Individual sessions with perpetrators of domestic violence

Chester - November 2013

Trainers: Chris Newman and Kate Iwi
Individual sessions with perpetrators of domestic violence

Additional course materials are at

http://www.fsa.me.uk/shetland-individual-work-training.html
Developed by the Caledonian System development group, NOMS and Respect

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Neil Blacklock
Kate Iwi
Rory Macrae
Chris Newman
Penny Rickman
Monica Wilson
Introductory round

Name

Where you are from

What you want from this training

What you’re missing to be here
Training Groundrules

• Confidentiality

• Looking after ourselves

• Respecting others and sharing the responsibility to challenge each other respectfully

• Timekeeping

• Distractions
Where the programme sits in the context of current approaches in DV work with perpetrators
Feminist approaches to working with perpetrators

• These are based in the idea that domestic violence is a misuse of power and control.

• Which is rooted in traditions that encourage men to believe that they are entitled to authority over their partners.

• From this perspective, men’s violence is defined as learned and intentional behaviour rather than the consequence of individual pathology, stress, substance use or a ‘dysfunctional’ relationship.

• The Duluth programme and its descendants seek to address this problem through an educational approach aimed at increasing men’s awareness of the distorting effects on their lives of gender role socialisation and encouraging relationships based on autonomy and respect.

Cognitive Behavioural Therapy approaches

• This approach is based on an analysis of the distorted thought patterns, assumptions, standards and beliefs which contribute to the use of violence and abuse.

• CBT approaches are agnostic about extent to which gender specific beliefs and attitudes contribute to abusive behaviour.

• Interventions are tailored to challenge or set in question these thoughts and beliefs

• Alternative, non-abusive ways of handling conflict are practised, along with other relationship skills such as assertiveness and active listening.
Elements of domestic violence perpetrator programmes in UK

These programmes aim to:

- Increase awareness of physiological, mental and emotional signs of build up to violence.
- Widen definition of abuse,
- Set abuse in context of power and control
- Develop critical awareness of attitudes and beliefs that support use of violence.
- Demystify use of violence – “I just lost it” vs intentional/functional behaviour
- Increase empathy for victims
- Increase awareness of effects of domestic violence upon children
- Identify and practice alternative behaviour.
What else is happening in the work?
Some quotes from men on a violence prevention group.

• “There is respect, …still being respected despite having used violence”. “They never made me feel like a ‘wife beater’ (even though I was!)”

• “I learned confidence. I thought I was just a bastard. I had no self esteem”.

• “You move away from being insular, the group process helps that, it helps you to respect yourself again”.

• “People need to feel free to speak. Because you are baring your soul about the worst things you have ever done, but I felt very secure”.
Understanding the past

“I’ve been fishing around for answers about why I am the way I am. It takes a long time to understand - it’s hard to recognise the things that happened when I was young..

But I’ve been thinking about it a lot - now I’m doing the abuse... it’s obvious that if I’m shouting and breaking things in the house that the children are being neglected. And I witnessed that growing up. Now I’m just trying to put the two together and seeing where it takes me

But changing is the hardest thing to do if you’ve never seen it before, never had role models.

But it’s up to me, it’s not outside of my capabilities, it’s possible”.
More recent developments in work with domestic violence offenders

Scotland
The Caledonian system, draws on the “Good lives model” – Tony Ward

Previous approaches have relied on identifying and targeting ‘dynamic risk factors’ - gender expectations, distorted thinking patterns, or dysfunctional beliefs, lack of empathy

• but... “Have we overlooked a rather fundamental truth: offenders want better lives, not simply the promise of less harmful ones?”

• This implies a more holistic approach, identifying life goals and how abuse in relationships impairs these goals.

See [http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/People/Equality/violence-women/CaledonianSystem](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/People/Equality/violence-women/CaledonianSystem)
Some of these goals can be identified in the values and qualities that men in a UK perpetrator programme said they wanted to bring to relationships.

