

REFLECTIONS ON DOMESTIC PEACE:

How the States' response to domestic abuse is evolving

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Executive Summary

Through my work as an IDVA and various other roles working with the issue of domestic abuse, I have become frustrated with the limited responses available to people who are abused, people who abuse and the children witnessing the abuse.

In the UK, we have a highly effective and well-evaluated response to high risk victims in crisis (see the report 'Safety in Numbers' at www.caada.org.uk) but we are limited in our responses to moderate risk, early interventions, engagement with perpetrators and family-focused approaches. We also rely heavily on the Duluth Model as the 'one size fits all' solution; and this may be limiting our ability to respond effectively to people who do not fit this model.

I applied to the WCMT to look at the development of the domestic violence field in the USA to see if it offered any new solutions.

As predicted, the States have pockets of innovative work that are addressing these limitations. There is recognition that working with the couple or the family as a whole may prove fruitful, that understanding and engaging the perpetrator more effectively could provide answers and that broadening out the power and control paradigm may throw up more solutions to a more nuanced problem.

Many organisations in the States have started to re-vision and re-frame the issues. They are widening out their remit to encompass the solution; healthy families, domestic peace and non-violence in all spheres of life. In re-framing the issues, they are finding new partners, more resources and wider scope for problem-solving.

The States are the original 'Big Society'. They are successfully harnessing the energy of the community in order to find community-led solutions to domestic violence. There is recognition of the limitations of solely relying on state interventions to address the issue of domestic violence and there is a strong will to explore the use of restorative practices in order to heal the family rather than necessarily break the family apart.

Interestingly, the States are looking to The Men's Movement to galvanise the male population in addressing this issue. Engaging men as allies, bystanders, perpetrators and fathers, they are advancing the dialogue about why men abuse and what can be done about it.

In conclusion, a 'one size fits all' approach to the issue of domestic violence is too limiting and a broadening out of thinking about the issue would prove beneficial. I have outlined a number of key lessons from the States at the end of this document.

Winston Churchill Memorial Trust

The Winston Churchill Memorial Trust was established when Sir Winston Churchill died in 1965. Thousands of people, out of respect for the man and in gratitude for his inspired leadership, gave generously so that a living memorial to the national hero could benefit future generations of British people. This fund now supports 100 Travelling Fellowships and ten Bursaries at Churchill College Cambridge, each year based on the Trust's objective of:

“The advancement and propagation of education in any part of the world for the benefit of British citizens of all walks of life in such exclusively charitable manner that such education will make its recipients more effective in their life and work, whilst benefiting themselves and their communities, and ultimately the UK as a whole”.

The Trust's objective for the Travelling Fellowships is to provide opportunities for British citizens to go abroad on a worthwhile enterprise of their own choosing, with the aim of enriching their lives by their wider experience – through the knowledge, understanding, and/or skills they gain - and, on their return, enhancing the life of their community by their example and the dissemination of the benefit of their travels.

**Sir Winston Churchill,
a national hero,
who led Britain to
victory in the Second
World War.**



Mapping My Trip



1. STEPS , Edwin Gould Services for Children and Families, Lucia Riveccio (Director)
2. .CONNECT NYC, Kala Ganesh (Director)
3. Family Wellness Centre, Children's Aid Society, Kerry Moles (Director)
4. Peace Circles, NYC Centre of Violence and Recovery, Yael Shy (Asst to Director)
5. Non Violent Communication and Intro to Restorative Justice Retreat, Aryoloka Buddhist Retreat
6. Centre for Domestic Peace, Jennifer Lees (Director for TC-TAT)
7. Mankind Initiative, Centre for Domestic Peace
8. 5th Annual Liberation-Based Healing Conference, Austin Texas
9. Project SARAH, New Jersey,
10. Institute for Family Services, New Jersey, Rhea Almeida (Director)
11. Institute for Fatherhood
12. Domestic Violence Surrogate Dialogues, Portland, Oregon
13. Creative Interventions, Oakland, CA

** SEE APPENDIX FOR WEBSITES

Emerging Themes

A meeting-by-meeting account of my trip can be read at the blog I wrote whilst I was travelling (www.domestic-peace.blogspot.com). For this report, I will outline the over-arching themes that ran throughout the majority of my interactions and reflect on lessons learnt.

Firstly, I would like to put the organisations I meet in context in the field of domestic violence in the US. Because of the complicated legal framework of the United States of America it is impossible to generalise about the current trends in the States. Most U.S. law consists primarily of state law, which can and does vary greatly from one state to the next.

But in general terms, the mainstream practice around the treatment of people who have been affected by domestic violence has taken a similar trajectory as in Britain. Indeed, it was thirty years ago this year that Ellen Pence set up the Domestic Abuse Intervention Program in Duluth, Minnesota which produced the Duluth Model that underpins most domestic violence crisis work in the UK today. The Duluth Model works to engage legal systems with human service agencies to create a distinctive form of organised public response to domestic violence. Consequently, as in the UK, domestic violence advocacy has become embedded into the criminal justice system and other institutions in the US.

