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Contents

The Campaign for Action on Family Violence

Peter Hughes

New Zealand's rates of child abuse and neglect, levels of domestic violence, death rates of children and women, and the level of elder abuse are shameful.

Family violence is the theme of this issue of *Social Work Now*, with a range of contributors focusing on different aspects of research and practice. It is timely to highlight the issues, with a major new campaign underway that aims to change the way people think about and act on family violence.

Amongst the many initiatives, people in Marlborough are seeing messages about family violence all over their community - in schools, cinema advertisements and pub toilets. In Kaikoura a community concert ended recently with a packed hall singing their commitment to a violence-free community. The Somalian community in Auckland is making a TV series on family violence, a family violence strategy is being developed for the Chinese community, and in Wairoa the community is working to prevent elder abuse.

Family violence is becoming everyone's business. It has to. Police respond to around 70,000 calls about family violence every year and many thousands more cases go unreported. Family violence causes death, injury and fear. It destroys families, and jeopardises children's

health, education and long-term outcomes. It has huge economic costs to families, the health system, the justice system and workplaces.

Eliminating family violence is a significant priority for the government but it can't do it alone. Local leadership is also needed to challenge violence. Individuals and their families, neighbourhoods, communities, whānau, iwi, hapū, and the business and local government sectors are all vital to bringing about change.

The Campaign for Action on Family Violence, a major initiative of the Taskforce for Action on Violence within Families, aims to work with communities to put family violence on everyone's agenda. It recognises that it is currently too easy for people to say "it only happens over there" or "it's none of my business."

The campaign is about increasing awareness and understanding, and getting more people to acknowledge that there is something they can do about family violence even if they are not directly affected by it. It is also about promoting a greater propensity to act on family violence, for victims, perpetrators, families and influencers.

These objectives reflect the complexities of changing the behaviour of people who use

violence to get what they want within their families. People behave the way they do for a wide variety of reasons. They are motivated to change, or not, by a number of influences and they maintain that change for still more reasons.

Leading with a message that family violence is not OK, the campaign will develop a myriad of ways to connect with people as it promotes violence-free relationships.

Many communities have been working in family violence prevention for a long time. Supporting communities to develop projects that meet the needs of local audiences is pivotal to the success of the campaign. Support will include mass media, resources, a website, an 0800 information line, funding for community projects and media training.

At a national level, the TV advertising is reinforcing the message that family violence is never OK. The advertising is about getting more people thinking and talking about family violence wherever they are: at home, at work or in social gatherings.

The campaign is based on research with male perpetrators of intimate partner violence. This research sought to increase understanding of behaviours, attitudes, beliefs and feelings surrounding men who are violent. It also aimed to find possible drivers for motivating change.

The research found that the men had many excuses for their violence, including feelings of anger and low self-esteem, their upbringing and alcohol. They believed they were marginalised and picked on and were confused about male roles. They saw violence as extreme and physical and felt it was a way to get short-term gains, such as control over an event.

The men wanted to gain love and respect, and connected with the idea of change when they understood that what they were doing was preventing this. The men were motivated to change by seeing the effect of their behaviour on their children.

Further research was carried out to see if these results were reflected in the general population. This found that violent behaviour is minimised and kept invisible by perpetrators, victims and society in general. It also found a belief that violence is a lower-socioeconomic, or a Māori and Pacific issue. There was also a belief that family violence is physical and extreme, and justified and acceptable in some circumstances.

If each of us takes personal responsibility for doing what we can do, we can create an environment where family violence is no longer tolerated in New Zealand. Family violence is a problem we can all do something about.

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Safeguarding everyone in the family – family group conferences and family violence

Dr Joan Pennell

Aotearoa New Zealand has offered so much to other countries on how to draw upon family and culture in safeguarding children and young people. From applying the New Zealand model of family group conferences (FGCs), other jurisdictions have learned about ways to involve families and their communities in making decisions with and about their young members. These decisions have been found to maintain lifelong connections to family, kin and culture without further endangering children and young people's safety. This finding is striking because too often families who come to the attention of children's care and protection agencies are viewed as 'dysfunctional' and incapable of making good choices for their youngsters. When domestic violence emerges as an issue, suspicions of the family sharpen.