David -
Being trustworthy, caring. Be emotionally and financially supportive
Being responsible, for the sake of others

Richard –
Being dependable (emotionally and otherwise)
Happiness (not burdening your partner and children with your moods)
Giving a bit more, and being more helpful

Colin –
Being caring and considerate
Stability, Best friendship

Jerry -
Respecting her feelings, and behaving respectfully
Being affectionate
Providing somewhere to turn to

Ali -
Understanding, patience
Respect – because you aren’t the only person that matters
Understandings
(scripted role play)
Power and abuse
(see power triangles in the manual)

1. So if he hadn’t used abuse and had sat with his difficult feelings how would he have experienced his power relationship to the victim?

2. When he uses violence how does this relationship change?

3. A day or a week later how is the use of violence likely to make him feel in relation to his partner?
The power and control model of an abusive relationship
Approaching the issue
Expanding his ethical side

Listening to what he wants to tell you first
• So what brought you here? This might be a difficult process and I’m sure you’ve thought about that when deciding to come. What made you think it mattered enough to give it a try?

Repositioning his anger – reflecting back (implicit) values
• You feel like no-one’s heard your side - so being listened to is really important to you
• so fairness really matters to you
• so justice is something you feel really strongly about – tell me what you mean by justice…..

Get his consent to ask direct questions
• Would you tell me if I ask you something you don’t want to answer - would you speak out?
Be explicit about your safety needs

If the above gives you cause for concern then you can ask

• If you begin to feel angry at me or misunderstood by me how can we make sure you won’t [do whatever he has done elsewhere] or just walk out on this for good?

• What could you do in that situation?

• What could I do to help?
Approaching the issue

• When did you meet? When did the relationship start getting serious? How soon did you move in together/marry?

• What did you see in your partner when you first met? What did she see in you, do you think? How did you make her feel at first?

• We all have rows at home sometimes. What issues did you argue over at first? And later?

• What are you like when you are angry at home but dealing with it at your best? And at your worst?
• When did you first get worried about how you deal with anger?
• When did you first lay a hand on your partner in anger?
• Do you ever get out of control?
• Tell me about some other times when you’ve gone too far? or when you haven’t used the right methods to stand up for yourself?
• How do you get physical with your partner when arguing? If you could see a film of yourself during an argument, how would you look? Do you pace around, shout, bang things, break things, stand close to her when you are shouting?’
• Have you ever hit her or pushed her around?
• Have you ever frightened her?
• How long do arguments last? How do they end?
• How often do arguments like this happen?
• What do you feel is the worst thing you’ve done to her? What would your partner say is the worst thing?
Blame and responsibility
Challenging blame

Gain their consent:
I am going to bring you back to talking about yourself when you seem to be focusing a lot on your partner - is that okay? I know you might go on feeling that you want to talk about her more and may feel frustrated when you’re shut down but I’d ask you to just stick with it for now.

And explain:

You’re partner isn’t here. Nothing that you and I can do in this room is going to change her. *The only person you can change is you.* So let’s work on that for now.

Let’s assume that your partner isn’t going to change. Let’s look at how you can stop your abuse anyhow.

Okay, it’s a given that you felt you were in the right and that you were angry when you were abusive. So what you need to learn is to stop your abuse even when you’re furious and feeling in the right.
It was you who did your violence and abuse. It was you who controlled your mouth to say what you said, it was you who lifted your arm to strike her – no-one and no-thing else.

While you focus all the time on who was right and who was wrong, you’ll have a job stopping your abuse. There is no place for you to be asking, “Is she right or wrong?” – only “What is the best that I can do in this situation?” So what would have been the best you could have done?

