

# ***PRESERVING THE SILENCE: THE OUTGROUPS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE***

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# AIMS OF THE TALK

What is domestic violence and abuse

Explain the historic narrative of domestic violence research and the implications for policy makers and support services

Describe the in-group and the out-groups

What does it mean to be part of an out-group?

Barriers to support for men – current findings

Barriers to support for children – current findings

Questions

# WHAT IS DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND ABUSE

*"There are different kinds of abuse that can happen in different contexts. The most prevalent type of domestic abuse occurs in relationships. But the definition of domestic abuse also covers abuse between family members, such as adolescent to parent violence and abuse" (Gov, 2019)*

Power and control underpin all behaviours:

- Emotional abuse
- Physical and verbal
- Sexual
- Threats, intimidation, coercion
- Financial
- Belittling, humiliation

# STATISTICS

An estimated 2 million adults aged 16 to 59 years experienced domestic abuse in the last year (1.3 million women, 695,000 men; ONS, 2019)

The police recorded 599,549 domestic abuse-related crimes - an increase of 23% from the previous year (ONS, 2019)

Almost half of 18-34 year olds reported witnessing a parent being a victim of domestic abuse (Hestia, 2019)

# TITLE

This is not anti-feminist

It is anti-violence

The statistics suggest the problem remains despite considerable and sustained efforts since the 1970's. We are all indebted to those who have tirelessly worked in the field but there is more to be done.

Today we aim to raise the issues associated with adult male and child victims and the lack of focused support available to them;

and think about how this may be contributing to the continuation/escalation of the problem.

# HISTORIC WORK AND NARRATIVE

Feminist movement in the 1970s brought about an awareness of domestic violence

Focus stopping wife abuse and marital rape

Development of Gendered models (e.g., Dobash & Dobash, 1979)

Influential within research, policy and practice

Duluth Model (Pence & Paymar, 1993)

# INGROUP

Heterosexual adult female victims

Heterosexual adult male perpetrators

# OUTGROUPS

Male victims

Older adults

LGBTQ+ victims

Adolescent victims

Children in homes where violence/abuse between adults occurs

Parents with children who perpetrate violence against them

Sibling victims



# POLICY AND SUPPORT SERVICES

Our research asks participants directly about support for the outgroups.

We know the main focus of support services and policy is women and girls.

However, the failure to challenge this inequality in policy and practice may have the unintended consequence of preventing the issue of relationship violence being adequately addressed.

# MALE VICTIMS

Steinmetz (1978) “The Battered Husband Syndrome”

Conflict Tactics Scale (1979)

Bates (2019) and Weare and Bates (2019)

- Verbal, physical and sexual aggression
- Coercive control
- Impact

# VERBAL AND PHYSICAL AGGRESSION

“...throwing anything she could get her hands on from tv remotes to ornaments. I used to get punched, slapped and kicked as well”

“In the evening after any argument, always as I was about to fall asleep, she would bring up the whole argument up again. I soon learnt to just apologise for anything and everything because if I didn't I wouldn't be allowed to get any sleep.”

“There will be slapping, scratching, pushing, pulling, blocking exit from a room, spitting, sometimes kicking or throwing things.”

“She has woken up in the middle of the night hitting me”

“I was raised to never ever ever hit a woman, so I never fought back, I just covered my face and backed away from her the best I could”

# MANIPULATION AND ISOLATION

“She had to know everything thing I did at work. She'd pester me until I told her. There were no activities without her.” (P11)

“Used son, even before he was born, against me to control my behavior. Said she knew he was the only thing I truly loved and would use him to get me to do what she wanted, that she'd never let me see him if I left her.” (P89)

“Threatened to slit her throat and daughters if I didn't come back” (P152)

“I have no friends now, my wife insisted I stop socialising as I was now with her and if I loved her I would not want to spend time with anyone else.” (P41)

