

Patterns and Profiles of Abuse

Conference held at Bisham Abbey on Tuesday 2nd October 2007.

Questions to the Panel

Q. **Sally Plumb**

How do we recognise that previous experiences of violent abuse makes people more likely to be perpetrators without making everyone feel that they will be?

Steve Pearce: We need to anchor this within current behaviour. Abusive behaviours always need addressing. Where a victim is worried about their own potential for abuse, but where no such abuse currently exists, we need to check and keep an eye on this.

Jo Nurse: It is about repeating patterns of what perpetrators experienced as 'normality'. It is now about confidence-building around actual 'normality', giving different non-abusive sets of skills/behaviours.

Liz Gilchrist: this is one risk factor amongst many. Various different levels of experience lead to risk factors. Someone may have experienced DV in childhood, but doesn't repeat this as an adult. Prediction of potential future risk should be managed as a positive intervention – a multi-causal issue.

Q. **Patrick Neil**

Liz – the case for interactional risk management has been made. The notion of 'ownership' (eg in marriage) is linked to jealousy. Synergy of relationships are critical – interactional focus.

No question, just a statement so no need for a reply

Q. **Donald Findlater**

Regarding the professional conversations about risk, what can you tell us about desistance from offending? What stops people?

Jo Nurse: Sexual assaults – 1 in 10 for teenagers. DV – follows similar age pattern for population – age is a defining factor in both perpetrators and victims. Also, in the population – young adults are trying to establish relationship norms, particularly sexual behaviour and alcohol use

Liz Gilchrist: note the recidivism rates for DV – very high levels of reconviction (especially with new partners). Connect to the notion of common

couple violence – and the link to alcohol issues and stable mental health, leading to improvement. Intermittent terrorists – currently no good studies, although there are some patterns of interventions, eg, personality/schema based, which generally work better. Remember the costs of anti-social behavioural links to desistance.

Steve Pearce: Homogenous group work is better than heterogenous group work. Cultural norms/expectations with a heterogenous group work pulls people in and challenges behaviour. This has a major effect – eg, working with a neglectful mother this approach will underline unusualness of neglectful/abusive behaviour against the experience of others. Also a challenge - sexual offender groups working with victims can be too distressing and difficult.

Panel Discussion

Sue Raikes: Types of profiles of abusers are currently being revised, but as more is known, additional resources are needed. We need to consider how we can do better by more effective collaboration

Hilary Eldridge: for a large proportion of female sex offenders there is a substantial overlap with DV issues, including coercion. There is also an overlap between child sexual abuse and DV, and closer collaboration in these areas would be effective

Liz Gilchrist: we should work more closely on risk assessments. Getting information is a struggle, and better risk assessments are key. The process should be undertaken in the right order. Shared knowledge equals better outcomes.

Hilary Eldridge: improved frameworks equal better training. MAPPA/MARACS especially for females/children

Sally Plumb: also focus on risk assessment. Adult survivors of sexual abuse – no one wants to take responsibility. Consequently this work goes out into the voluntary sector. There is a tendency to talk about risk as a mechanism for restrictions due to resources issues. There is also the difficulty of stigmatising people seeking help

Patrick Neil: Risk alters once you embark upon a process – and there is a need to share both risk assessments and risk solutions. Should we work better passing information more effectively across established demarcation lines, or work better collaboratively? Risk solutions are part of a line between experts.

Conclusion **Sue Raikes:** this leads to a link back to MARACs and the process of identifying key people to take responsibility. This is a dynamic time – with

committed practitioners moving ahead. Good to hope for greater support, and we clearly need to look at current overlaps and better ways of working.