However, the majority of the organisations I visited were left of the mainstream, working to promote interventions outside of the system. Some work was being done in mainstream organisations, like the Family Wellness Program, but the more innovative aspects of the work did not get any funding; rather it was being done in the workers spare time in order to affect change. As often is the case, change of practice comes before change in funding streams. Likewise, much of this work is new and unevaluated.

LIMITATIONS OF THE CURRENT SYSTEM

All the people I meet spoke of a frustration with the heavy reliance on state-intervention as a means of keeping individuals safe. They talked of the costs and limitations that had come with becoming 'professionalised' and part of the system. There was a strong recognition that naming the problem and engaging with the system with a common language has been essential to the battered woman's movement but there was a sense that it is time for the movement to evolve and become more 'big thinking'.

Many people who have been abused want to avoid state interventions to domestic violence for many different reasons. The intersection of domestic violence with ethnic identity, substance misuse, mental health, immigration, sexuality, disability, poverty and other compounding issues can often make the interaction with the criminal justice system and the child welfare system more challenging and people can feel re-victimised. Obviously, improvements and reforms within the systems that are in place are desirable but the criminal justice system as a whole serves to keep the 'blame' culture alive.

The law asks three questions:

What law was broken?

Who's to blame?

How do we punish this person?

There is little focus on repairing the harm to the victim or transforming the person who has abused. Also, there is little recognition that violence is rife in our society, not just an issue between two intimates.

Also, many victims of abuse don't want to get their partner arrested and want to stay with their partner – but without the violence.

REFRAMING THE ISSUE

Many of the organisations I visited are changing their focus of making individual victims safer to fundamentally changing the world, in order to make all victims permanently safer. They are changing their names and changing their vision statements to reflect this. So new, inspiring names such as 'Center for Domestic Peace', 'Connect: Safe Families, Peaceful Communities' and 'Family Wellness Center' are replacing the old, 'problem focused' names such as 'Marin Abused Women's Services (MAWS)'. They are starting to refocus onto the end result.

MAWS (Marin Abused Woman Services) are considered one of the national leaders in domestic violence in the States. They started off as a shelter 30 years ago and slowly grew to include advocacy work, perpetrator programmes, transitional housing, support groups, professional training, Domestic Violence Co-ordinating council etc. You name it, they've got it. They now have a huge spectrum of services under one roof and all the different sections pull in the same

★ The Center for Domestic Peace

Statement of Purpose: "We mobilise individuals and communities to transform our world so domestic violence no longer exists, creating greater safety, justice and equality."

The Center for Domestic Peace offers a wide continuum of services; including 24/7 advocacy, batterer intervention groups and transitional housing. They also host Transforming Communities –Technical Assistance and Training (TC-TAT). TC-TAT was created ten years ago to address the root cause of the problem and promote social change. Jennifer Lee, TC-TAT Project Manager says, 'If you change the social norms of the community and society then there will be no more violence. We have got to make this our focus. In our view, patriarchy is the root cause of power and control issues and this is where we need to start'.

TC-TAT serves as a technical assistance, training and resource centre for the advancement of new practices, learning, and skill development in domestic violence prevention. TC-TAT vision is to strengthen the collective efforts of domestic violence and allied organisations to ameliorate the effects of domestic violence and to prevent such violence. They utilize cluster workshops, training institutes and Training the Trainers to achieve their goals.

direction – sharing the same vision, sharing the same goals and sharing the same data.

Nothing much new there – part from the seamless service. But ten years ago they added a third strand to their work: Social Transformation .

Under this banner comes their innovative Transforming Communities. At Transforming Communities prevention is their sole business – it's at the heart of the matter. The only way to fully prevent domestic abuse happening is to eradicate it.

This all seems to chime with the Coalition's Strategy outlined in 'A Call to end Violence to Women and Girls'. It's putting prevention and gender back at the heart of the matter.

This re-focusing broadens out the remit. In focusing on the issue of power and control in society at large, it calls for a socially just society for all. The movement in the States is starting to look outwards towards collaborations with other social equality movements like the Peace Movement.

The Center for Domestic Peace launched a county-wide initiative to end domestic violence by issuing an 'Individual Peace Agreement' to every citizen (see overleaf). Psychological research shows that people are more likely to change if they articulate and commit their goals in writing. In addressing the broad public, rather than an identified 'perpetrator', they hope to achieve a ground-swell of support to end violence – and engage the wider community in addressing the issue.

Individual PEACE Agreement

In signing this **peace agreement**,

I **believe** these statements.

I realize that a mixture of **education**, changing relationships, **negotiation**, and

dialogue will be necessary to achieve the personal and societal

transformation reflected in these agreements.

