

Tri-County Batterer Intervention Provider Network Meeting Minutes April 12, 2016

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Minutes by Kate Sackett, edited by Chris Huffine

Beyond Batterer Intervention

A variety of trainers (including Eric Mankowski) make the point that batterer intervention is not just the programming, it's the larger systemic response to abusive individuals (Ed Gondolf does too) - one component of which is programming for abusive men. But BIP is part of coordinated community response -- Duluth Model -- so need to think about the broader intervention. So what else is being done or needs to be done with men who choose to use violence or be abusive?

So in the Duluth Model, which is not just the Duluth curriculum, is a coordinated community response - as a community, working together, including police education for DV dispute responses, courts need DV laws, probation needs to be knowledgeable about DV, need to make strong use of survivors and advocates as experts, and then what should be the actual programming for abusive men (Duluth curriculum, Pence & Paymar). So today talking about the macro-level and ways of working with abusive men beyond the curriculum or group sessions alone (e.g., giving resources).

Safety First supervised parenting program CORE community input committee folks, how to engage the non-custodial parent and different approach - viewing ways of how we engage with folks shifting away from just criminalization (mentioned in Trauma Stewardship book) is promising.

Working with an individual includes working on their personal belief system, a study of positive and negative self-talk put on a map comparing to death from heart disease, perfect nearly correlation; DV exists in a community and overall health of the community so Coordinated Community Response needs to deal with the health of the entire community, so with the illness in the society that is harmful to that health; so using language intentionally, thinking about the context of how language is used ; what people are exposed to in their everyday life versus in the two hours they go to group every week; power and control issues in the community, funding competitions and even competing for funding for housing; coordination has greatly improved, communicating with the criminal justice system and educating judges, laws still needs to happen, that power dynamic is still so difficult -- still dealing with the power and control issues in the wider society

Notice that many of the men in his groups need mental health evaluations, really seeing how much trauma work needs to be done with the guys - still want to work with their belief systems, honesty, accountability and all that, but the guys don't want to talk about trauma in group very much -- ACE study and scoring of adverse childhood experiences, he did a presentation on that and had men in the group score themselves (10 highest, 4 or above puts you at risk of earlier death, health problems, a lot of antisocial behavior, risk behavior, anger, etc.) - in his groups, two of the stage-two groups had 75% of members scoring 7 or above □ starting to take a different look at this. Man who was having a hard time going to the group shared story of being kidnapped and raped as a kid, wasn't going to group because he had 13, 14, 15 year old kids and did not want to leave them home alone; also do mindfulness meditation at the beginning of every group, moving toward body-centered mindfulness practices (The Body Keeps the Score by van der

Kolk - who will be in Portland next week) -- there is only so much that BIP group facilitators can do about that but at least accept that that is a piece of what needs to be worked on; the ultimate would be a seamless situation with dual programming, mental health and drug and alcohol providers in the same space as BIP providers; regularly starting to connect people to mental health programming either during or after the group

Gondolf's latest book on interviewing BIP providers -- many abusive men have significant mental health histories, trauma survivors, which does not *cause* but *aggravates* the DV -- raising awareness of trauma

Also fits with conventional wisdom about gender differences with trauma, women "act in" while men "act out" - men more likely to do violence to others, women to themselves

PTSD, stress, substance abuse issues so many providers are being trained on that, free training recently on the psychology of trauma in interventions -- looking at individuals that have unmanaged PTSD, stress, substance abuse; as soon as something triggers those issues, the limbic system takes over so brain is not communicating so fight/flight/freeze takes over

Many individuals also grew up in very traumatic environments, so the more a community has early childhood interventions - supporting pregnant women, meeting core basic needs, means healthier brain development and physical development and program in CT/MA found that offering whatever support is needed to families with young children led to lower child abuse, DV rates

Multnomah Co. Boys Strength programs - for younger kids to teach healthy relationships, communication, how to interact in a prosocial way -- noticing changes in their classrooms; trying to get to high school kids but right now younger; talked to the Mayor about funding for those classes, at the last judges meeting there is someone looking into that; need to have earlier interventions and trying to make that more accessible, seeing more acknowledgement that it needs to start early on and needs to be a group effort (elementary school, 8-12 year olds) -- want it to be men teaching the boys

Clackamas Co. has also been doing Boys Circle for quite a while, similar-sounding program (middle school and high school)

To what extent is there a gendered analysis of this though? Some of the commentary about gender and gender socialization was edited out of the Boys Strength curriculum as mental health professionals led it toward a micro-oriented curriculum □ tension in psychology that it tends to reinforce mainstream values, does not acknowledge mainstream issues of oppression; sometimes mental health professionals are limited in their larger macro social analysis, focusing on micro

Prevention classes (e.g. in Clackamas co.) are also limited by what the school systems allow them to talk about; that is also difficult

Criminal Justice Coordinated Community Response - typically what you see on DV councils (law enforcement, courts, DA, child advocates, advocates, etc.) but meant to include other community members as well (mental health, schools, media, business employers, etc.) -- meant to be a larger community response □ Spotlight recent film on sexual abuse of children by clergy focuses on the collusion of the community in the abuse ("It takes a village to raise a child, I think it takes a village to lose one as well")

Multimodal intervention is recognized now as needed for substance abuse intervention, now incorporating medical services, mental health services, career development, etc. -- need this probably in BIP as well; not nearly as much vilifying now of addicts as of abusive men, but this seems to be coming as a recognition in this field too -- much more provocative though to say that we need to be working on housing for abusive men than for substance abusers

Traditionally it has been hard to move toward integrating services, multimodal programming -- likely will be met with same kind of resistance

High risk cases identified by criminal justice center also now have a designated program in Clackamas county; shifting how services are provided to people has started, can't just punish people who are bad and expect them to be different, see awareness beginning to have wraparound services to stop the cyclical nature of crime

Also complicated with the Latino community because of the system's failure to meet them with different distresses, language barriers, etc.

