



Gender and Child Welfare Network: The Proceedings of the Cardiff Conference

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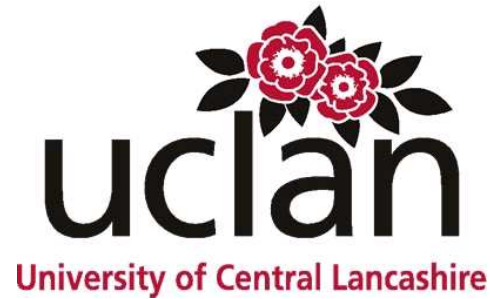
[Men's Talk: Tackling Domestic Violence](#)

1 June 2009

[stanleymenstalk.ppt - MS PowerPoint - 1.21 MB]

Summary of the presentation

The final presentation was by Nicky Stanley of the University of Central Lancashire and entitled Men's talk: Tackling domestic violence. Stanley described research conducted with men in order to inform a public education campaign targeting domestic violence in Hull, UK. Fifteen focus groups were conducted with a diverse range of men recruited through groups including sporting, church, family support and substance misuse. Men answered qualitative questions related to how they defined and understood family violence, its impact on children and families, and how they felt abusive men might best be motivated to change their behaviour. Men described help-seeking and changes to abusive behaviour as constrained by masculine norms, social stigma, and fear of the consequences of disclosure. Men suggested effective public education campaigns should present the impact of domestic violence from a child's perspective, highlighting how children perceive men who perpetrate abuse. The logo "strength to change" was adopted as a result of the research.



Men's Talk: Tackling Domestic Violence

**Nicky Stanley, Ben Fell, Pam Miller,
Gill Thomson and John Watson**





A Social Marketing Campaign for Abusive Men in Hull

- Hull PCT developing campaign in partnership with wide range of local stakeholders
- Influenced by West Australian *Freedom from Fear* campaign
- Local advertising campaign supported by comprehensive service for abusive men



Social marketing

‘the application of commercial marketing technologies to the analysis, planning, execution and evaluation of programs designed to influence the voluntary behaviour of target audiences in order to improve their personal welfare and that of their society’ (Andreason, 1995, p.7)

- Value of formative research – bottom-up approach
- Engaging stakeholders throughout the project
- Know your target audience!
- Target messages on specific groups
- ‘Marketing mix’ – range of strategies and media used to deliver persuasive messages



Research methodology

- **Interviews with 10 local stakeholders**
- **15 focus Groups with 84 men recruited from a range of settings:**
 - **IDAP and substance misuse services**
 - **family support services**
 - **young people's service**
 - **workplaces and sports club**
 - **older people's service**
 - **BME community organisation**
 - **church and university**



Focus Group Members' Previous Experience of Domestic Violence

As a Child	17 (20%)
As a Victim	18 (21%)
As a Perpetrator	12 (14%)
Any previous experience of domestic violence	32 (38%)



Defining Domestic Violence

- Physical violence – first response evoked
- Sexual abuse mentioned by some
- Most men prepared to acknowledge psychological abuse as form of DV

BUT

- Didn't consider DV was confined to intimate relationships
- Unhappy about too broad a definition, eg 'threatening behaviour'
- 'Women can be perpetrators too'



Domestic Violence - the wall of silence

it's such a hidden thing as well, I think it's something that no-one talks about, I mean I've never had a conversation about domestic abuse with anybody ...no-one's going to talk about it, just like a complete blanket.

(General Public Focus Group 3)

if somebody ... has talked to me about it in drink, I would tend not to say anything to anybody, whether that's the right thing or the wrong thing I wouldn't know but I wouldn't tend to say anything.

(General Public Focus Group 7)

you brought shame on the family kind of thing because whatever happened behind closed doors it's still frowned upon but when it becomes public and it's, it's even worse.

(BME focus group)



Understandings of Men's Violence: local culture

certainly since moving to Hull, I was probably in fights, without exaggerating, nearly every day, constantly fightingcertainly looking at Hull, classic fishing village and stuff like that, you know, the men go out in the fishing industry etcetera and the wife's at home, the men come in, they go to the pubs when they're back at home etcetera, there's a lot of drink involved and that side of it's dying away now but people are still here, you know, and people haven't moved on, we all still live here, you know. (Perpetrators' Group)

There is an acceptance that domestic violence exists and is not necessarily considered a bad thing.