Probably your partner isn’t perfect – few people are – but the bottom line is that if you can’t be in a relationship with her without being abusive, you shouldn’t be in that relationship at all.
Challenging minimisation

- Acknowledge and discuss the barriers to disclosure
- But be persistent in order to get detail and context of what happened
- Use scales – on a scale of 1-5 (5 being punching her as hard as you can) how hard did you punch her?
- Ask for detail of the words that the abuser used - ask for exactly what was said and how. How loud?
- Reflecting back without the minimising e.g. he says “I just slapped her” – reflect back “you slapped her”.
- Start at higher levels of violence than you believe has been used so that the client then has to work back to the actual level of violence
• Sequence analysis...

• And when you picture that moment in your mind’s eye (when the violence came to a stop) what are you seeing in the faces of (your children/partner)?

• And when you think about that, what are you realizing?
me when I’m being abusive

Minimisation
I hardly touched her
She bruises easily
I was trying to grab her and she fell

Denial
It was self-defence

Blame/Resentment
She threw something
She knew what would happen if...
I was drunk

How I want to live

Honesty
Responsibility
Accountability

SHAME/GUILT
Consequences as a motivation to change

1. Consequences for him - Costs and benefits of being abusive

2. Consequences for the children

3. Effects on his partner and others around him
Individual work programme
Elements of first stage of the work

• Engagement and safety
• Motivation
• Setting the tone
• Teaching the tools e.g. the CBT iceberg
• Risk assessment
Self Characterisation

I’ve known Jim for 35 years and I like him a lot. He loves his family, will do anything for them – if anyone harmed them he’d rip their head off.

• He’s good at his job, though he’s treated like an idiot. He can’t stand his boss.
• He likes things clean and tidy,
• When he was young he got in a lot of bother, now he only fights with his wife.
• He’s a poor writer, but he loves drawing.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Constructs</th>
<th>Someone I know who is violent</th>
<th>My partner generally</th>
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<th>How I felt my partner was being before I hit her</th>
<th>A man I admire</th>
<th>Women in general</th>
<th>Me now</th>
<th>My mother</th>
<th>Me when I’m abusing</th>
<th>My father</th>
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<td>Good in a team (enjoys it)</td>
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<td>Caring, loving, trusting</td>
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Constructs:
- Outgoing
- Shy
- Hard worker
- Lazy
- Happy/relaxed in drink
- Angry in drink
- Secure in relationship
- Insecure, jealous
- Always there for family /caring
- Not being there, uncaring
- Good father
- Doesn’t care or take part
- Positive, happy, good self-esteem
- Devastated, low morale, low self-esteem
- Good in a team (enjoys it)
- Loner
- Caring, loving, trusting
- Violent
<table>
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<th>Ideal me</th>
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1 = Very negative  2  3  4  5  6  7 = Very Positive
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<th>My mother</th>
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1 = Very negative  
2 3 4 5 6 7 = Very Positive
### Constructs Table

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>My mother</th>
<th>Me when I’m abusing</th>
<th>My father</th>
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<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violent to everyone</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 = Very negative  2 3 4 5 6 7 = Very Positive

- confident
- Loves their job
- Good father/mother
- Liked by all
- Wakes up happy
- Never drinks
- Never violent
Genogram

- What kind of man was your father’s father?
- How was he different from your mother’s father?
- How would each person have been proud of how you turned out? In cases where he cannot identify anyone ask ‘What is it about you as a person that [someone in your family tree] would think was a really positive thing?
- What skills have you adopted from others in your family?
- How was/is your parents’ relationship?
- Who was/is in charge about what?
- How did disputes get resolved in your house as you were growing up?
- How would you like it to be different for your children?
Support networks

• **Who do you spend time with generally?**
• *(for each person) - How would you describe this relationship?*

• **Who would you talk to if you had a problem? Who would support your efforts to change?**
• **Who, within this network, might try to stop you changing your behaviour?**
• **What might prevent you from being able to confide in this person?**

• **How would you like these relationships to change?**
• **Is there anyone missing from your diagram?**
How did you feel about (the event) at the time?

How did you manage these feelings?