Center FOR DOMESTIC PEACE®

Home of Marin Abused Women's Services

Starting today I will:

- 1) Acknowledge and accept responsibility for not always practicing healthy behaviors in my relationships.
- 2) Immediately end any form of physical violence that I may have been committing.
- 3) Educate myself about all forms of domestic violence and abuse outlined as the PEEVS (Physical, Emotional, Economic, Verbal, Sexual, Spiritual, and Stalking forms of abuse). *[SEE REVERSE]*
- 4) Learn more about my own behaviors and how they may appear unreasonable, abusive, or threatening to others, respecting those who offer me insights.
- 5) Eliminate any form of the PEEVS toward my partner, former partners, children, and others.
- 6) Hold myself accountable and make amends to others, if appropriate, for the harm my behavior has caused.
- 7) Seek assistance to stop my behaviors if I begin to falter in this Peace Agreement.
- 8) Educate others (my partner, children, co-workers) about this Peace Agreement and invite them to sign.
- 9) Promote social policies and practices that create more opportunities in support of domestic peace for youth and adults.
- 10) Contact Center for Domestic Peace if violence occurs in my interpersonal relationships or community and if I need assistance understanding what to do to "take action."
- 11) Expand my commitment to equality in all my relationships by valuing and respecting diversity inclusive of gender, race, age, class, and sexual orientation.

By making these agreements and living by them, I create and maintain healthy and equal relationships for myself, my partner, my family, and my community.

SIGNATURE

DATE

WITNESS

BUILDING A SOCIAL MOVEMENT

Both TC-TAT and CONNECT: Safe Families and Peaceful Communities work to build a social movement to affect social norms change. They look at Social Movement Theory to see the most effective way to bring about this change.

Wiki definition: Social movements are a type of group action. They are large informal groupings of individuals and/or organisations focused on specific political or social issues, in other words, on carrying out, resisting or undoing a social change.

The Californian Department of Public Health have funded a large part of the preventative work that TC-TAT has implemented. Consequently, TC-TAT have looked to the public health model to see how it affects change in behaviour in their health campaigns – for example, substance abuse and tobacco consumption. These campaigns have been very successful for individual behavioural change but the model has limitations as it does not work on a community and societal level. Domestic Violence as an individual health issue doesn't address the wider societal issue of power and control.

So TC-TAT has gone full circle and has looked to one of the most successful social change movements in history - The Battered Woman's Movement. This started off at grass roots level and was created by the community who had the problem; survivors of abuse housed victims of abuse in a national network that became the refuge system. It was a tremendous feat of community mobilisation. Much like the other highly successful social movement that changed society; the Civil Rights Movement that was galvanised into action by one brave girl refusing to leave her seat on the bus - the battered women's movement started from one individual's action.

According to Social Movement Theory, the energy generated by such activities sparks similar efforts in other communities, eventually creating a large scale movement that links community to community.

As Donna Garske, Director at Centre for Domestic Peace, states, 'Understanding how social movement evolve, analyzing where our movement has come from, and forging new partnerships with other justice movements will help us develop ever more creative, democratic, and cost-effective solutions to the problem of violence against women.'

TRANSFORMING COMMUNITIES

THROUGH COMMUNITY ACTION

Community mobilisation,
community engagement,
community activism,
community
organisers/leaders,
community solutions,
community-based
interventions....

The key message I was
hearing over and over
throughout my meetings

was about the role of community in effecting change. The idea that particular communities hold their own solutions to the problem of domestic violence is gaining momentum. Preventative work is being carried out by the community for the community and the role of the domestic violence agency is to provide 'enablers' for the community to become active in the field.

★ *CONNECT: Safer Families,
Peaceful Communities*

Vision: The realization of a society based on mutuality, respect and social justice where institutions are accountable, communities are peaceful, families are safe and individuals are empowered.

CONNECT is dedicated to ending family and gender violence. Through a holistic combination of prevention, education and early intervention programs, they work within families and communities to transform the beliefs and behaviors that fuel patterns of abuse.

CONNECT established CONNECT Training Institute (CTI) to expand the number of community leaders and professionals with an in-depth awareness of the complex dynamics of family violence. Participants return to their communities with a transformed understanding of power and control, gender and the full range of consequences from violence. CTI graduates use their insights to create new community resources for prevention and early intervention in settings such as workplaces, schools, healthcare centres and faith communities.

CONNECT's Community Empowerment Program assists communities in designing violence prevention and early intervention strategies to meet local needs. Premised on the notion that individuals hold the power to change their communities, the program holds neighbourhood forums to raise awareness and build trust.

So, both CONNECT Training Institute (CTI) and TC-TAT exist as training, technical support and capacity building organisations. This means, for example, that they don't attempt to train every single person in their community to raise awareness around the issue of domestic violence. They see this as exhaustive and a poor use of resources – it is unsustainable. Rather they provide the technical know-how to affect change and then collaborate with community leaders/ activists to provide the solutions for their own communities – in this way capacity is built.

For example, both organisations work very closely with Faith groups in their community. CONNECT facilitate a Theological Roundtable in which religious leaders and organisers come together to discuss the issue of domestic violence in their communities and how they will address it. They identify who might be an agent of change in the religious community, collaborate with the leader on how the community would best receive the information, provide training on how to communicate the message to the community and then provide the technical assistance on how to deliver that strategy. So they are building up capacity with a view to working themselves out of a job.

As Kala Ganesh, Director of Connect, states 'we're not the experts in how your community responds – you tell us how they respond and how they listen and we'll provide you with the tools to deliver it.'

Every person who trains at CTI will have an intensive four-day core training to provide the foundations of knowledge about domestic violence; then they will have specialist training around *how* to deliver their message after that based on their particular field.