(Local professional)



Understandings of Men's Violence

Communication problems:

this person cannot communicate to the other person their true feelings so it then spans out of control to they're going to have to use another way of getting their feelings across be it attacking or doing any of this or psychological or emotional so I think it is .. communication is a big thing, (Family Service Users Focus Group)

Other contributory factors: men's innate aggression, drink, stress, masculine identity, low self-esteem ('little man syndrome')



Women's provocation

- They know the men's weaknesses, that's why isn't it?
- Yeah, ...and if they know your weak points they will still touch on the same or push on the same buttons.
- Same buttons. (BME Focus Group)

- Because the woman agitate the men to the point of boiling.
- A lot of it's stress isn't it?
- Keep on doing it and doing it....
- Yeah, give me half an hour, I've just got back from work, you're nagging as soon as he gets through the door, just going to get the guy going, winding him up.
(Youth Service Users Focus Group)



Barriers to Seeking Help

- Men don't talk about sensitive issues
 - Shame, stigma, protecting self-image
 - Fear of consequences
- I think self-image and ego really, like 'I have denial, I haven't got a problem' or 'I don't want ... I'm in fear that if I do put my hand up and say look I do have a problem, I don't want people just to start kicking up a big fuss and then I'm being outed and then I'll be then scared of what's going to happen next' and that would be the biggest thing.
- The shame and embarrassment.
- Yeah shame and embarrassment would be.
- Probably police just a bit below that, if they were being getting charged with somewhat and ...
- Losing everything. (Family Service Users Focus Group)



Acknowledging the Problem – ‘a huge step’

Admitting to what they’re doing, I think that’s one of the main things, if they don’t ... if they see as that’s the norm, they’re not admitting to what they’re doing is wrong, where is the help?

(General Public Focus Group 7)

- I think there would be a lot of men .. whether it’s true I don’t know but who believe that they’d been provoked into doing it, say if the wife’s being ... a woman can get not totally physical but screaming, shouting and bawling and think `well I had to do something to stop her, stop her being so ...
- Yeah they seek justification don’t they?
- Yeah so they might even think `oh well it’s her that needs the help, not me’.

(Family Service Users Focus Group)



Barriers to Accessing Services

- Scepticism re statutory services – waiting lists
- Lack of trust in services:
‘A lot of people in Hull have had, to varying degrees, interaction with the authorities, whether it be Police, Probation, Social Services or anything else and I suspect that most people’s perception of those authorities is not one of trust.’ (Perpetrators’ Group)
- Domestic violence services perceived as targeted on women
- Professionals don’t know where to refer abusive men



Motivating Factors Ranked as Highly Effective

	Rated as highly effective
Worried about effect on children	67 (80%)
Worried about losing wife/girlfriend	56 (67%)
Knowing help is available	44 (52%)
Getting into trouble with the law	43 (51%)
Improve relationship with wife/girlfriend	42 (50%)
Trying to do things differently from when he was growing up	40 (48%)
Worried about what others might say	33 (39%)
Wanting to be a better person	27 (32%)



Motivating factors - Harm to Children

Well if he's likely to change, if he wants to change he's going to change for his kids isn't he

(Substance Misuse Focus Group 1)

Well as a child me dad did used to hit me mother a few times and it did have an effect on me and it's not very nice and I think if ... again I think parents don't realise at the time when they're doing it but if you took them aside and told them I think that would have a big powerful effect on people, especially the children.

(Family Service Users Focus Group)

Because if I was violent towards the missus or anything like that, I still would worry about what my children would be like because I wouldn't want them to be like me. (Youth Service Users Focus Group)



Through the eyes of the child

I think if you saw your children cowering or hiding or even flinching from you because they thought you were going to hit them, I think that would be a really big wake up call...certainly that I think more than your wife or partner cowering in a corner. (General Public Focus Group 1)

....it petrified me as a child and the one thing I don't want to do is make my child see me as a monster...I have shouted at my wife and I've seen the look on me son's face

(BME Focus Group)

- And that, that will stay with me forever, is just that look on his face. A mixture of disgust and terror and I think just the fact that a twelve year old saw what I was doing was just probably hardest thing to bear. (Perpetrators Group)



Motivating factors – losing partner

Second in ranking of high scoring messages

At least 50 %of participants in each type of group scored this high

Worried about losing wife or girlfriend – the fact that he’s by himself – I think loneliness is one of the worst things there is.