Both domestic violence and child maltreatment refer to patterns of violation by respectively intimate partners or parents/caregivers who are expected to offer caring, not harm. Family violence - the interaction of domestic violence and child maltreatment - generates multiple questions. On one hand, holding FGCs raises questions about their putting survivors at risk. On the other hand, not holding FGCs raises questions about perpetuating institutional racism against children and their families who are marginalised because of income, colour, heritage or nationality.

Legitimate fears of FGCs in the context of family violence

The identification of domestic violence in the household in itself leads to questions: Can children thrive if they are exposed to domestic violence? Will such a home teach children to abuse and be abused? Answers are not clear cut, and nuanced assessments of the impact on children are needed (Edleson, 2004). The combination of child maltreatment and domestic violence increases fears that children will be traumatised (Rossman, Rea, Graham-Bermann, & Butterfield, 2004) as well as concerns that perpetrators will use the children to control their intimate partners including after separation (Bancroft & Silverman, 2002).

Reports to child protection are one strategy that perpetrators use to manipulate their partners.

This was aggravated in the United States by some states passing legislation that children witnessing domestic violence are in need of protection. This led to many children unnecessarily being removed from their homes and increased the suffering of the abused partner (Dunford-Jackson, 2004). A countermeasure is differential response, a strategy that New Zealand is in the process of introducing. Differential response is a means of responding in a more flexible manner and reducing the reliance on forensic investigations, and enlarging family supports (Dyson, 2007).

Nevertheless, bringing FGCs or other restorative processes into this mix heightens the uncertainties: Will batterers manipulate the decision process? Will victims feel intimidated at the conference? Will relatives fear retaliation or retaliate against the abusers? Will the family group make plans to keep the couple together at the expense of those victimised? Will social workers blame the abused mother for the perpetrator's failure to carry out the plan? And more generally, will the cultural norms and practices of the family group condone family violence? (Francis, 2002; Pennell & Burford, 2000b). Fuller discussions of these questions can be found in Cook, Daly, and Stubbs (2006); Ptacek (2005); and Strang and Braithwaite (2002).

None of these questions should be ignored - they concern legitimate issues that need to be addressed. The solution, however, is not to be found in reverting to professionally driven decision making. Such an approach, as indigenous peoples have documented (Rangihau, 1986; The four circles of Hollow Water, 1997; Kelly, 2002), has a history of reinforcing

institutional racism rather than empowering families and their communities to stop family violence. Nor does the lasting solution rest on removing adult survivors and children from their homes and communities. While sanctuary may be the only recourse, refuges and secret locations are not healthy places for children and their families to live over the long-term. As severely abused women relayed, living in hiding makes them "so alone, so alienated," "depressed," and "sick" and their children need the "safety net" of family connections (Pennell & Francis, 2005, pp. 680-682).

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> ## Although limited in extent, the research on FGC and family violence shows positive results
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Although limited in extent, the research on FGCs and family violence shows positive results. A Canadian study of FGCs in situations of family violence did not find that violence took place during or after the meetings because of the conferences (Pennell & Burford, 2000a). In addition, the Canadian research found reductions in indicators of child maltreatment and domestic violence for the families for whom a conference was held, while these same indicators rose somewhat for the comparison families who did not have an FGC.

Countering institutional racism

FGCs, and more generally family-centred meetings, have demonstrated some effectiveness in countering institutional racism. When family groups have a voice in where their young relatives are to reside, they seek to keep children with their siblings, family, kin, and/or cultural group (Merkel, Nixon, & Burford, 2003). This leads to a decline in the number of children entering state care and a rise in relative foster care placements.