“I was afraid to go spend time with friends because I didn't know what kind of minefield I'd be walking into when I got back home.” (P20)

# DENIGRATION AND HUMILIATION

“The verbal abuse would go from name calling, to making fun of my looks, to insulting my friends, to telling me our child wasn't mine.” (P9)

“She wouldn't let me sleep – it was torture, she would stand over my bed at night and say nasty things and I would have to get up early for work” (P26)

“...little things like criticism and jealousy became more common place until the point of being told how unimportant I was.” (P50)

# IMPACT OF THEIR EXPERIENCES

(BATES, 2019B)

“I tried to kill myself...I ate all the sleeping pills I could find, drank a bit, and was happy that it was over. I woke up next to her, It was the worst moment in my life, I was still in hell” (P141)

“It is over and has been for 18 years but I live it as if it happens everyday due to my PTSD...I am disabled by my mental illnesses now and I am housebound. It destroyed my life and robbed me of a future. That is how it impacted me, I fear.” (P8)

“I feel alone. I have little to no friends left” (P75)

# IMPACT OF THEIR EXPERIENCES AS FATHERS (BATES, 2019B)

“4 years after I am struggling to have a relationship with the children due to parental alienation.” (P40)

“The whole experience of frequent separation from my daughter and being cynically and clinically alienated from her for almost two years was worse than any bereavement or loss I have experienced before or since.” (P33)

“I was scared to leave because I did not want to leave my son alone with her and she threatened to keep him from me and I worried the courts might enable that.” (P89)

# POST-SEPARATION (BATES & TAYLOR, 2019)



Existing research on post-separation abuse from women's literature



Bates (2019c) follow up – harassment, parental alienation and false allegations



*N*=143 anonymous online questionnaire



Preliminary analysis reveals similar themes plus:

Manipulations of systems e.g. Family Court, CAFCASS

Ongoing detrimental impact to their and their children's mental health



# ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLES

“Son is showing increasing (early) signs of stress - migraines, fear of dark and places he's unsure about, and what might be early signs of panic attacks (he's now 14yrs old)”

“Since she moved out she has continued to stalk me.”

“Post separation, I have been visited 3 times by the Police due to false allegations from my ex wife...I was surprised how each time I was assumed to be guilty simply because I am a man and the complainant was a woman”

“Continued harassment... 50,60,70 texts per day, same number of calls. Hell on earth”

“...one time she said she "could claim I raped her" that thought terrified me beyond belief.”

# IMPACT OF EXPERIENCES (BATES 2019C)

*“I don’t know how I survived that time because it was just unbelievable” (P3)*

*“I will not have a partner because I can’t trust anyone” (P2)*

*“I had trouble sleeping, I was quite anxious at times, sometimes I just was quite isolated, depression...” (P12)*

*“yeah erm I was diagnosed with PTSD when I was 30. Erm and I have severe agoraphobia with panic disorder now” (P6)*

# ISSUES WITH LEGISLATION

## Section 76 of the Serious Crime Act 2015

- Current partner
- Ex-partner but living together
- Relative

## Stalking and harassment

- Following, contacting, monitoring, loitering, spying, fear of violence
- ...that affects victim' physical and mental health

“where there is an ongoing relationship then the offence of controlling or coercive behaviour should be considered”.

# POST- SEPARATION “RECOVERY”



Photo elicitation study ( $N=16$ )



“Recovery”



Coping, moving on, living  
with...language



Individual, social and systemic factors

# POWER

*“Yes. I know, it’s, it’s funny, you could go long periods of time with everything ok, and then it would all fall apart again. And quite often there was a, an affair in there at that point, erm and [sighs] I wouldn’t say I... yeah I would say, I did stay, I stayed for the children. I didn’t maybe understand I stayed for the children but... it was made abundantly clear to me if I left I would not see my children ever again.” (P6)*