How did you cope with this event? Can you identify any strategies you used to help you deal with it?

How do you now see it?

Are you seeing any patterns to how you behave or feel?

Do you want to compare these events by giving a score to these events, good and bad?
Personal plan

- **Goals** - need to be *specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-limited* and must not depend on other people (It is important to start with the ‘good life’ view).

- **Motivation** is an important element and should be sufficiently robust to get a man back on track if he falters. Take time on this and draw on your knowledge of his aspirations to a good life from the earlier sessions.

- **Actions** should be actual steps he plans to take, including the planning of these steps. Time lines are also important. Short, medium and long-term.

- **Resources** should include the concrete (e.g. finances, house, computer), the emotional, the professional.

- **Obstacles/solutions**, *i.e.* What has, or could, stop him achieving his goal?

- **Performance indicators (AEB)** *Caution* - Men may want to include an indicator such as, “My wife won’t have left me”. This may well be the case but is not necessarily an indicator that he has stopped abusing her.
### Personal Plans

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What (Goal)</th>
<th>Why? (motivation)</th>
<th>How and When (Action)</th>
<th>What resources do I have?</th>
<th>Obstacles / solutions</th>
<th>I will know I’ve achieved my goal when...</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Do something about my drinking</td>
<td>My wife wouldn’t feel so scared. The kids would be happy.</td>
<td>Go back to the alcohol counsellor. Phone before next session</td>
<td>I’ve done it before. My friend Dave would support me.</td>
<td>Drink isn’t my first thought when I’ve got problems.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Self-talk
Taking apart an incident of violence

Learning points

• Identify those bodily sensations, thoughts and emotions which could serve as signals of build up to the violence to this man.

• Prior to an act of violence, there are frequently thoughts which objectify partner, make her into an enemy, or plan the violence. Identify how his thinking contributed to his abuse.

• Our thinking, and our emotional experience, is connected to our beliefs, expectations and fears. Draw the links between the beliefs and expectations you identified and the emotions he was experiencing.

• Violence carries a message to our partners about how she should behave. What was the message in this incident? What did he want her to do different? What function does using violence serve for this man?
Conflict resolution skills

List 3 times when s/he was in conflict with someone – how did they deal with it?

Explore skills and areas of weakness:

- Have you ever managed to deal with a conflict in a different way? What did you do?
- Have you known anyone who was good at it? How did they do it?
- How would you like someone to respond to you in a conflict?
- How do you know you’re being listened to and heard?
- What might have to change for you to listen really actively in a conflict situation - listening rather than mechanical reflection of what partner says?
- What might you have to tell yourself in order to make these changes?

Make notes of the answers you come up with and keep them with you as you explore particular incidents.
Conflict resolution skills

• Using non threatening body language

• Using positive self talk

• Active listening

• Capacity to express emotions (without guilt tripping)

• Negotiation – being able to seek compromise – prioritising the relationship rather than feeling the need to ‘win’
Conflict resolution

Stop and check:

1. What are you feeling?

2. What hurts and fears (worst fear in this situation) lie beneath your anger?

3. How might you honestly express those without guilt tripping your partner?

4. Answer questions 1 & 2 from the perspective of your partner (possibly using a 2-chairs technique)
Intimidating behaviour

Sandra

“I knew when we had to tread softly around him. His moods took over the whole house. The kids had the same sense. We were totally tuned in to his moods and they governed our lives”.
Intimidating behaviour

• What might he be doing that would make his partner and children ‘tread softly’?
• What might ‘treading softly’ involve for Sandra and the children?
• Do you think he knows how they are feeling? If yes, what is he trying to achieve by behaving like this? If not, how does he shut this knowledge out?
• What is the benefit to him of behaving in this way?
• What is the cost to him?
• What is the cost to his family?
Intimidating behaviour

Teaching points:

• Any intimidating behaviour evokes the memory of the past violence.

