Men’s Family Violence: an Introduction
About us

No to Violence (NTV) is a peak body for organisations and individuals working with men to end family violence in Victoria and New South Wales.

Men’s Referral Service provides telephone counselling, information and referrals for men in Victoria, New South Wales and Tasmania. We’ve supported callers for over 25 years.

1300 766 491

More information: ntvmrs.org.au
Men’s Behaviour Change Programs

- Meet state’s minimum standards requirements
- Up to 14 participants
- over 40 locations in VIC
- 2 hour weekly sessions for 20+ weeks
- Two facilitators, differing gender
- Family safety contact mandatory
- CALD specific programs
- Gay / queer program run by Thorne Harbour for cis and trans men
Do behavior change programs work?

Project Mirabal Final Report

- Major research project in the UK, 2009-15
- Looked at whether women felt safer as a result of men’s participation in a behaviour change program
- 11 different program providers
- Longitudinal surveys of 100 women
- 5 interviews over 15 months
What leads to change?

“Men who made the most steps toward change had spent considerable time rethinking and remaking themselves as men within their relationships and in terms of their parenting...

Those who chose to take a clear look began to unravel notions of male privilege and entitlement and were more likely to take steps towards change”

Project Mirabal Final Report, p36
Drivers of men’s family violence

“The causes of family violence are complex and include gender inequality and community attitudes toward women. Contributing factors may include financial pressures, alcohol and drug abuse, mental illness and social and economic exclusion.”

Drivers of men’s family violence

› Condoning of violence against women

› Men’s control of decision making and limits to women’s independence in public and private life

› Rigid gender roles and stereotyped constructions of masculinity and femininity

› Male peer relationships that emphasise aggression and disrespect toward women
POWER AND CONTROL

USING COERCION AND THREATS
- Making and/or carrying out threats to do something to hurt her
- Threatening to leave her, to commit suicide, to report her to welfare, making her drop charges, making her do illegal things.

USING ECONOMIC ABUSE
- Preventing her from getting or keeping a job
- Making her ask for money
- Giving her an allowance
- Taking her money
- Not letting her know about or having access to family income.

USING INTIMIDATION
- Making her afraid by using looks, actions, gestures
- Smashing things
- Destroying her property
- Abusing pets
- Displaying weapons.

USING EMOTIONAL ABUSE
- Putting her down
- Making her feel bad about herself
- Calling her names
- Making her think she’s crazy
- Playing mind games
- Humiliating her
- Making her feel guilty.

USING MALE PRIVILEGE
- Treating her like a servant
- Making all the big decisions
- Acting like the “master of the castle”
- Being the one to define men’s and women’s roles

USING ISOLATION
- Controlling what she does, who she sees and talks to
- What she reads, where she goes
- Limiting her outside involvement
- Using jealousy to justify actions.

USING CHILDREN
- Making her feel guilty about the children
- Using the children to relay messages
- Using visitation to harass her
- Threatening to take the children away.

MINIMIZING, DENYING AND BLAMING
- Making light of the abuse
- Not taking her concerns about it seriously
- Saying the abuse didn’t happen
- Shifting responsibility for abusive behavior
- Saying she caused it.
Gendered Stereotypes

- Masculine male
- Feminine female
- Masculine female
- Feminine male

Consider..

- Beliefs, Assumptions, Attributes & Expectations
- Role in relationships, family, community
Indivdual experiences and interactions, relationships

Family & peer groups; sporting clubs, workplaces, online communities

Formal & informal rules and regulations; mass media, laws, schools, current political climate

Dominant norms, cultural practices and discourse that maintain privilege and imbalanced power dynamics. Historical political context.

Cultural norms, history, societal ideologies

Systems, structures, institutions

Community, family, social

Individual
Balancing Engagement and Challenge

Engagement

Collaboration

Challenge

Collusion

Coercion
Collaborative engagement & Active Bystanding

› Curious
› Open questions
› Respectful
› Invites accountability
› Creates a space for critical thinking
› Focusses on choices of behaviour and impacts, not judging individuals
› Invites critique of gender rigidity & hierarchy (not perpetuate it)
› Reflects on own social location, values and beliefs
Further Reading and Resources

• Men’s Referral Service - 1300 766 491 - ntvmrs.org.au
• Royal commission into Family Violence
• Our Watch - ourwatch.org.au
• VicHealth– vichealth.vic.gov.au
• Hollaback! – ihollaback.org
• Undercurrent – undercurrentvic.com
• The Duluth Model – theduluthmodel.org
• Undoing Privilege: *Unearned Advantage in a Divided World* (Pease, 2010)
• Becoming Ethical: a parallel, political journey with men who have abused (*Jenkins, 2009*)