In the United States, a comparative study in the national capital, Washington DC, found that the institution of family team meetings significantly increased kin care and expedited the return of children to their parents without setting their safety at greater risk (Edwards & Tinworth, 2006). This largely affected children and adolescents from African American families who are disproportionately represented in the foster care system. In Washington, 71 percent of people under 18 years are African American according to the US Census Bureau on July 1 2006, while this population comprises 94 percent of those in foster care (DC CFSA, 2007).

Similarly, another comparative study in Texas, of a hybrid model of FGCs and traditional Hawaiian practices, reported that non-relative foster care placements decreased, relative care increased, and children were reunited with their parents at a faster pace (Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, 2006). This pattern was evident for African American, Hispanic, and Anglo children but, given that it was least pronounced for the last group, non-mainstream children seemed to benefit the most from the family group meetings.

Including different sides of the family group

Given the benefits of FGCs to children and their families from diverse populations, prohibiting its application in all instances where there is a history of domestic violence would be problematic. Moreover, this ban would be nearly impossible to enforce because domestic violence is highly prevalent in child protection caseloads

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In situations of family violence, careful attention to organising the meeting is especially called for

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(Edleson, 1999) and because the workers are often unaware of its presence.

A US study of the extent to which child welfare agencies involve fathers who live apart from their children reported that child welfare administrators and caseworkers cited the possibility of violence as a reason for not involving the fathers (Malm, Murray, & Green, 2006). The fear is that these fathers will endanger the safety of the mother and children and the workers. At the same time, these same agencies referenced FGCs and other family group decision making meetings as good practices to engage the fathers, or at least the paternal relatives, in planning for the children.

The latter supposition is supported by various studies that found fathers or the paternal side of the family taking part in the deliberations (Pennell, 2006a; Veneski & Kemp, 2000). Moreover, having multiple sides of the family group at the meeting appears to increase the likelihood that the plan will include more contributions from the family, specify steps for monitoring and evaluating its implementation, and be approved by child welfare in a timely manner (Pennell, 2006b).

Safeguarding FGC participants

For any conference, FGC coordinators need to prepare the family group and service providers. This is humane, and adequate preparation seems to decrease the possibility of manipulation during the family private time (Pennell, 2006a). As FGC coordinators in New Zealand have long recognised, the family group members are more likely to feel comfortable at the conference if they know why it is being convened, identify people to invite, and figure out arrangements

that fit their culture (Connolly & McKenzie, 1999; Paterson & Harvey, 1991). In situations of family violence, careful attention to organising the meeting is especially called for.

Helpful measures include assessing the safety of participants and working out in advance measures to safeguard them, encouraging a person who has been victimised to designate a support person to stay by them during the meeting, inviting a women's advocate to share information at the conference about the effects of domestic violence, or more generally working with women's groups to develop local protocols and educate workers about holding FGCs when there is a history of family violence (Burford, Pennell, & MacLeod, 1995; Pennell, 2005). If a no-contact or restraining order is in place, it should be respected. This may mean excluding the perpetrator, but other inventive strategies may be applied. For instance, meetings can stagger attendance by having the perpetrator present at the first part of the conference and the survivor at the second part. This approach holds out more promise than separate meetings or exclusions for lessening suspicions and formulating a coherent and agreed-upon plan (Pennell, 2007).

In conclusion, Aotearoa New Zealand has provided a gift to other countries seeking to place family groups at the centre of child welfare decision making. When family groups are invited to make plans concerning care and protection, they usually opt to keep the children and young persons connected to their kin and cultural roots. Holding FGCs, though, in situations of family violence raises questions about whether the process will be safe before, during, and after the conferences. Especially in these situations, conference preparations should be thorough, plans should be carefully scrutinised in terms of safeguarding all family members, and follow-through on the plans after

the conferences is crucial. To not hold FGCs reduces the say that survivors and their families have over their affairs and jeopardises children's family connections. To hold FGCs offers the promise of countering to some extent the racism ingrained in our child welfare systems.