• The threat of violence or even subtle signs of displeasure can serve as a warning for her to stay in line.

• It may feel unfair but men who have used violence need to set themselves a higher standard of behaviour than other people.
Emotional Abuse

Defining respect –

• Choose a person you respect “How do you show that you respect them? What do you say and do to show this, and how would we know?”

Defining abusive behaviour -

• Behaviour which is hurtful, either because it is aimed to hurt, or because you haven’t thought or checked out whether it is hurtful or not.

• Behaviour which is controlling
Emotional Abuse

• How can we be abusive emotionally – what has he seen in his friends or families relationships? What has he used in his own?

• Explore the effects of these behaviours, what is the cumulative effect if they go on for a long time?

• What would it be like to support rather than run down his partner in her ‘weak’ points. What might this involve? If he builds her up rather than runs her down, what impact might it have on her and on the relationship?
Sexual respect
Sexual abuse brainstorms

• What do we want from sex - over and above what we could get from masturbation?
• What ways can we pressure for sex?
• What is the impact of these behaviours on the list generated of what we aim to get from sex?
• Why might someone not feel like sex?
• What are alternative ways of getting the intimacy and reassurance we seek?
Jealous behaviour - what and why

How would your partner know that you were jealous?

What kinds of things do you do when you are jealous?

Expand the brainstorm to include other jealous or isolating behaviours.

Ask your client why they try to isolate their partners in those ways.

What do they fear? Discuss the points that come out of this.

The ‘other guy’
Impacts of jealous behaviour

When you’ve questioned your partner, do you feel less jealous or more secure?

Do you feel better if your partner says your fears are true?

If your partner reassures you, do you believe him/her or do you just think, ‘S/he's saying that to reassure me?’

How does your jealous behaviour make your partner feel?

How will this affect the relationship?

How will this affect your partner’s behaviour?

Will your partner be more likely to stay in the long run?
Taking about alternatives

• If you do all this stuff, your partner may want out all the more but if you stop, s/he may have more chance of getting out

• If you stop, you may be left with incredibly difficult and uncomfortable feelings and obsessive thoughts. However, the reality is that the more you fuel your obsessive jealous feelings by checking up on and questioning your partner, the longer those feelings will continue.
Alternatives:

• Building up emotional muscle (the ability to tolerate feelings of neediness and dependency)
• Building up social networks that won't support your jealousy. Which friends do you have who wouldn't collude?
• Positive self-talk, especially accepting that this is the way you feel, and that she's not making you feel like that – she's not making you jealous.
• Accepting that it won't work in terms of getting what you want, if that is to feel more secure.
• Recognising that you’re jealous and that your beliefs about what is going on are likely to be severely warped by this, and using that energy on something constructive to feel proud of. For example, you can go to the gym, take the children out, make something or learn something.
• Doing something you’ve always wanted to do.
• Letting go the beliefs that we have any rights over who our partners see or what they do. Your partner is in a relationship with you because she chooses to be. If she stops choosing to be in it, there is nothing ultimately that you can do about it. You will survive it.
Accountability for past abuse
Grief

SHOCK & DENIAL

ANGER

‘SADNESS’, REFLECTION, LONELINESS

EXPERIMENTATION

ACTION

ACCEPTANCE, RECOVERY
Substance misuse module

- Identifying patterns of use
- Identify links with relationship problems and domestic abuse
- Educational materials on the effects of substance use
- Identifying times of highest risk and developing strategies to avoid them
Working with Fathers
Assessment and engagement around this issue

Worksheets

Positive regard for my child

How well do I know my child

(from ‘Caring Dads’)
The wall

When they are very angry at ‘the system’…

• What / who are obstacles between where their lives are now and how they want them to be? (this might, for example, be about what stands between them and their contact with their children) – these are the bricks in the wall (you can draw it or build it or just talk about it)

• When they face this wall how do they feel? (for example, anger, helplessness, shame)

• How might they act when these feelings are strongest? (what are they tempted to do and say?)