*“eventually she err, she was pregnant with NAME, my daughter, and that just opened up a whole new avenue of control. Erm... it was you know [stutters], you know, ‘You can’t leave. Don’t leave me’, you know, ‘You can’t leave me, or you’ll never see her’ and this that and the other, and it was... [Sigh].” (P8)*

# SELF-CARE

“I went into that place absolutely broken from what that girl did and I came out of the other side and I was like well do you know what? There is nothing wrong with me at all” (P1 talking about seeing therapist)

“This is a picture of erm, I think you pronounce it Helms Toot, erm, it’s in Dorset. Erm, and one of the things that the therapist said to me was erm, you need to get out into nature. Erm...you need to be in fresh air and erm, walking. Walking’s very good for you, and, and fresh air” (P2)

“I went for a nice, a nice run this morning, a ten kilometre run. I run through a local university um, it’s good meditation. I’ve always enjoyed exercise, um it, it lets my mind go um, so I think that’s um, that’s a key life boat for me right now” (P4)

# FAILURE AND SELF-BLAME

“But err, I don’t see one of, one of my children, that to me is a complete failure, I feel like a complete failure as a father. How could I not get through to her, I probably will never see her again” (P6)

“But I have abandoned him, haven’t I? I have left him in that situation” (P9)

“I suppose it was a erm...a relationship in which I was dominated. Erm it is something that I recognise that I have allowed myself. Erm I played my part in allowing that. Erm and understand a little bit more about myself following the relationship.” (P15)

# LOSS

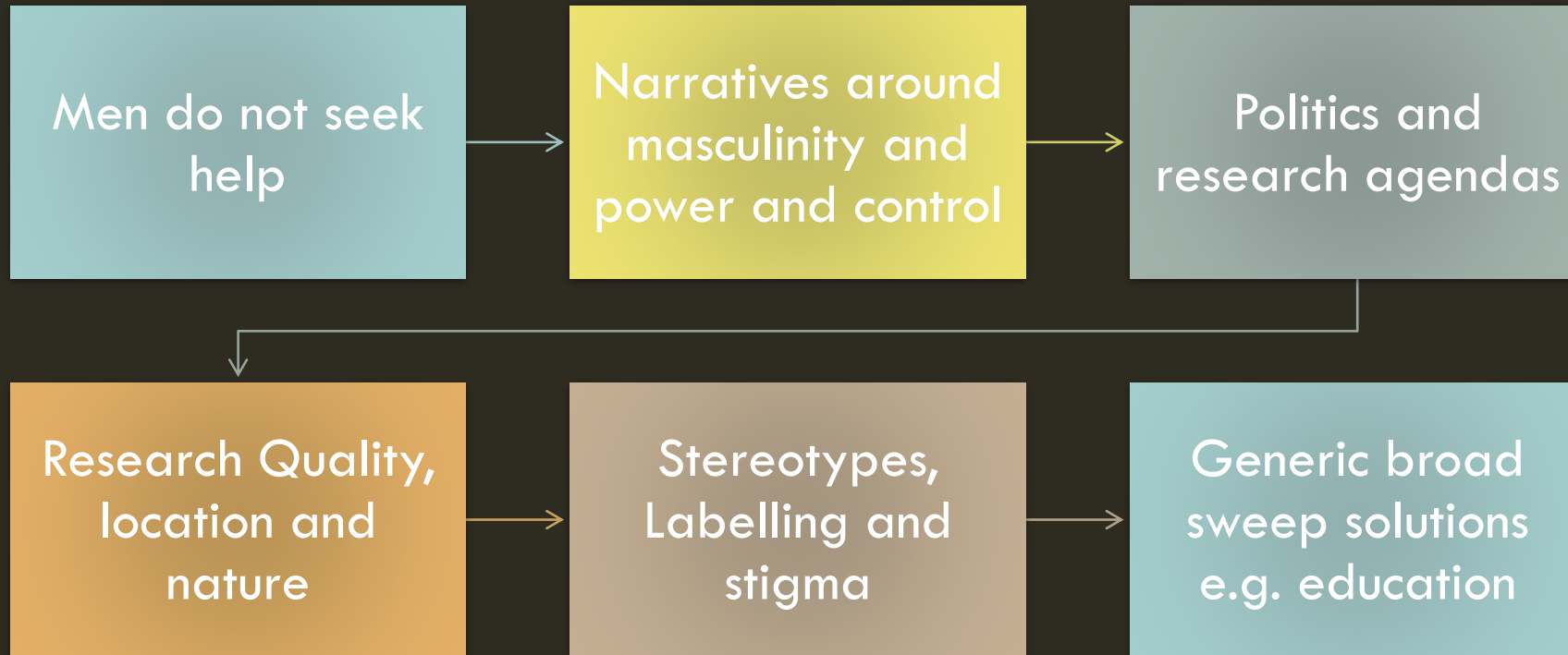
“that’s the most powerful physical representation of how this process feels that I’ve ever seen or heard of. It’s just like being hollowed out. It’s just like being a big man with a small head and no insides”(P3)