(Older People’s Focus Group)

**There’s a thought of losing the wife or the girlfriend, I’m pretty sure that would hit these guys hard
(Family Service Users Focus Group)**



Provoking anxiety

Messages that emphasise loss can provoke anxiety and a defensive response:

**‘ The fear of losing my partner.... There’s a lot of use of the word ‘fear’ here...are real men supposed to be frightened?’
(Local professional)**



Motivating factors – Help is Available

- Rated highly by just over half participants,
- Not sufficient on its own – men need to recognise the problem first:

Knowing help is available I've put, sat on the fence at three because knowing help is there doesn't give you the motivation but when you, if you want the, if you've got the motivation knowing there's help, helps you get off your arse and get going with it.

(General Public Focus Group 8)



Sources of Support

Sources of Support	Focus group members rating as most likely to be utilised
Telephone Helpline	62 (74%)
GP	36 (43%)
Friends	35 (42%)
Relatives	32 (38%)
Police	8 (10%)
People at Work	8 (10%)



Helplines

- **Anonymity**

definitely the anonymous side of it that if you do realise you've got a problem you want, you, sometimes you're like desperate to speak to someone to get advice or, you know, someone to kind of turn to ...you can't really speak to your friends because they've got a perception of you (BME Focus Group)

- **Control over the interaction**

- And also they can't come back to you either.
- They can't contact you, you're in control.
- Yeah.
- Of the conversation.
- That's true, yeah.
- Because you can walk away, they can't then talk, come back and say how's it going? (General Public Focus Group 8)

- **Immediacy of support**



Other Rated Sources of Support

- GPs – Highly rated by 43%
 - Valued by BME & substance misuse groups
 - Confidentiality, expertise, trust, ‘a stranger you know’, but lack of continuity of care
- Friends – Highly rated by 42%
 - Depends on who they are and how close
 - Anticipated loss of status
- Relatives – Highly rated by 38%
 - Closeness, might know already
 - Not if they were abusive or if no close relatives



Religious Sources of Support

- Cited by BME, Substance Misuse and General Public Groups

it's a face, a one-to-one contact where you think the pastor will be somebody who will understand me and he won't judge me, he, he might not agree with me, he might, he might think about my wife more than .. he thinks about me but actually, he will actually still care for me (General Public Focus Group 8)

- Mediation service provided by imams
- Some BME participants unsure about whether religious leaders would offer confidentiality and sufficiently non-judgmental response



Other identified sources of support

- **Counselling services**
- **Groups led by former perpetrators**
- **Internet – anonymous, man in control**



Devising messages for the campaign

**It takes more of a man to sort his problems out than to stand by and let it happen more and more
(Substance Misuse Group 1)**

...it should be a picture of a child watching their parent turn into a monster because at the end of the day as a child there's nothing more frightening than watching your parents... (General Public Focus Group 4)

You will not be judged...help is available...don't wait for it to happen again! (General Public Focus Group 6)

**Family man? Want to keep it that way?
(General Public Focus Group 4)**



Summary of Key Findings

- Men struggle to acknowledge their own violence and so require a message which jolts them into this recognition
- Power of images which reflect children's views of abusive fathers back to them
- Message re availability of non-judgemental support for men valuable in association with other messages
- Avoid provoking fear, shame, men's sense of vulnerability
- Avoid backlash responses that occur when men detect an anti-male bias
- Messages re legal consequences and availability of help need to avoid evoking scepticism or distrust associated with services
- Emphasise anonymity of helpline



STRENGTH **TO** CHANGE

Find the strength to stop domestic violence

- Campaign material appeared in Hull from 7 April 2009
- Service start-up 7 April 2009
- Campaign launched 10 April 2009
- Evaluations of both response to campaign materials and longer-term impact underway



DO YOUR CHILDREN RESPECT YOU OR FEAR YOU? IT CAN BE HARD TO TELL THROUGH A RED MIST.

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FAMILY IS
SCARED
OF YOU?
IMAGINE
HOW
THEY
FEEL.**




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