• Which actions would help to dismantle the wall and which would only serve to strengthen it? (possibly brainstorm in 2 columns)
Setting goals for parenting

• Have the parent come up with 3 hopes for their relationship with their child

• Draw up a scale of 1 to 5 and have each parent place how they are doing in relation to each of these goals right now. Where would they ideally like to get to? Where would be good enough to get to?

• Update the personal plan in the light of these goals

(Include consideration of the effect a good relationship with his partner or ex partner has on his children)
Increasing empathy for children

- Exploring man’s own understanding effects of abuse on children generally and his children in particular (iceberg metaphor is useful here)
- ‘Argument outside the room’ recording
- Child empathy role play
- Educational input on impact of DV on children
ICEBERGS

- The worker explains how most of an iceberg is hidden beneath the water and draws this on a piece of paper.

- The worker asks the parent what their child shows when their mum and dad fight? What would be visible in terms of their actions and feelings. The worker asks the parent to draw the child’s iceberg – “what does s/he show on the surface when these things go on?”, “and what do imagine is going on underneath?” This is drawn or written into the submerged section of the iceberg.

- The parent is asked to look at what they have drawn and is given another iceberg. The worker says – “when you look at that, these are the things you show on the surface” and writes in what she sees. Then she hands the pen to the parent and asks “what’s going on underneath for you?”
Steps for ordinary child discipline

• Modelling *
• Giving clear instructions as to what you want the child to do
• Giving praise and attention for good behaviour *
• Ignoring bad behaviour
• Confrontation - “NO, don’t do that” followed by firm authoritative instructions *
• Incentives – star charts work for younger children – set them up for agreed behaviours and maintain them consistently until better habits have formed. Incentives charts work on older children with agreed rewards when the child has earned enough points from agreed ‘goal’ behaviours. Contracts may also work with older children.
• Consequences –
  ➢ offer choices and speak of the logical consequences first
    (eg. if you make the choice to wear only a t-shirt then you
    will end up cold)
  ➢ for more serious issues where you are not willing to allow
    choice insist that the child must first do …… before you will
    co-operate with her in any way.
  ➢ negative consequences for bad behaviours (eg. Confiscation of toys for younger children)

• Family rule discussion – for older children – sit down as a
  family and discuss the problems. Gather your children’s ideas
  about what are the key problems and how to address them. Try
  to reach compromise and agreement.

• Time out - time out should not be an alternative to completing
  a task, but a consequence of bad behaviour.
Modelling

• Who is important in your child’s life?
• What behaviours from you set good examples of how to communicate with these people and how to manage frustration?
• How you rate yourself on a scale of 1 to 10 in communicating and managing frustration with others - especially those important to your child?
• How can you appreciate others who are important in your child’s life to the child (eg. Other parent, foster carers etc?)
* **Praise**

- Get them to share ways they remember being put down or felt they were negatively labelled as a child
- How did this affect them?
- How did they feel to person to said those things to them?
- How do they do that to their own child?
- How can they praise their own child – both for specific skills and attributes but also for specific behaviours. Ask them to log praise for their children in the coming weeks.
The over-controlling parent
Parenting log

1. **ACTIONS**: place them on the continuum from child centred to parent centred:

   child |---------------------------------------------------------------| parent centred
   centred

2. **FEELINGS**

3. **THOUGHTS** (eg. About the child or what you would do etc.?)

4. **INTENTS**: What did you want those actions to achieve? What did you want the child to learn from them? - place on the continuum from child centred to parent centred:

   child |---------------------------------------------------------------| parent centred
   centred

5. **BELIEFS**: How does this incident suggest you expect things should be?

6. Where might you have learned these beliefs?

7. **EFFECTS**: - On the child, On you & On others

8. **ALTERNATIVES**: child-centred non-abusive ways to achieve the child-centred intentions identified above. These might include alternative thoughts and actions.