“I’ve never felt such absolute devastating loss, and I couldn’t, I couldn’t work that out. I just knew that it was highly likely that that I take, that I might give up.” (P13)

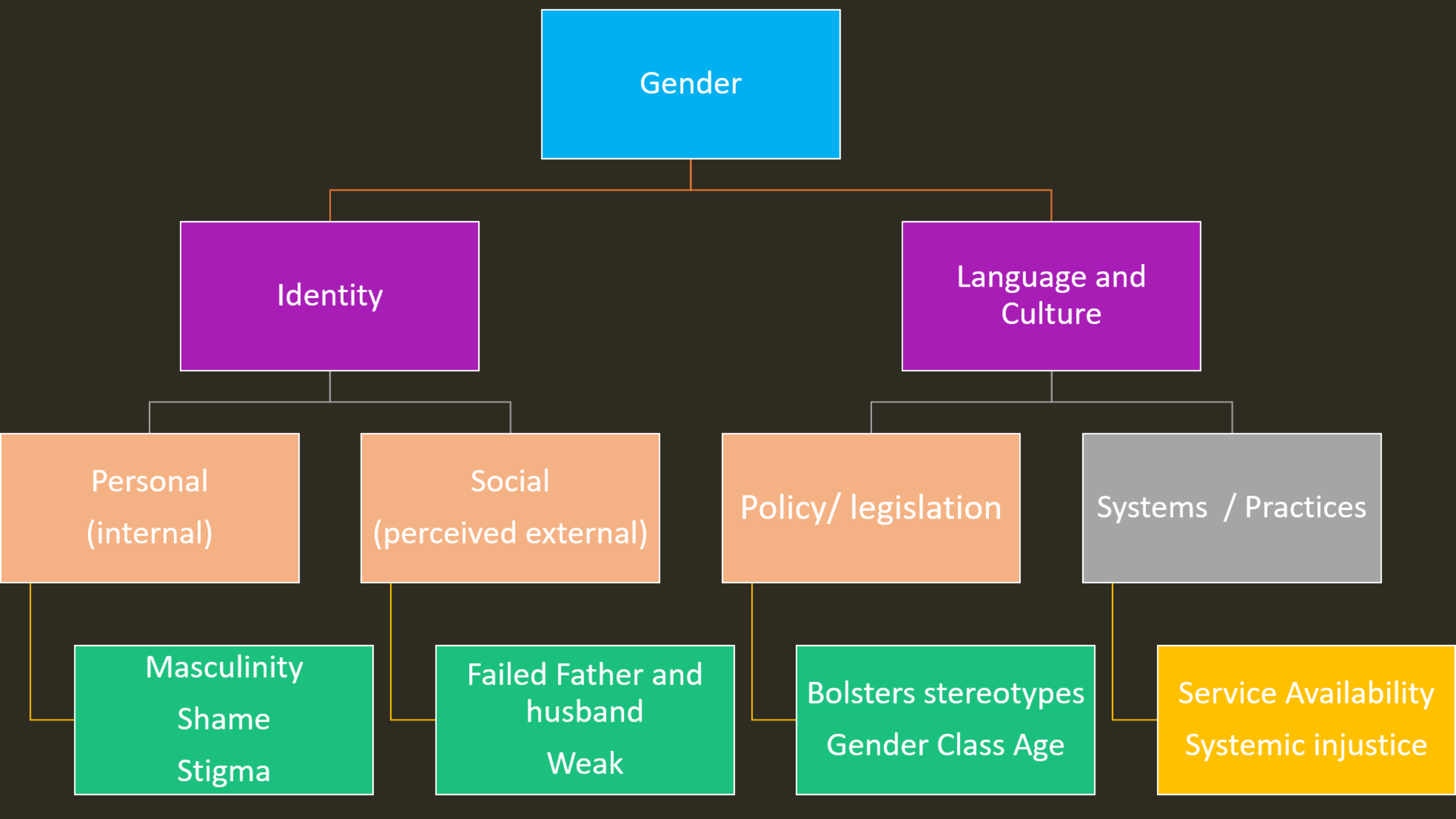


# GENDER ROLE STEREOTYPES

one of my friends was quite badly assaulted by his, by his partner, his ex-partner. And, through like the most ridiculous of circumstances. He ended up being prosecuted for it. Erm, yeah and I remember the kind of injustice of erm the CPS pushing this sort of ridiculous sort of tale through from this girl. She had, you know she claimed that she had broke her arm, she had broken bones, but there were no x-rays or anything like that to corroborate. And, regardless of this lack of evidence this poor lad was put through the mill, will he lose his job, will he go to prison and this went on for a very very long time. And, one of the things erm she said to me on the night that we broke up was erm was “right, well I will give myself as black eye and we all know who the police will believe” and that one, that one just completely broke me. Because every time I heard a car outside the house, I was right that it. That was the one thing, that was the one comment that cut me the most and because I knew she was right. (P1)



# Barriers to Help-Seeking



## **Personal Identity**

## **Social Identity**

*Felt like my manlihood would be questioned*

*I'm a **6 foot 2 ex squaddie** with a professional technology job and lots of accomplishments. Moaning about my wife beating me up could turn a friend who admired me into someone who either viewed me as a failure or suspicious that I was really to blame within minutes.*

*a man is looked upon as being the protector not the victim*

*I was very worried about the sexual allegations and other assault allegations made against as people may believe there is no smoke without fire and for a period of time became withdrawn from family and friends and depressed*

*Shame was a big factor. I felt unable to discuss my humiliation with friends and family. **I felt quite alone.***

*It was really the threat of reputation destruction that worried me most, that and the ensuring storm that would arise if she accused me of 'beating her' after she harmed herself.*

*Feeling shamed and insignificant*

*I am 6 feet tall with a black belt in karate, my ex wife is 4 feet and 11 inches tall. I was too embarrassed to talk about what I was going through.*

# LANGUAGE AND CULTURE

## Policy

## Systems and Practices

That I would be believed but the policy is all about women

David Cameron “Absent fathers are as bad as drink drivers”

Publicity and recognition that men are victims too, in policy and practice

Recognition that men are victims too.

Some confidence that safeguarding systems are interlinked, that doctors would talk to social workers, that schools would be involved and that each party would be given a fair hearing but the sad reality is that the medical, educational, legal and social services first priority at all times is to ‘cover their own ass’ every other issue is entirely subordinate to self preservation to the detriment of the people they purport to put first.

The police immediately & aggressively arresting me, whilst letting the actual tyrant go?