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'Talking to my mum': Strengthening relationships between mothers and children in the aftermath of family violence

Professor Cathy Humphreys

The evidence that children are at risk of harm when they live with family violence is remarkably consistent. No study suggests that there are not heightened risks and vulnerabilities to their safety and wellbeing (Hester et al, 2007). This article draws attention to the harm created through damaging the relationship between children and their mothers. It argues that family violence represents not only an attack on the adult victim (usually women), or a child victim, but an attack on the relationship between the child and their mother. The article arises from an action research project which worked with women, children and refuge workers to develop activities which could address this destructive aspect of family violence through strengthening the relationship between mothers and their children.

The project developed from a collaboration between researchers at the University of Warwick and Colchester and Tendering Women's Aid in the UK. It sought to address the consistent finding that children were harmed by living with family violence, through a project that was positive and solution-focused. In particular, the researchers were interested to address the consistent research finding that less than a third of mothers or children spoke to each other about the violence and abuse they were living with (Abrahams, 1994; McGee, 2000; Mullender et al, 2002). Such a pattern suggested that there was an active undermining of the relationship and the communication between mothers and their children when living with family violence. It was strengthening this communication that the action research sought to address with seven refuges and four community-based projects that worked with women and children who had lived with family violence.

The initial starting point of the research with women involved naming the 'tactics of abuse' that were used to undermine the relationship between children and their mothers. The examples were myriad and included both

direct and indirect ways of undermining the relationship: direct attacks during pregnancy; preventing women attending to their babies; insulting and criticising the woman in front of the children; expecting women to control children so that they are virtually 'seen but not heard'; demanding all the woman's attention so that she is unable to attend to the children properly; active sleep deprivation. The indirect effects on the mother-child relationship were created through ensuring that the woman was unavailable to her children through disabling her physically (needing to be hospitalised; in bed recovering from back or other injuries), or mentally (through the symptoms of abuse such as depression, trauma and suicide attempts).

The initial work with children and young people and workers occurred in focus groups to establish the issues that children thought were important and the activities that they enjoyed doing with their mothers. Activities for mothers and their children were developed to address five different themes that had emerged to help children: build self-esteem and confidence; identify and talk about feelings; stay safe; strengthen communication with their mothers; and talk about aspects of their lives that may have previously been clouded by secrecy.

Over a three-year period activities were developed and tested out with children and their mothers over three cycles of work, with different children and their mothers in each cycle. Two different books of activities were developed for children under nine (*Talking to My Mum: A picture workbook for workers, mothers*

and children affected by domestic abuse, Humphreys et al, 2006) and a second book based on photos as trigger points for discussion for young people approximately nine and over (*Talking About Domestic Abuse: A photo activity workbook to develop communication between mothers and young people*, Humphreys et al, 2006).

Embedding the work in practice was not straightforward. Work needed to be undertaken with women, children and workers to create the circumstances or *readiness* such that women and children enjoyed, or at least could constructively engage with the activities. A clear start point was that organisations needed to have overcome the strategic divide between services for women and services for children. Moreover, management needed to actively support the work so that frontline workers were able to make it a priority in a busy and often crisis-driven caseload.

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It was also clear from the three years of work in this area that women often needed to be actively supported by workers and in a position to acknowledge that their children may have been negatively affected by the family violence with which they had lived. Those women who were already engaged with a counsellor, either for themselves or their children or else in a group, found that the 'Talking to My Mum' activities provided an easy complement to this work. Other women required help and encouragement to continue with activities that brought up some difficult issues for them and their children to address. This occurred

particularly around the activity, 'Talking about my dad' which frequently raised intense feelings for both women and children. However, of the 45 self-selecting women who participated in the activities, all felt that the activities had been helpful in their relationship with their children, with 88 percent stating that it had made a positive difference and 34 percent of these reporting that this was a major difference.