For example, the Women's Empowerment for Survivors and Victims is for professional people and people from the community working with women victims and survivors. It looks at how family violence shapes personal and social lives, and teaches techniques for empowering and healing victims. Throughout the course, participants are writing their own curriculum for their own communities. Kala Ganesh explains, 'Out of each training there are 8-10 new curriculums that pop up and spread out into the community. One African woman wanted to train informally in her front room, one wanted to write a curriculum for her fellow-workers to deliver in lunchtime, one wrote a curriculum for young south-asian, LGBT youth. After the course we meet monthly to see how the groups are going and to offer support.'

Likewise at TC-TAT , they train up organisations who are committed to implementing a community mobilisation strategy in their own community. So, they offer courses about Community Mobilisation, How to Facilitate Community Action Teams, Enhancing Collaboration, Leadership and System Change Work. Jennifer Lee states, 'It isn't enough to change the opinions of a few key professionals or leaders (although that is also important). Empowering 'ordinary people' to act on their values and beliefs in safety and justice will create a more lasting, deeper change in our society than any single policy shift....At Transforming Communities we put community empowerment at the heart of our approach. A community's 'collective ability to envision and take action to create the positive social change it desires is as good a definition of

empowerment as any – and it the backbone of the most promising strategies for a violence-free future.'

TC-TATs Community Action Teams (CATs) are small groups of volunteers, with or without staff facilitators, who organise specific local campaigns for safety and justice. So, for example, TC-TAT provided support and leadership for two CATs in Novato – the Media CAT and the Teen CAT. The Media CAT publishes a monthly newspaper column and has successfully campaigned for the retraction of offensive advertisements in media. The Teen CAT has produces a video and study guide on teen relationship abuse and teen activism, entitled 'Abuse- NO Way!'. They also host an internet 'chatroom' for discussion and problem solving.

Case Study:

Peer Organisers keep Neighbourhoods Safe by Mobilising Within

Monserrath emigrated from Ecuador to the US in 1990. After starting a family she became interested in civic leadership, but struggled to find a role that allowed her to communicate in Spanish.

Noting her desire to work to improve the welfare of her neighbourhood, Monserrath's Church recommended her for CONNECT's Peer Organising Gender Education Program (POGE), a network that prepares individuals to do outreach work around intimate violence. After completing the POGE curriculum, Monserrath was armed with information to raise awareness and had built the confidence, savvy and skills to interface with community members on this charged topic.

Monserrath handed out information all over her neighbourhood; speaking with her daughter's teacher and school nurse, posting flyers in local laundrettes, hair salons and international calling phone booths. "It was an unforgettable experience, to have the opportunity to help my community", she says.

POGE combines education, training, support and guidance to empower participants to change the culture around family violence in their community. Using these tools and resources, trainees can create strategies to raise awareness and mobilise their community around intimate violence.

"Change must come from within a community in order for it to have lasting results" says CONNECT liaison Patricia Martinez. "Our organisers come from Bolivia, Chile, Colombia...they know what engagement strategies work best for their own communities here in New York."

Martinez worked with Leader Trainer Rosanna Ramirez to select participants for the POGE pilot. They asked partner organisations like churches and cultural centres to identify someone who had the potential for activism. Those selected went through an 18 hour curriculum addressing various issues and skills; including gender roles, active listening and group leadership.

Later, each trainee conducted over 40 hours of community work, ranging from informal conversations with other women on warning signs of family violence, to speaking out in community affairs, to giving referrals to crisis centres.

They are building a network of community leaders. "As women in my community found out about what I was doing, they would open up and tell me what had happened to them", says Peer educator Mariol. "My neighbours used to know me as the Avon lady, now they know me as the woman who knows about domestic violence."

ENGAGING MEN

Most of the organisations I spoke to are attempting to engage men with the issue of domestic violence- as perpetrators, allies and agents of change. I also spoke to and heard about a whole host of grass-roots, community-based men's organisations addressing the issue of masculinity and violence.

It's worth noting here that women also abuse their partners, but as the majority of serious domestic violence and homicides are inflicted by men on women, I concentrated on the specific issue of male violence.

ENGAGING MEN WHO ABUSE

Many of the organisations who have started life as a victim service are starting to engage on the subject of men who abuse. Why do they abuse? How can they be assisted to change? Whilst there are no real answers to these questions yet, there is a willingness to think outside of the box and speak difficult truths. Effectively working with the perpetrator is starting to be seen as central to ensuring women and children's safety – and stopping the inter-generational cycle of abuse.

One difficult truth is that, although power and control may underpin the actions of perpetrators, there are all different motivators as to why someone wants to gain power and control over another. Esther from the New Jersey Jewish Family Services put it like this, 'You can't lump perpetrators all together and think the same treatment will work for everyone. Here, we categorise them as the good, the bad and the ugly. This informs the way we work with them and their families.' Whilst this description may be quite glib, it does touch on the important distinction that some men are genuinely remorseful for their behaviour, some men learn their behaviour from their parents, some men really want to change and some men have become so brutalised by life that they are beyond

assistance and need to be locked up to keep people safe. But at present, we only have one limited response to men who are seeking to change.

