

Tri-County Batterer Intervention Provider Network meeting Minutes – 9/9/2014

Present: Regina Rosann (ARMS), Katherine Stansbury (Eastside Concern), Matt Johnston (Domestic Violence Safe Dialogue), Phil Broyles (Teras), Mike Duncan (Allies in Change), Linda Castaneda (Manley Interventions), Emmy Ritter (Raphael House of Portland), Rachel Smith (Portland State University)

Minutes by Rachel Smith, edited by Chris Huffine

Multimedia in men's groups - Do you use it?

Some of us use it and have found it effective for some of our groups. One attendee does not really use video clips, but have found it more effective to just talk about the issues in person.

Using multimedia materials in groups allows for a different voice. We use them as conversation starters and more so in informal presentations of ideas.

One attendee uses a “gun smoke presentation” which is very well received by clients but needs to be adapted for different audiences.

One attendee brought 3 video clips for the group to watch:

<http://modernprimate.tumblr.com/page/3> (gray area of rape culture)

<http://modernprimate.tumblr.com/page/10> (Rape culture part 2, also Steubenville football rape culture,)

Attendees really like the idea of showing these in a group. The ones with a laugh track are going to be the most effective. This stuff is often so implicit and difficult to get across, but having this video with a laugh track is helpful for breaking down some of the barriers in these conversations in the group.

Another attendee has shown Michael Kimmel's talks on gender to clients, although it has not been very well received by them. Many of them took it as politically skewed (in a liberal sense) and religiously skewed:

<http://www.mediaed.org/cgi-bin/commerce.cgi?preadd=action&key=232>

Jackson covers some of the same ground more effectively: There is another one by Jackson Katz - “Violence & Silence”. Katz talk takes “the whole Jackson Katz message” and condenses into 15 minutes:

http://www.ted.com/talks/jackson_katz_violence_against_women_it_s_a_men_s_issue?language=en

He (Jackson Katz) has talked to all male audiences and it is pretty much the same as this TED Talk. He does a great job of talking about the issues in accessible ways. The way it is presented is sort of alienating. One attendee noted that they have not had good luck with it in the group. One attendee noted that they recently showed the Jackson Katz in group and made a short list of

the issues he (Katz) calls out and had the men come together after watching the video to talk about what was “unmanly” about the different characteristics mentioned by Katz. A second attendee has seen some men take pictures of lists they create together during the group and keep it on their phones to look at when they are in “the real world” outside of the group. Another attendee has had people getting into conversation about ‘what is vulnerability’ and ‘what is nurturing’. One attendee noted that they may have had a bit of a breakthrough recently with the guys in the group seeing that we (BI Providers) are not attempting to “unman” these men.

Another attendee suggested a TED Talk by Tony Porter:

http://www.ted.com/talks/tony_porter_a_call_to_men?language=en

It seems like using TED Talks like Tony Porter’s could be a good idea. Are there others that people know of and/or have used in groups?

While these types of media have been helpful in groups, we have also found that participants can get into distracted conversations with the Jackson Katz video, while the Tony Porter talk does not really allow for much argument. Question: Where are these guys when they tend to get into these kinds of distracted conversations? Dealing with their masculinity (many attendees nod in agreement). There are also many videos that talk about sports, masculinity, and violence.

Question: Are you all talking about the Ray Rice issue in conjunction with these videos? It seems like “the perfect storm”. We have talked about it in passing, but not a real focus, but it seems like that would be really powerful to do some work using these videos in conjunction with a conversation about Ray Rice. We’ve talked about it some and had a lot of guys respond with “well I’m not that guy” (*nods and sounds of agreements among attendees*).

One attendee noted, as a general thought on the topic, that the NFL is a great topic for talking about abuse with the guys in the group. The NFL is supposed to come out and comment on the issue today. There was some public commentary that talked a lot about issues around blaming the victim, and there is a quote about Ray Rice being the head of the household. One attendee noted that “this thing is going to blow up - the NFL is going to blow up right at the start of their season. These guys (our clients) watch football and this is about to blow up.” Question: About blaming her - how are you saying blaming her? What are you referring to? That this is what we think the NFL will do. So that the focus will be on her not on him. Even President Obama said something about it. “I can’t remember what it was but it was good”. Vice President Biden brought it up while talking about the anniversary of the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA). There is a quote from the commissioner of the NFL that was something to the effect of “I hope it gets worked out”. Maybe his verbiage is wrong and he’s just ignorant in words. He may be looking at it in terms of the marriage. Right, and that is what most of us encounter in our relationships without DV - we encounter conflict and we “smooth things out”, which is different from DV. “Smoothing out” is problem-solving. Yes, and there is sometimes confusion about that among abusers. It seems that [HE] thinks it is important for working out the relationship. What does that mean/how does that fit into the NFL? Right, we don’t know what he means by it. Yes, because he is normalizing the behavior. In (football) practice they are taught to hit, etc.