Similarly, children also reported very positive benefits to participating in the activities with their mothers. Through interview, it was clear that the overwhelming benefit lay in 'spending time with mum'. One gained the impression that any joint activity may have been helpful. All of the 52 children put themselves at the mid-point or above on scales for both the enjoyment of the activities and the fact that the activities had been helpful in talking to their mothers.

In the end, however, it is not the activities per se that are important. Of greater significance is firstly that workers recognise in their assessments that a poor relationship between women and children may be the result of the perpetrator's attack on the mother-child relationship. This relationship may well be amenable to change and strengthening when women and children have separated from the perpetrator of family violence and where active support is provided by workers. Secondly, the divide between women's services and children's services needs to be overcome to ensure that relationship work is possible. Thirdly, strengthening the mother-child relationship may need to go beyond traditional 'parenting programmes' which fail to allow space to 'debrief' the place that violence and abuse has played in shaping the child's experience and the constraints to mothering under such adverse circumstances.

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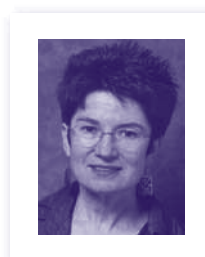
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Family violence and cultural context

Yvonne Crichton-Hill

Family violence affects a considerable number of people in New Zealand each year. In fact, the Taskforce for Action on Violence within Families describes New Zealand's rates of family violence as "shameful" (Ministry of Social Development, 2006, p.4) whilst other authors (Kruger, Pitman, Grennell, McDonald, Mariu, Pomare, Mita, Maihi, and Lawson-Te-Aho, 2004) describe whanau violence as an "epidemic" (p.4).

Over the past decade or so, New Zealand has steadily expanded its efforts to reduce violence through legal and structural reform, service and programme enhancement, and public education campaigns. In 2005, the Taskforce for Action on Violence within Families was established to provide advice to the Family Violence Ministerial Team. The Taskforce signifies "a new phase in New Zealand's efforts to eliminate family violence" (Ministry of Social Development, 2006, p.30). It is made up of representatives from government, non-government organisations, the judiciary, the Families Commission, and the Children's Commissioner, who work in partnership to develop New Zealand's strategy for violence prevention. The Taskforce has developed its first programme of action aimed at the areas of leadership, changing attitudes and behaviour, ensuring safety and accountability, and effective support services (Ministry of Social Development, 2006).

Family violence affects all families and exists across all cultures, backgrounds and socioeconomic situations (Ministry of Social Development, 2002). This article considers how practitioners and organisations can provide effective, culturally responsive services to those experiencing family violence.

Family violence

Violence in the family may include "controlling behaviours of a physical, sexual, and/or psychological nature which typically involves fear, intimidation, and emotional deprivation" (Ministry of Social Development, 2002, p. 8). Family violence is described as being perpetrated:

> "within a variety of close interpersonal relationships such as between partners, parents and children, siblings, and in other relationships where significant others are not part of the physical household but are part of the family and/or are fulfilling the function of family." (Ministry of Social Development, 2002, p.8)

Te Rito: *the New Zealand Family Violence Prevention Strategy* (Ministry of Social Development, 2002), describes family violence as consisting of a number of *forms* of intra-familial violence including child abuse/neglect, spouse

abuse, elder abuse/neglect, parental abuse, and sibling abuse.

However, in thinking about the *forms* of family violence it would seem that there is more understanding and research in some areas of family violence than others. For example, child abuse/neglect and spouse abuse are well researched and well understood forms of family violence. There is a range of government and non-government services in place to respond to the needs of victims and perpetrators, even though there has been criticism that these service responses need to be better coordinated to respond adequately to needs (Appel & Kim-Appel, 2006; Carter, 2003; Pence & Taylor, 2003). Conversely, there is a paucity of research about elder abuse/neglect; a lack of data means it is difficult to estimate the levels of elder abuse in New Zealand (Fallon, 2006). It would appear there is even less research and understanding of sibling abuse and a minimal amount of research about parental abuse, otherwise known as adolescent violence towards parents (Crichton-Hill, Evans & Meadows, 2007). Areas that suffer from a lack of research and understanding are likely to have fewer services dedicated to addressing the issue and social work practice methods are likely to be less well developed. However, there are frameworks that can be used whatever the family context, whatever the form of family violence. Here we move to examining cultural diversity and in particular cultural responsiveness for social work practice in a family violence context.