Kerry Moles, at The Family Wellness Program, chairs the newly formed Coalition on Working with Abusive Partners (CoWAP), a working group of victim and offender services in NYC addressing the issue of limited responses to perpetrator behaviour.

CoWAP is developing an assessment tool for perpetrators. In the same way that victims risk is assessed by DASH, the perpetrators risk score would outline the perpetrators triggers, the level of risk of harm to another, their social history and their readiness to change. Kerry explains, 'While models for batterer's "typologies" are still being explored, understanding the individual characteristics of an abusive partner gives us a better opportunity to

Multiple Factors Affect the Development of Abusive Behaviour

"It is incorrect to assume that 'one-size-fits-all' when it comes to interventions for abusive partners. The dominant models of batterer's intervention primarily focus on anti-sexist education and the promotion of equality on relationships. While challenging sexism is a key element of our efforts to end domestic violence, we believe it is overly simplistic to attribute intimate partner abuse to sexism alone. All men are socialised in the same system of patriarchy, but most men are not abusive. If we truly want to effect change, we must understand and address the factors that contribute to each individual's abusive behaviour.

Studies supporting particular interventions are few and inconclusive. A long-held position of some domestic violence service providers is that perpetration of abuse should not be treated therapeutically because their violence is not related to mental illness. Research and our own practice experience lead us to question this premise. In one longitudinal study conducted in New Zealand, 88% of men who perpetrated severe physical abuse met the criteria for one or more psychiatric disorder. In another study of men in the general US population, the prevalence of serious mental illness was three times greater among perpetrators of domestic violence. Further there is a wealth of research confirming that most men who abuse are victimised as children, either directly or by witnessing abuse to their mother, indicating that they have been, at the very least, exposed to trauma.

The link between childhood trauma or mental illness and adult perpetration of domestic violence does not in any excuse abusive behaviour. But it does help to explain it, and leads us to believe that gathering social histories and screening abusive partners for a whole host of possible contributing factors are critical components of effective intervention. Whenever mental illness, substance misuse, childhood trauma, socialisation and other potentially significant issues go unrecognised and untreated, we are

recommend interventions that may be effective in helping the individual change abusive behaviour when motivated to do so'.

Whilst the perpetrators programs nationally seem to have limited success, there was a sense that they have never been properly resourced and effectively facilitated and that they could well be one good resource with the right input. At the Center for Domestic Peace, they deliver the Mankind Program; an innovative batterer's intervention program, in which graduates from the course deliver the program. This peer group leadership approach seems to work. Mankind statistics show that 77% of all graduates on probation do not get re-arrested for domestic violence 4 years after graduation. These are some of the best statistics in the country for Batterer's Interventions Programs.

ENGAGING MEN AS ALLIES AND BYSTANDERS

CONNECT Men's goal is to develop a team of men who ally with women, reach out to other men and children in their respective communities and develop responses to male and gender violence. CONNECT Men consists of a number of anti-violence initiatives.

They hold a monthly round table where people from various organisations who work with men (football coaches, youth leaders, teachers) meet to discuss issues of masculinity and what it means to be a man today.

They offer a 12-week training on 'Understanding Men who Batter and Abuse' coupled with technical assistance and capacity building so graduates can write and deliver their own curriculum back to their communities.

They also have a preventative project based in 5 schools in the Bronx. These schools are renowned for their gun and gender violence and consequently there is a seamless movement of young men from prison into society and back to prison. It's a career choice for these boys, if you like. CONNECT Men have a presence in the school every lunch-time, in the school canteen, to discuss issues

of masculinity and power and control. The students initiate the conversations through their own experiences of – for example, rap music, current films etc - so they don't feel lectured to but the key messages are filtered through. The facilitators then identify peer leaders within the school in order to build capacity and sustainability.

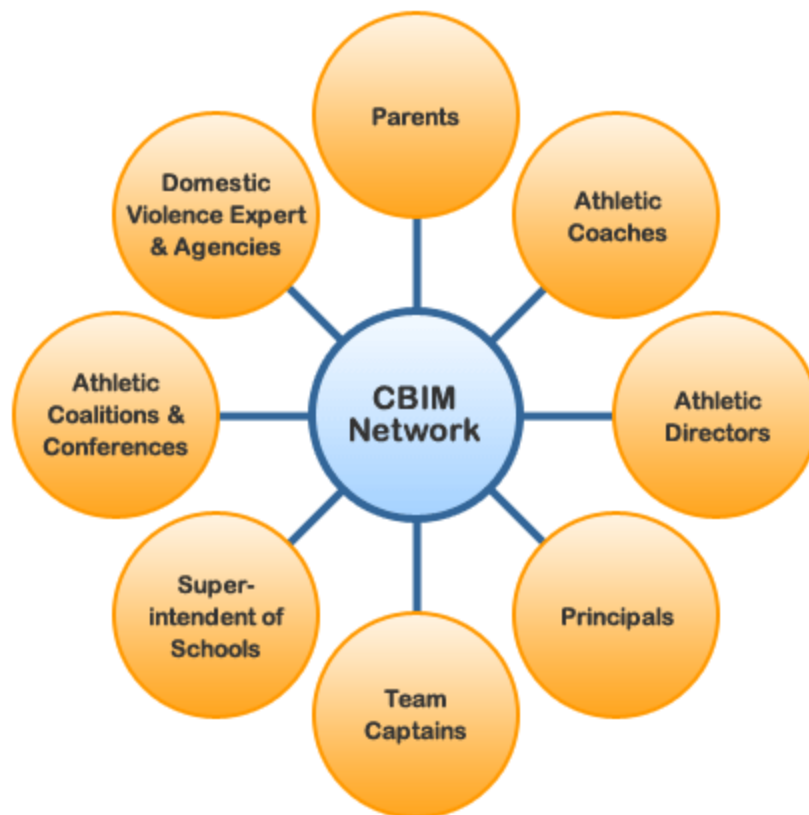
Throughout the States there is a drive towards engaging the athletic community in colleges in becoming allies. They typically occupy a privileged position in school culture, and particularly in male peer culture. As such, male student-athletes – especially in popular team sports such as football, basketball, hockey etc – tend to have enormous clout when it comes to establishing or maintaining traditional masculine norms. Their support or lack of support for prevention efforts can make or break them.

