

Tri-County Batterer Intervention Provider Network Meeting June 8th, 2010

Attendance: Chris Huffine (Allies in Change Counseling Center), Amanda Binley (Bridges to Safety), Paul Lee (Men's Resource Center), Laura Ritchie (Multnomah County Dept of Community Justice), Amber Sutphen (Mult County DCJ), Emmy Ritter (Raphael House of Portland), Chad McGhee (Allies in Change), Regina Rosann (ARMS), Jodell Wright (Mult County DCJ), Paula Manley (Manley Interventions), Linda Castaneda (Manley Interventions), Steve Stewart (Allies in Change), Elka Grisham (Allies in Change), Jacquie Pancoast (ChangePoint), Johnnie Burt (ARMS), Dean Camarda (Allies/MRC), Don Voeks (GIVE), Eric Mankowski (Portland State University), Ashley Boal (PSU), Jennifer Warren (Women's Counseling Center/Men's Resource Center), John Scharff (Bradley Counseling Services), Tammie Jones (Oregon Justice Dept), Sara Windsheimer (Choices DVIP), Marta Bringas (MHFCS), Guruseva Mason (Choices DVIP), Phil Broyles (Teras Interventions)

Minutes by Ashely Boal, edited by Chris Huffine

Topic: Research Summary on the Effectiveness of Batterer Intervention

Presented by Eric Mankowski, PhD

Eric is a Professor of Psychology at Portland State University. He teaches courses on a variety of topics including : Men and Masculinity, Domestic Violence Intervention Systems, and Community Psychology. He does research in a variety of areas related to domestic violence including how BIPs function and domestic violence in the workplace. He also serves on the Attorney Generals BIP Standards Committee.

Included is a copy of Eric's PowerPoint presentation.

What is batterer intervention? Not a clinical or group treatment, but part of a coordinated community response. A set of intervention practices enacted along with other sectors such as law enforcement, courts, probation, mental health services, victims services, etc. that target individuals who are abusive.

Batterer intervention programs (BIPs) grew from the battered women's movement in the late 1970s and have since become more affiliated with the criminal justice system. In Oregon there are approximately 60 BIPs, nationally there may be approximately 2,500 programs. When examining the location of programs you see significant parts of Oregon lacking any BIPs. Most of the programs are concentrated along the I-5 corridor with a few scattered along the coast and the Columbia Gorge. There are also a few in the Bend area. Southeast Oregon has very few providers.

With regards to curriculum/philosophy, the national study found that most programs identify as Duluth, as well as cognitive-behavioral.

BIPs outside the US Fifty six programs across 38 countries have been studied and found that most men (85%) are voluntary. Most countries have few laws against domestic violence. As a result, rather than formal criminal justice practices being used informal social control is utilized. It was asked if a future topic could be a longer presentation on how batterer intervention work is being done in other countries.

Oregon implemented its BIP standards in 2006 after years of work. Currently, 45 states including the District of Columbia have standards

including the District of Columbia have standards.

Why assess BIP effectiveness? Answers from the group: To understand the best way to do this work to make change. Am I wasting my time? Want to have some research to defend why we are doing this work. Want to know what positive things I am doing and what things I can stop doing. Want to know how each area can promote change (e.g. probation). Justify our existence, it's not yet accepted. What increases safety and respect for women and children, what kind of intervention? What, if any, role does batterer intervention play in this task?

One idea that Eric has been thinking a lot about is how programs can collect their own data and examine their own effectiveness. If you are interested in this idea contact Eric (mankowskie@pdx.edu) .

There are a number of issues in assessing BIP effectiveness. How is effectiveness defined: victim safety perceptions? physical abuse? psychological abuse? attitude change? program completion? Whose report should count: victims? perpetrators? police reports? A lot of research relies on police reports because it tends to be the easiest to get, which misses out on a lot of incidents. How long do we wait to determine non-recidivism? Studies vary: 3 months to 11 years, with most studies focusing on 6 months to a year. Another problem is that the Conflict Tactic Scale (CTS) is widely used to assess partner reports and perpetrator reports of violence. It has a number of limitations. It leaves out most of the non-physical forms of abuse. It also does not consider the impact or frequency of the behavior. There also may be differences when the full version that assesses both what abuse they have experienced and what abuse they have perpetrated versus the short version that just asks about perpetration. Another scale that is sometimes used is the Abusive Behavior Inventory, which measures other types of abuse such as manipulation.

Other research challenges include: small sample sizes in part due to low response rates and high dropout rates (though drop out rates may be different now since studies are 10 years old and in the last 10 years probation has become more involved). Experimental designs are very difficult to do in the real world where the idea of having a control/no intervention group may not be acceptable. Another question is to decide if you are interested in the BIP itself and men who completed it or in men that may or may not have completed the program.

So do BIPs reduce men's violence? In general the findings are mixed and modest. The experimental studies have shown little or no effects, while naturalistic designs have shown small to moderate effects. Additionally, when looking at program type (i.e., the curriculum/orientation that is used) no difference in effectiveness has been found.

Gondolf (2002) conducted a study that examined 4 programs over time. This study found that 30 months after intake 80% were non-violent in the past year, 48 months after intake 90% were non-violent in the past year and 75% were non-violent over the past 2.5 years. These numbers examine men who were assigned to one of the programs and they did not have to complete to be part of the study. These findings were based on partner reports over 4 years. The first 6-12 months is the highest risk time for recidivism. Men who completed the program: 50% less likely to re-assault at 30 months compared to non-completers. (36% re-assault for men attending at least 2 months versus 55% re-assault for men who dropped out). This is regarding physical re-assault. To learn more about this and to get a good overview of research on BIPs in general, read Batterer Intervention Systems: Issues, Outcomes, and Recommendations by Edward W. Gondolf.

How do men change and avoid re-assault? In Gondolf's research of interviews with abusers, most talked about utilizing cognitive behavioral techniques like interruption techniques (time out, self talk). Some said discussion (problem solve, talking to a friend/counselor). Few said relying on respect or empathy.

What has been found to predict recidivism? The best predictor of new physical abuse was the women's perceptions of their own safety. Another significant predictor that Gondolf found in his

research was level of drunkenness in the follow up period (not just drinking, but high levels of drunkenness).

While experimental studies have generally not found BIPs to be effective, they have a number of distinct problems. Experimental studies generally don't have the follow-up with partners and usually use criminal recidivism data. Many of them utilize unique populations (e.g., individuals in the Navy). Additionally, experimental randomization may not have been kept. For instance individuals may have been placed in treatment when they should have been in the control condition. These are important limitations to think about. It may be that experimental designs may not be the best design for this area of research—this is Gondolf's opinion.

What can we do to increase effectiveness? Recommendations from Gondolf and Eric:

Monitoring attendance such as requiring court appearances every thirty days. More criminal justice interventions/consequences such as arrests with convictions, arrests with treatment, severe sentences, and treatment rather than incarceration. Ongoing community coordination such as combining prosecution, probation, and treatment. Match programs to offender characteristics such as the individuals' stage of change. Finally, address diverse characteristics of men (e.g. severe mental disorders, culture, ethnicity).