There should be consequences for organizations that don't offer help to men

Its cultural, system is designed to blame the male

It's the woman portrayed as victim, posters, webpages, all deal with women as victims of Domestic Abuse

# RESEARCH: CHILDREN (BOYS AND GIRLS)

Constructed as witnesses not victims

Implies they are not directly affected by the violence/abuse they observe

Implies that DVA does not pervade the home, rather it punctuates it

Solutions focus on parenting classes

The trauma of their experiences is rarely addressed

They have rarely disclosed their experiences or been asked to

Nobody asks them how they feel or are coping

Services fail to appreciate the love they often have for both parties and the complexity of their feelings

Teenage boys rarely welcomed into shelter – Sophie's choice

The literature all focuses on negative outcomes – fails to consider the strengths and qualities (Callaghan et al., 2017; Katz, 2016; Kimball, 2016; Øverlien, 2017).

# RESEARCH FINDINGS SUGGEST....

That **children who grow up in families** affected by **domestic violence** and abuse are at:

Higher risk of mental health difficulties throughout their lives (e.g. Peltonen, Ellonen, Larsen, & Helweg-Larsen, 2010),

Elevated risk of physical health difficulties (e.g. Bair-Merritt, Blackstone, & Feudtner, 2006);

Higher risk of dropping out of school (e.g. Willis et al., 2010);

Higher risk of involvement in criminal behaviour (e.g. Gilbert, Farrand, & Lankshear, 2012)

More interpersonal difficulties in intimate relationships and friendships (e.g. Siegel, 2013).

More likely to be bullied and to engage in bullying themselves (e.g. Lepistö, Luukkaala, & Paavilainen, 2011)

More vulnerable to sexual abuse and exploitation, and becoming involved in violent relationships themselves (e.g. Turner, Finkelhor, & Ormrod, 2010).

There may also be lasting neurological impact (e.g. Choi, Jeong, Polcari, Rohan, & Teicher, 2012)

# TAYLOR, BATES AND CALLAGHAN (ONGOING)

Questionnaire (qualitative) n=56

PE Interviews n=10

Retrospective (18 years and over)



# EXPOSURE

*My mother was physically, emotionally and sexually abused by my father and I witnessed this.*

*When I was younger, I watched my mum get beaten by my dad.*

*At first I thought nothing of the abuse, I thought it was normal as it was all I knew. It wasn't until we moved away that I started to realise that it was not normal.*

*My mum went through domestic abuse for just over ten years. My father was an incredibly violent man who did not hide his abuse from me and my brother. We lived in a dangerous home environment.*

*The mother was a verbally, emotionally and occasionally physically violent person. Not only to me but also to her husband and son. Decades of shrieking, screaming, slaps, scratching, put-downs, sneers, belittling... I hated her*

# ABUSERS : MALE, FEMALE

Male

Female

Biologically related to child

Parents, step-parents, grandparents

Bi-directional

# DISCLOSURE AND SUPPORT

Hidden

Normalised

Fear

None

ChildLine

Services dealt with parents

# INTERVIEWS (SO FAR..)

Reinforced the trauma, isolation, mental ill health, physical ill health

Some signs of recovery after help-seeking as adults but significant on-going relationship challenges reported.

High levels of anxiety

We were the first people that had asked !!

# QUESTIONS...?

Sharing this link to a questionnaire on experiences of domestic violence. In this new study Dr Julie Taylor; Dr Elizabeth Bates and Professor Jane Callaghan are exploring the experiences of people who have at some point in their childhood or adolescence lived in a home where there has been domestic violence and abuse. Please click the link to find out more & take part: [Link to Questionnaire](#)

# FORTHCOMING BOOKS AND EVENTS

London seminar – April/May 2020

Conference May 21st 2020 Fusehill Street

Bates, E.A. and Taylor, J.C. (2021). *Domestic Violence: Experiences of Men and Boys*.

Taylor, J.C. Bates, E.A. and Callaghan, J. (2021). *Children and adolescent's experiences of violence and abuse at home: current theory, research and practitioner insights*.

# THANK YOU!

Any questions?

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