But even in football there are things that are not okay. (*Nods of agreement*) There are things like “cheap shots”. There is also the aspect of intimidating [HER]. [YOU] can see it on her (Janay Rice’s) face in the video she (Janay Rice) is scared. Yes, and she is under two levels of pressure - “How is she going to deal with this?” (General Sentiment from the public) There are also family concerns, and the notion of “The Raven’s family” as sources of pressure. (*Nods of agreement among attendees*) It is also kind of like the guy that said something derogatory about black players and was banned from the NBA and the response was very quick and severe - there is a misfit between the response to player-to-player abuse versus abuse by players toward their intimate partners.

Another video used by Allies in Change is a clip from the sitcom “My Wife and Kids”. It centers on a variety of controlling, egotistical, and even abusive behaviors a father does with his three children over the course of about 10 minutes, all played for laughs. One attendee likes this one because it says “look this is our culture and it’s played for laughs” The moral of the story is that dad is right and his (abusive and controlling) behavior is rewarded. It shows how this mindset “Creeps into our consciousness”. The “My Wife and Kids” piece also gets into what’s funny: it’s about who is the punchline - is it self-deprecating or at the expense of others. Who’s the brunt of the joke? It’s often: “my kids are stupid”, “my wife is stupid”, etc.

So “Family Guy” might be an interesting thing to apply as “who’s the butt of the joke?” There is one episode where the wife stands up for herself after everyone else kind of gave up on her. Question: And she loses in the end right? Yes, so it is a little more subtle than My Wife and Kids”. Right, and they (the guys in the group) think it is funny. Right, so it is in their humor, which helps get the message across.

There is one good TED Talk that is about empathy by Brené Brown: http://www.ted.com/talks/brene_brown_listening_to_shame?language=en

It would also be great to find something on men’s codependency. (*nods from around*) A lot of these people have been through a lot of messed up relationships, and they think they have to do these things because things have been so messed up and it takes a long time to get them out of that mindset. Two of us have seen one that is good for codependency with alcohol and drugs, but when we have shown it the guys will just focus on Meg Ryan and talk about how bad she treats [HIM]. They are always focused on what is wrong with her and don’t see it as an issue with themselves. It is often about them thinking there was an agreement between [HIM] and [HER], and it is difficult to get them to realize that just because [YOU] told [HER] to do it does not mean it was an agreement.

Film clips can be helpful - One attendee noted that when they did the “Turning points” project they used this and it worked in that context. A second attendee noted that they had some multimedia resources that they used for talking about healthy relationships. We have a hard time finding good examples of that (healthy relationships). Often what gets flagged are romantic

comedies, which generally only represent a very superficial view of how problems get solved in relationships. Some of us have a hard time finding positive examples of dealing with abuse.

There is also a video about Tina Turner - "What's love got to do with it", which is really just great because it shows what she had to get through.

One Attendee's Story: "I showed a video of me being abused by somebody. I only used that because a lot of these guys are saying things like "She was pushing me...". This really happened - I was renting a room from this guy and it turned out being a lot like an abusive relationship and he ended up accusing me of pushing him down the stairs - and there's no way I could do that (he was a lot bigger than me), so I decided to record our interactions on my phone. He started moving his stuff into my room saying he was entitled to it and saying so many things like what an abuser says to a partner. I showed it to the guys in the group because a lot of them talk about how she pushed him and I wanted to show that their behavior is not self-defense and tried to explain it by tying it to that entitlement and dominance piece. It was just such a classic scenario". I posted it on Facebook and people were like 'Why do you put up with that?'

That must be really powerful for them to see that.

"When I showed it to the police officer - a female police officer - she said it wasn't appropriate to show in court.

[Group Consensus]: This story gave a poignant example of many of the issues we try to get across to the guys in our programs, and it shows it in a way that they can better access the message because they can (potentially) better relate to the person being abused and also see some of their abusive behaviors and assumptions mirrored in the behavior of the abuser in this situation, as well as in the response from people outside of the situation (e.g., Facebook friends, the police officer, etc.).