First it is important to define culture as something more than ethnicity. This is often the simplification made, that culture and ethnicity

are the same thing. In simplifying culture in this way we fail to recognise that ethnicity is not the only thing that differentiates us. Try to describe yourself by completing the sentence "I am …". You may well find that you use a number of words to describe yourself including (but not limited to) gender, ethnicity, sexuality and age. Therefore, cultural identity is formed through our identification with multiple social categories that have varying degrees of importance for us (Fellin, 2000). Furthermore, culture (and therefore our cultural identity) is continually changing.

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Our view of the world will be influenced by the context within which we live and the experiences we have had to date

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Our view of the world will be influenced by the context within which we live and the experiences we have had to date. In this sense culture, and cultural identity, are dynamic, shifting concepts. They are also central to the process of social work in the area of family violence.

"… culture will have a determining effect on the process of social work… different societies and varying degrees of the same society (or culture) will have different preferred strategies of action." (Crichton-Hill, 2001, p.209).

The centrality of culture in social work practice with children and families is well supported by a number of conventions and codes. They include the Aotearoa New Zealand Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics (including the Aotearoa New Zealand Association of Social Workers Bicultural Code of Practice), the International Federation of Social Workers Code of Ethics, and the Social Workers Registration Board Code of Conduct for Social Workers which all articulate the importance of acknowledging and valuing culture and delivering social work services in a culturally appropriate manner. The

United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child recognises a child's right to preserve their identity and to have their cultural identity, language and values respected. Other relevant documents include the Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, and the Convention on Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women.

Furthermore, Bancroft and Silverman (2002) state that families where violence occurs are shaped by a combination of factors including the relationship between the parents, and between each parent and each child, and the family's relationship to the outside world. These relationships are influenced by cultural beliefs and thus culture is critically important when thinking about community response systems and interventions.

Working with culture and diversity

Many organisations that work in the field of family violence conduct this work in a context of resource constraints, high workloads, high staff turnover, and increasing public scrutiny (Connolly, Crichton-Hill & Ward, 2006). These organisations, as a result of public pressure, become more focused on increasing accountability and reducing the possibility of mistakes being made. The result is a focus on instruments and tools — sometimes at the same time as an ever decreasing focus on the social worker-client relationship. This has led to an approach to child protection practice, training and supervision that is quickly delivered, quickly fixed and has been termed an 'administrative approach' to child protection (Connolly, Crichton-Hill & Ward, 2006).

The common 'iceberg' metaphor can help us when we think of culture in this context. Above the waterline are the aspects of culture that are tangible and explicit including aspects such as dress, language, and food. These aspects generally inform us about the superficial characteristics of a person. Below the waterline is deeply embedded culture including habits, values, beliefs and views of the world. It is above the waterline that quick-fix approaches address; it is below the waterline that social work practitioners seek to understand. In order to gain understanding of that which is 'below the waterline', practitioners need to be culturally responsive. However, practitioners make up only one part of the equation.

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Cultural responsiveness can be thought of as consisting of three levels including practitioner, agency and community

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Cultural responsiveness can be thought of as consisting of three levels — practitioner, agency and community (Miley, O'Melia, & DuBois, 1998). Cultural responsiveness at the *practitioner level* is made up of appropriate attitude, knowledge and skill (Lum, 2003; Tsang & George, 1998). From the *attitudinal* point of view, cultural responsiveness is enhanced if the practitioner is critically aware of his or her own personal values, cultural heritage, values and bias, and has awareness of the culture of others and the impact of this cultural thinking on others. Connolly et.al., (2006) acknowledge that in addition to the personal self there is a professional self where it must be recognised that theoretical ideas "have the capacity to powerfully influence the way in which we think about family violence and how we then respond" (p.33). Walsh (2006) adds that the professional self is strongly influenced by the agency within which they work and that "a social worker's ideas about theory and practice are likely to change to resemble those of immediate colleagues" (p.9). Practitioners need

to have the ability to examine their personal and professional selves in a critical and honest way.

