

Working with Men who are Abusive in Relationships.

SCCPN Seminar
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Who are these men?

- Men are ambivalent about their use of violence;
 - May be angry and feels justified in use of violence;
 - May feel guilty;
 - Fearful of being exposed as violent;
 - Probably resistant to being engaged on this issue;
 - Confused about own behaviour;
 - May be scared about his own behaviour;
 - May be looking for a quick fix;
 - May be looking for you to agree with him / his story.
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- Likely to be troubled as well as troubling.

How do we engage?

- Much of the work at early engagement is about motivation;
- Encourage him to see there is an issue which is negatively affecting *him*;
- May already have been consequences for him – e.g. relationship with partner and with children;
- Consequences likely to continue or become worse;
- May be in crisis;
- Feels out of control;
- **TASK:** To focus on consequences of current choices and actions for him (and others); To enable him to see that the situation cannot go on as before; That the thing *he can control* is his own behaviour – and that he *can* do this.

How do we engage?

- Man likely to be apprehensive about worker attitude / disapproval;
- (Many men are fearful and have isolated themselves as well as partner);
- How we engage is vital in obtaining motivation;
- We can emphasise the disapproval of his behaviour up until now;
- We can approve of the fact that he is facing up to the need to change this (by looking forward);
- Appreciate that it takes courage to face up to and change behaviour which is difficult to look at;
- Begin to establish the roots of 'therapeutic alliance' or 'journey'.

Not just about physical violence

- 'Physical Violence is the use of physical force to punish, intimidate, control someone or to get them to do something against their will'; *CHANGE Manual* (1996)
- See also Scottish Government definition of 'abuse';
- Useful to draw from the man's narrative that this is not 'just physical';
- What is his 'story'?
- Should we believe his story?
- When to challenge and what to challenge?
- If we don't challenge his version are we colluding?

What is His Story?

- Listen to the most recent example of violence or abuse:
- What were the effects of violence or abusive behaviour?
- Consequences on partner;
- Consequences upon children;
- Consequences for self;
- Legal, personal, wellbeing, relationship etc.
- Gains and Losses of Violence and Abuse;
- What pattern can he see to this?
- What pattern might other people see?
- Has he said that this will never happen again?
- Why has it?

Demystifying the problem

- What is **the problem** we are dealing with here?
- He will say that it is....his partner / life ?
- The problem is that this is what he has learned about living as a man thus far;
- The problem is the sets of attitudes and beliefs which have taught him how to think and act in particular ways;
- **TOOL : CHECKLIST**
- 'Look at these things you have done in the past. Might be shameful. Helps us see what we need to deal with. Have you ever... (Self Assessment exercise from CHANGE; Behaviour Checklist from Caledonian. Chapter in *From Fear to Freedom*).

Establishing the Other Me

- How this problem has got me where I am and who I am?
- Who would I be if I moved beyond this problem?
- What might the other (ME) look like?
- **TOOL: Self Characterisation / Letter about Myself**
- Man writes letter / provides description of self in third person;
- Important to stress the things he likes and values and why this is so.
- "This is me and I like these bits about me".
- "These are the bits (of me) I want to sort out or get rid of".

Making Myself Safe

- Establishing an alternative;
- Making Myself Safe;
- Establishing a Safety Plan;
- **TOOL: What Makes me Tick?**
- What kinds of situations do you get worked up about?
- What physical situations do you notice when you're getting worked up or wound up?
- What thoughts / feelings / self-talk come into your head at these times?
- What would your partner recognise in you when this happens?

Making Myself Safe

- Establishing an alternative;
- Making Myself Safe;
- Establishing a Safety Plan;
- Learning to Take a Time Out.
- **TOOL: Developing a Responsible Time Out.**
- QUESTIONS
- What are the do's and don'ts of Time Outs?

How Do I Change?

- Changing Behaviour
- **TOOL: What prevents me changing my behaviour?**
- Denial;
- Minimisation;
- Blame;
- Consequences of D.M.B.
- I AM NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR MYSELF!
- **TASK: What are the reasons for changing?**
- What are the risks of not changing?
- What, whom can I identify to help me with the changes I see I have to make?

Change / Maintenance / Desistance

- Replacing the locus of control;
- **FROM:**
- Move away from being a victim of external circumstances
- Someone who is 'acted upon' by the world;
- 'Something just came over me!'
- She / they made me do it!
- Only other people can make me feel better about myself!
- **TO:**
- Someone who begins to accept responsibility for own behaviour;
- Begins to relinquish control over others.