, I'm taking my time in making decisions and more patient with people’

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# Research-Practice Nexus

There are significant issues around research informing practice in this area

Politics and “ideology”

Accessibility of papers? Accessibility of research?

Better communication needed – of findings but also of ongoing research, better connections need to be built

“Hold their hand”

Motivation to change and engage? Finance.

# Concluding Thoughts

Evidence against men's control theory

Still influential model in practice

There is a need for change for:

- More services for men
- Intervention for women perpetrators
- Perpetrator programmes grounded in evidence based practice and not politics

# Thank you for listening!

Bates, E. A., Graham-Kevan, N., & Archer, J. (2014) Testing predictions from the male control theory of men's partner violence. *Aggressive Behavior*, 40 (1) 42-55

Bates, E. A., Graham-Kevan, N., Bolam, L. T. & Thornton, A. J. (in press) Review of Domestic Violence Perpetrator Programs in the UK. *Partner Abuse*.

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