In addition, practitioners need to develop a keen *knowledge* of the socio-historical context within which they are practising, the systemic context within which they work, and the unique culture of the family with whom they are working. Developing knowledge of unique family culture highlights that being culturally responsive is not about treating all members of a group in the same way. Furthermore, cultural responsiveness could be said to occur in every encounter as we will always be working with an individual or family who is different to us in some way. Encounters will vary in the level of comfort we experience. Moreover, practitioners need to be able to explain how the dynamics of family violence and the dynamics of culture interact and the implications of this for social work practice. Finally, practitioners need to have the ability to transform attitude and knowledge in to *skills* that are appropriate according to their professional role and the family cultural context within which they are operating.

Just as becoming a culturally responsive practitioner is a developmental process, so is becoming a culturally responsive organisation a developmental process. At the *agency level* culturally responsive agencies provide opportunities for practitioners to reflect, usually through supervision, on the impact of the personal and professional selves on the social work process. In addition, agencies train workers in the skills and knowledge necessary to achieve culturally responsive practice. Agencies that

work in the arena of family violence, therefore, should have a set of congruent policies (for example, recruitment and practice policy) that come together to support practitioners to work well in situations of cultural difference. In this way, the agency strives to deliver services that are reflective of its commitment to building cultural responsiveness and reducing family violence. Furthermore, the agencies' networks and resources need to reflect a commitment to cultural responsiveness

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The *community level* of cultural responsiveness refers to the ongoing desire to develop a societal context that celebrates diversity and works toward social justice. This fits well with New Zealand's desire to reduce levels of family violence, and the programmes and strategies that are in place currently.

If New Zealand is to eliminate family violence we must consider how to provide a service delivery system that is effective. Given that family violence occurs across a range of cultural contexts, those effective service delivery systems must be culturally responsive. It appears that the most effective solution to family violence is to think about how we can be effective at each of the three levels of practitioner, agency and community. After all, as Pyles & Kyung Mee suggest:

> *"it seems that one will have greater success addressing domestic violence ... in a culturally competent way if one works in an agency that is culturally competent." (2006, p.226).*

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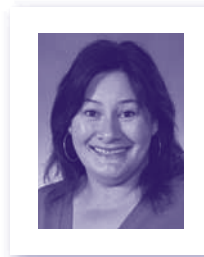
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Power and control in family violence

Sheryl Hann

Women's Refuges have been operating for 33 years in Aotearoa New Zealand, and last year worked with 16,728 women and 12,107 children. Increasingly, Women's Refuges, along with many family violence agencies, are entering into collaborative networks and interagency projects focused on whānau wellbeing and preventing (more) family or domestic violence.[1] One of the challenges of interagency collaboration around family violence is the differing understanding of violence that agencies bring to the table. Hester (2005) has warned of the dangers to children and their families when agencies are operating on different 'planets', each with their own presumptions, analyses, cultures and laws. Vital to the success of interagency work therefore, is a common understanding of the problem of family violence.

This article aims to assist the conversations and learning about one aspect of family violence, by outlining the power and control analysis of partner abuse that is employed by the National Collective of Independent Women's Refuges.

Origins of the power and control analysis

The first Refuges in Aotearoa New Zealand were formed by women's collectives, community development workers and activist groups seeking to raise awareness of domestic violence. While the initial aim was to provide a safe place for women and their children escaping violence, Refuge workers quickly realised that supporting women and children necessitated battling against dominant institutions and individuals who denied, minimised or wanted to ignore domestic violence.

