

Bates, Elizabeth ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8694-8078> , Graham-Kevan, Nicola, Bolam, Lauren T. ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1520-0318> and Thornton, Abigail (2016) Review of domestic violence perpetrator programmes in the UK. In: British Psychological Society; Division of Forensic Psychology Conference, 14-16 June, 2016, Brighton, UK. (Unpublished)

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Review of Domestic Violence Perpetrator Programmes in the UK

Dr Elizabeth Bates

Elizabeth.Bates@cumbria.ac.uk

Dr Nicola Graham-Kevan, Lauren Bolam
& Dr Abigail Thornton

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



How does it impact perpetrator interventions?

Duluth: first multi-disciplinary program

Re-education not treatment

Men's violence understood as not "stemming from individual pathology, but rather from a socially reinforced sense of entitlement." (Paymar & Barnes, ND)



The Duluth Model



Pence & Paymar,
(1993)

Developed by activists
with 5 battered
women and 4 men

IPV is men's use of
patriarchal power and
control - political

Effectiveness

Research shows it is unsuccessful – e.g. Babcock et al. (2004) meta-analysis ($N=22$) found minimal effects.

Effect sizes close to zero (Jewel & Wormith, 2010)

Feminist researchers speak more favourably (e.g. Gondolf & Jones, 2001) – issues with evaluation design

Others grounded in evidence based practice (e.g. Dutton & Corvo, 2007) are more critical and using different methods have demonstrated different outcomes

What the 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 DVPP

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 (part of larger review)

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

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 – “next stage”

Few reviews available

- Bloomfield & Dixon (2015) $N = 6,695$ small but significant reductions in reoffending – many men still reoffended
- Bullock et al. (2010) – variety in delivery and data collection – only 40/2986 collected pre, post and follow up

Key Findings from literature

Respect accreditation

- Based in feminist theory

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

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

Project Mirabal (Kelly & Westmarland, 2015)

- Data from women – interviews or nominal data

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

Key Findings from literature

Dixon et al. (2012) critiqued Respect's mission statement

Focused on key issues: gender as cause, majority of men's violence, women's violence if self-defensive, gender is most important risk factor

Respect refused requests for an up to date mission statement

Men's Advice Line

Evidence Based Practice?

Lack of evidence based practice – evidence is not informing DVPP

Lack of methodologically rigorous evaluations – immune from the need

Lack of available DVPP for women or LGBT community

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

Contact: Dr Nicola Graham-Kevan: Ngraham-Kevan@uclan.ac.uk

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

Individual Needs

Programme 6 – 40+ weeks

1-2-1 or group

High intensity 2 sessions per week

Modules

- Thinking, Feeling and Behaviour
- Relationships (Transactional Analysis)
- Skills for Change (emotional regulation)
- Skills for Change 2 (Complex Emotions)
- Substance Misuse
- Sexualised Behaviours
- Stalking Behaviours

Up2U – the story so far....

2015/16 data - 115 referrals

Referrals: 80 M and 35 F

Joint abuse

Evaluation ongoing

University of Portsmouth – Dr Dominic Pearson, Dr Claire Nee

Evaluation Design – Multi-site

- Random Control Trial
- Process Evaluation

Completer Comments

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'

Amy.Ford2@Portsmouthcc.gov.uk

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

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Elizabeth.Bates@cumbria.ac.uk

01228 616328