The Jackson Katz's Mentors in Violence Prevention is one such model. The Mentors in Violence Prevention (MVP) Model is a gender violence, bullying and school violence prevention approach that encourages young men and women from all socioeconomic, racial and ethnic backgrounds to take on leadership roles in their schools and communities. The training is focused on an innovative "bystander" model that empowers each student to take an active role in promoting a positive school climate. The heart of the training consists of role-plays intended to allow students to construct and practice viable options in response to incidents of harassment, abuse, or violence before, during, or after the fact. Students learn that there is not simply one way to confront violence, but that each individual can learn valuable skills to build their personal resolve and to act consciously when faced with difficult or threatening life situations.

School personnel, coaches, identified student leaders need to 'buy in' to the MPV program in order to create sustainability. They undertake an intensive two-day training on the curriculum and are given 'The Playbook' – a book full of role plays and exercise to run back at the schools. Part of the MPV Training the

Trainers' course covers identifying key student leaders and organisers to take ownership of the curriculum in order to build capacity in the school.

Another campaign 'Coaching Boys into Men' started as a National Education Campaign to engage men in the issue of Domestic Violence but is now a comprehensive web-based organising toolkit (www.coachescorner.org). It encourages athletic coaches to take up the role of Coaching Boys into Men Network Co-ordinator for their local area and provides a wealth of ideas and suggestions about how to implement this model into their local community.



ENGAGING MEN AS FATHERS

The development of the Fatherhood Movement in the States has been consolidated by Obama's launching of the Fatherhood and Mentoring Initiative in June last year and the creation of the Fatherhood, Marriage and Families Innovation Fund, which give grants to nonprofits that support fathers and families.

In a parallel development, many organisations are starting to address the issue of domestic violence through the identity of fatherhood. The idea is that if men understand the impact their behaviour is having on their children and how their children are learning from them how to act in a relationship, this provides opportunity for change.

One such project is Fathering After Violence (FAV), an initiative of The National Fathering and Domestic Violence Institute; funded by the Family Violence Prevention Fund. FAV provide a framework for BIPS (Batterer Intervention Programs) and other perpetrator interventionists to develop strategies and policy and procedures around this issue.

One strategy they have implemented is to show a 15 mins documentary entitled 'Something My father Would do' in the waiting room of a family contact centre. The film shows the stories of three men who grew up with abusive fathers and have to grapple with their own choices as intimate partners and fathers. They ensure the abusive fathers absorb the message of the film by calling them into their appointment 30 minutes early and have them sit in an empty waiting room, save for the film on loop.

Again, the message to effect change in perpetrators is being reframed. Rather than blaming and condoning, the message is one of understanding and accommodation.

TEN THINGS MEN CAN DO TO PREVENT GENDER VIOLENCE

1. Approach gender violence as a MEN'S issue involving men of all ages and socioeconomic, racial and ethnic backgrounds. View men not only as perpetrators or possible offenders, but as empowered bystanders who can confront abusive peers
2. If a brother, friend, classmate, or teammate is abusing his female partner -- or is disrespectful or abusive to girls and women in general -- don't look the other way. If you feel comfortable doing so, try to talk to him about it. Urge him to seek help. Or if you don't know what to do, consult a friend, a parent, a professor, or a counsellor. **DON'T REMAIN SILENT.**
3. Have the courage to look inward. Question your own attitudes. Don't be defensive when something you do or say ends up hurting someone else. Try hard to understand how your own attitudes and actions might inadvertently perpetuate sexism and violence, and work toward changing them.
4. If you suspect that a woman close to you is being abused or has been sexually assaulted, gently ask if you can help.
5. If you are emotionally, psychologically, physically, or sexually abusive to women, or have been in the past, seek professional help **NOW.**
6. Be an ally to women who are working to end all forms of gender violence. Support the work of campus-based women's centers. Attend "Take Back the Night" rallies and other public events. Raise money for community-based rape crisis centers and battered women's shelters. If you belong to a team or fraternity, or another student group, organize a fundraiser.
7. Recognize and speak out against homophobia and gay-bashing. Discrimination and violence against lesbians and gays are wrong in and of themselves. This abuse also has direct links to sexism (eg. the sexual orientation of men who speak out against sexism is often questioned, a conscious or unconscious strategy intended to silence them. This is a key reason few men do so).
8. Attend programs, take courses, watch films, and read articles and books about multicultural masculinities, gender inequality, and the root causes of gender violence. Educate yourself and others about how larger social forces affect the conflicts between individual men and women.
9. Don't fund sexism. Refuse to purchase any magazine, rent any video, subscribe to any Web site, or buy any music that portrays girls or women in a sexually degrading or abusive manner. Protest sexism in the media.
10. Mentor and teach young boys about how to be men in ways that don't involve degrading or abusing girls and women. Volunteer to work with gender violence prevention programs, including anti-sexist men's programs. Lead by example