In most of the world, DV is not a criminal act -- the US is one of the leading countries in criminalizing DV; Australia did not have a lot of laws for DV until past decade ago, many

criminalizing DV; Australia did not have a lot of laws for DV until past decade or so, many services were voluntary-based so now programs are primarily working with mandated individuals

Pros and cons to criminalizing DV

PRO: Protects a population of individuals who were not recognized by existing laws (other assault laws) □ b/c of oppression, “privacy” of the crime, not entitled to protection □ connected to it being recognized as a human rights violation

CON: Punishment-based model of handling crime does not necessarily translate well to DV cases (e.g. making guys pay for classes can impact families) -- punishing the perpetrator may also punish the family if they are still together (this is similar to the criminalization of substance use -- recognition that they need intervention, not jail)

PRO/CON: Difference between compliance and change, many men wouldn’t get into the programs if they were not adjudicated so increasing recognition but need coordination with probation officers around responses with certain cases; need to help them understand not because they have to but because they want to

PRO: Takes women out of being second-class citizens to being more equal in society, that abuse is harmful to a woman, because it wasn’t being dealt with; minimization of the abuse (could be called an addiction cycle) is challenged because it is acknowledged as a problem in the law

CON: Limits of the criminal justice system also in what is recognized as domestic violence, only able to act based on what specific charges are covered, only certain acts are illegal so not all instances of domestic violence are actually recognized □ so change becomes just not doing illegal acts of abuse so that they are not arrested (partly why arrest rates have dropped), so other types of abuse (non-physical abuse) are not recognized, not taken away in handcuffs

PRO: Society views someone who has been abusive has changed now - not celebrated anymore or validated as a man having control over his family, but it has informed our culture and how we see violence against women media, music, it is spilled over into other areas so it is less socially approved

CON: Typical with other criminal behavior too, these laws disproportionately target men of color and working class men -- arrest and conviction rates seem to portray this as a bigger problem in those communities when it is actually related to who is recognized by the laws, not because actual rates of domestic violence differ in those communities compared to others

Need to counter the typical stereotype, e.g. through movies like *Sleeping with the Enemy*

CON: Our culture tends to be reductionistic in how social issues are framed, so make this into an individual problem with “these bad men” and “those poor women” over there □ so can start to lose sight of the larger social issues and values that drive this, lose the gendered social component by over-focusing on individual-level issues of trauma, etc. (easier to get empirical support for individual-level issues than the broader cultural analysis)

This is a systemic issue, the context is the social construct, need to address the different components, different messages of how people handle power and control at many different levels (individuals, communities, governments, etc.)

There has always been a community response to DV but historically it has been an uncoordinated, uninformed response (and still do through the Strength at Home program, clergy, HR workers, etc.) □ consciousness-raising, raised awareness, is a key part of creating change; need to share this information with the larger community so they get it (can see this evolution in how people consider substance abuse now compared to thirty years ago) □ relevant to the bystander intervention training model in prevention work as well

Desensitized in some ways regarding words, actions, what is considered “normal” in relationships (“bitch”, slapping), domestic violence is accepted in some ways by excusing it by drinking, how desensitized are people to abuse in their own lives, reinforced by pop culture that seems worse -- normalizing stalking, jealousy, things that should not be normalized □ also relates to the rise of women’s empowerment over time; prior to the feminist movement, did not need to use such derogatory language so pervasively in order to keep women in their place -- now more combative language in the same effort

Don’t look at why people can resist cultural issues while others absorb them? Everyone is exposed to misogyny and violence, but only a subset of men actually act it out and embrace it -- why do some men seem to embrace these things in violent and inappropriate directions and

others are not in any way misogynistic? What is it in the majority of boys and men who do not give themselves permission to be abusive and controlling? Chris believes many males do embrace some traditional feminine qualities (compassion, emotional awareness, embracing the relational) -- combination of rejecting the feminine and embracing the masculine; men who do not reject the feminine are less likely to be abusive

E.g., words mean different things to these two groups □ “anger” is behavior for abusive men, “anger” is a feeling for non-abusive men

Non-custodial parent focus is another way of conceptualizing it differently □ Family Justice Centers that do not focus on fathers/perpetrators

Values that drive DV are the same values that drive most of the ills in the world -- dominating and controlling the environment, the target of terrorist groups, starving people, other countries in war (versus collaborative, non-violent relationship orientations)

Stories in the paper about a man who killed a student in Texas, a man running from MacLaran -- both lacked positive role models; next to a story about a condor that needed adjustment, brought in older condors to mentor the younger condor -- how are we mentoring, supporting younger people?

Goes back to need in Boys Strength for mentors and male mentors are not volunteering -- men need to figure out that it is their responsibility to give back to their community