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WORKING WITH THE FAMILY

Two of the organisations I meet up with are starting the contentious work of engaging with the whole family around the issue of domestic violence. They are starting to recognise that, in some instances, family systems theory might be relevant.

The Family Wellness Centre, is developing an assessment tool that can be used for every member of the family when domestic violence has been identified. Creating a holistic picture of the family dynamics, it argues, can facilitate more effective interventions that will increase the whole families' safety and wellbeing. The practitioners also look to the family to come up with their own solutions to their problems and then facilitate the action plan.

At the Liberation-based Healing Conference, I learnt about the Cultural Context Model created by Rhea V Almeida from The Institute of Family Services in New Jersey. This model also works with the whole family, but in the context of a community.

The couple are invited to join an existing group or 'community' where they are introduced to 'cultural circles'. At these circles the couples are educated in the 'colonialisation' of various groups of people in the world – in effect that power and control is not equal in society at large. Rather than focusing on the couples individual issues, the community together look at the imbalance of justice and how one person having power facilitates another being a victim and powerless. The community meet weekly for an indefinite period of time and challenge each other to commit to non-violent behaviour.

RESTORATIVE PRACTICES

'The fundamental unifying hypothesis of restorative practices is disarmingly simple: that human beings are happier, more cooperative and productive, and more likely to make positive changes in their behaviour when those in positions of authority do things *with* them, rather than *to* them or *for* them. This hypothesis maintains that the punitive and authoritarian *to* mode and the permissive and paternalistic *for* mode are not as effective as the restorative, participatory, engaging *with* mode'.

Restorative Practices were used by Indigenous tribe where community was essential to survival as a means to resolve conflict. The guiding principles are that everyone in the community has a valid voice, harm done to an individual is harm done to the community and that ostracizing and punishing a member of the community creates disharmony within the ecology of the community.

At the beginning of this report I sited the three questions used by the criminal justice system to ascertain who to punish. In restorative justice a different set of questions are asked which brings about different remedies. They are:

What happened?

Who's been harmed?

What is the communities' responsibility towards the person who has been harmed?

This takes the process away from blame and punishment towards restoration and transformation and it places the victims' voice in the middle of the process.

Restorative Justice originating in the 1970s as mediation between victims and offenders, in the 1990s restorative justice broadened to include communities of

care as well, with victims' and offenders' families and friends participating in collaborative processes called "conferences" and "circles." RJ can be used both within and outside of the Criminal Justice System.

The principles that underpin Restorative Justice are that:

- Restorative Justice must be voluntary for all participants
- Restorative Justice seeks a positive outcome for all parties
- Restorative Justice is respectful not degrading

CIRCLES OF PEACE: RESTORATIVE PRACTICES MEETS DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Circles of Peace is one of the first domestic violence treatment and prevention programs that uses a restorative justice circle approach to reduce violent behaviour in families. It is offered as an alternative to a traditional batterer's intervention program offered to non-custodial offenders. The program consists of 26-52 weeks of conferences, or Circles, that bring the abusing person together with their families (including the victims, if they choose to participate) as well as trained professional facilitators and community volunteers in order to encourage dialogue and goal-oriented change. Someone who is close to the family is identified to help monitor the safety of the victim throughout the weeks of treatment. Trained volunteer community members also sit in the circle to widen out the harm done to society and to show community support to the victim.

The community sits in a circle and the 'talking piece' is passed around the group so everyone has an equal chance to talk. No one must talk unless they are holding the 'talking piece'. If at any time the perpetrator is not taking responsibility for his/ her behaviour or not respecting the ethos of the circle, it can be sent back to court to be sentenced.

A randomized controlled study of the Circle of Peace showed that compared to traditional batterer's intervention programs, the perpetrators recidivism rate was

exactly the same but the perpetrators. This may not seem particularly promising but if we look at the other outcomes it enhances the idea the RJ promotes healing. The perpetrators who engaged with the circles method committed less overall crime and that the satisfaction of the victim was much greater – they felt heard and supported by the community. It concluded that the Circles approach strengthened the bond between the perpetrator and the community and between the community and the victim.

HEALING CIRCLES

Healing Circles describe the use of circles outside of the criminal justice system. Project SARAH (Stop Abusive Relationships At Home), part of New Jersey Jewish Family Services, introduced this model into their service delivery as there is very strong family ethos in the Jewish community and leaving the perpetrator was culturally taboo.

They found that compared to the traditional batterer's intervention (voluntary) that they also deliver, the men who took part in a healing circle with their partners and community showed better outcomes in terms of reducing physical and verbal abuse and a larger shift in attitude.

Esther East, Director for Project SARAH suggests it's because they felt more connected to their community and more supported. 'In a study of people who were at risk of suicide, they found that people improved more if they received a postcard every few weeks from a well-wisher than if they had intensive psychiatric support. It's the same principle; enhancing community and connection promotes healing more than any professional intervention.'

So, we are back to that word again, COMMUNITY.

THE BIG SOCIETY

Big Society: *"Significant responsibility for running society's services devolved to local communities and volunteers."* (Oxford English Dictionary)

I thought it would be useful to put a few words in here about the concept of the 'big society' as this phrase echoed in my head at every meeting I had in the USA. In the States, there does seem to be a tangible sense of community, a sense that if you want something changing, change it yourself, an entrepreneurial spirit that underpins the American dream. Indeed, I believe David Cameron looked to New York as a model for developing the Big Society over here.

When I got back from the States, I attended a conference in London called 'Building the Big Society'. It was an exploration of how society – the citizens - are going to take back control for their own lives, back from government - and in doing so feel empowered to make a difference. This in turn, will build community and a sense of belonging which is so lacking for many disenfranchised people.

Speakers there talked of a new settlement between the government and the civilian. In the past, government was all encompassing, all powerful and bureaucratic; in the future government will hand the power back to the local community and the individual. Government will take the place of an enabler rather than the decider. So, they will be releasing power, resources and information back into the communities so the communities can provide their own solutions to their problems.

So, in the past, people in need have looked to public services to solve their problem and this has caused a culture of dependency and disempowerment. Now they will be in charge of their own destiny.

This message resonates with the evolution of the Battered Woman's Movement taking place in the States. Capacity-building in the community so the community becomes the experts, creative interventions outside of state intervention and going back to the grass-roots to find the wisdom and knowledge within the population.

LESSONS FOR THE UK

- Preventative work and social norms change work need to become central to services wanting to eradicate domestic violence.
- Government's evolving role as enabler or facilitator means developing new ways of working with the third sector to build capacity in local communities for prevention and change.
- Training the Trainers could be a means to building capacity in the community. This training could provide technical assistance and training on collaboration and leadership for community organisers and activists – the general population is an unlimited resource.
- Re-visioning and re-framing the issue creates more solutions and more opportunities.
- Domestic violence is not an issue 'out there' – it needs to be brought 'inside' the community. It needs to be addressed, not as an individual health issue, but as a societal problem that only society can address.
- Opening up the dialogue about why men abuse and how this violent behaviour can be transformed is the best root to making women and children safer.
- Men are an untapped resource. Engaging men as abusers, allies, bystanders and activists could open up new possibilities.
- By opening up the dialogue about why people abuse, abusers may feel more able to disclose their behaviour and we may foster a more compassionate attitude towards those who abuse.

CONCLUSION

The UK has a highly effective and well-evaluated system for high risk victims of abuse. However, the power and control model currently favoured by the States and the UK may be restricting our capacity for an effective and long-lasting response in all cases.

Developing a more nuanced understanding of the issues may throw up more solutions. In the same way that people who abuse may have different motivators to explain their behaviour, people who are being abused may also have different motivators to stay.

And all the while, many of the children who witness this violence are unwittingly taking up the baton of abuse and taking it on to the next generation. There is little in the way of early intervention to allow these children a different way of life.

The States have started to have the difficult conversations about why people abuse and why people stay. They are starting to develop a more sophisticated understanding of domestic abuse – beyond the power and control model. Clearly, there is a need for this conversation to be had in the UK and a pressing need for a more holistic approach to tackling the issue of domestic violence.

Appendix

Organisations' Websites

STEPS (Steps To End Family Violence)

Edwin Gould Services for Children and Families
New York
Website: www.egscf.org

CONNECT NYC

New York
Website: www.connectnyc.org

Family Wellness Centre

Children's Aid Society
New York
Website: www.childrensaidsociety.org

Peace Circles

NYC Centre of Violence and Recovery
University of NYC
Website: www.nyu.edu
Website: www.circlesofpeace.us

Non Violent Communication and Intro to Restorative Justice Retreat,

Aryoloka Buddhist Retreat
New Jersey
Website: www.cnvc.org

Centre for Domestic Peace

Marin, CA
Website: www.maws.org

Mankind Initiative

Centre for Domestic Peace
Marin, CA
Website: www.maws.org

5th Annual Liberation-Based Healing Conference (Texas)

Sponsored by Institute for Family Services

Website: www.instituteforfamilyservices.com

Project SARAH (Stop Abusive Relationships At Home)

Part of Jewish Family Service of Clifton

New Jersey

Website: www.jfscifton.com

Fathering After Violence

National Institute for Fatherhood and Domestic Violence

Futures Without Violence

Website: www.futureswithoutviolence.org

Domestic Violence Surrogate Dialogues

Portland, Oregon

Website: www.dvsgprogram.com

Creative Interventions

Oakland, CA

Website: www.creative-interventions.org