From the early days, an understanding of domestic violence as a social problem with cultural and institutional supports has been central to the kaupapa of Women's Refuge. Refuge advocates conceptualise domestic violence as a feature of a society characterised by unequal power relationships, particularly one where on many levels men dominate and women are disempowered. While partner abuse is one important aspect of sexism within a patriarchal society, violence against women and children is also linked to other oppressions such as racism, classism (the divide between the rich and poor), homophobia, and heterosexism.

In developing their understandings of violence in the home, Women's Refuge have been strongly influenced by the analysis of domestic abuse

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1. I use family and domestic violence interchangeably in this article. The legislation refers to 'domestic violence' while Police and other government policy refer to 'family violence'. In New Zealand both terms are inclusive of child abuse and neglect, same- and different-sex partner abuse, and elder abuse and neglect, as well as other violence between family or whānau members.

developed in the US city of Duluth, home of the Duluth Abuse Intervention Project (DAIP).

DAIP started as a support group of abused women, and went on to develop world-leading education and training programmes for victims and perpetrators, models for collaboration and coordination of community services, a system for auditing communities to improve responsiveness to domestic violence, and training for professionals and practitioners (Shepard and Pence, 1999). The Duluth model provides the framework for working with domestic violence for thousands of agencies all around the world, including the Hamilton Abuse Intervention Project (HAIP) (Balzer, 1999).

While DAIP worked with men who were perpetrators and victims of violence as well as women, they were very clear that domestic violence was centrally a problem of men's violence towards women and children. Although men and women might both use physical violence, the intent and effect of their violence differs. Men who use violence do so instrumentally, in order to dominate their partner, while women are more likely to use violence towards a partner for self-defence or retaliation for abuse (Dasgupta, 1999; Gelles, 2007; Kimmel, 2002; Loseke & Kurz, 2005). Pence and Paymar (1993) claim that in 10 years of working with thousands of victims of violence, they saw only seven cases of men who were 'battered', that is fearful of their female partner's violence and unable to leave the relationship. Fear and entrapment however were commonly experienced by female victims of violence.

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violence as a gendered issue (Yllo, 2005). It was first developed in the early 1980s by DAIP advocates and women who had experienced violence. Women's stories of abuse challenged the idea that violence was only about physical or sexual assaults. While the physical or sexual assaults might be regular or infrequent, the women experienced no respite from mind-games, threats, put-downs, manipulations, and controlling behaviours. Focusing on incidents of physical or sexual violence renders invisible all the intangible and sometimes hidden tactics used by abusive men that instil fear and undermine women's sense of self and their ability to control their own lives.

By highlighting the ongoing tactics of psychological abuse that have such debilitating and destructive effects on victims of violence, the power and control analysis revolutionised the way that people thought about domestic violence. The analysis contradicts ideas that violence is a result of an explosion of anger or frustration that can be addressed by reducing stress and teaching anger management. Refuge advocates often point out that most abusers are very good at managing their anger: They do not strangle their work colleagues, threaten people at the supermarket, or rape their friends; they choose to wait until they get home to do it. While stress, drug and alcohol misuse, poverty, and childhood exposure to violence can be seen as factors contributing to domestic violence, the power and control analysis identifies that abusers use violence intentionally and benefit from its use. As Pence and Paymar (1993) point out, "[a]lthough many men experience themselves as out of control or controlled by emotional outbursts when battering, their

behaviours are not without intent." Violence by some men towards women and children in the home is largely a result of the men's belief in their right to control, dominate, and take charge of their families.

The structural analysis of domestic violence as a "tactic of entitlement and power that is deeply gendered" (Yllo, 2005 p.24) leads Refuge advocates to focus their work on women's empowerment as a way to protect both women and their children, as well as working to transform social systems so that safety is prioritised, the needs of victims of violence are met, violent men are held to account, and domestic violence is not tolerated.
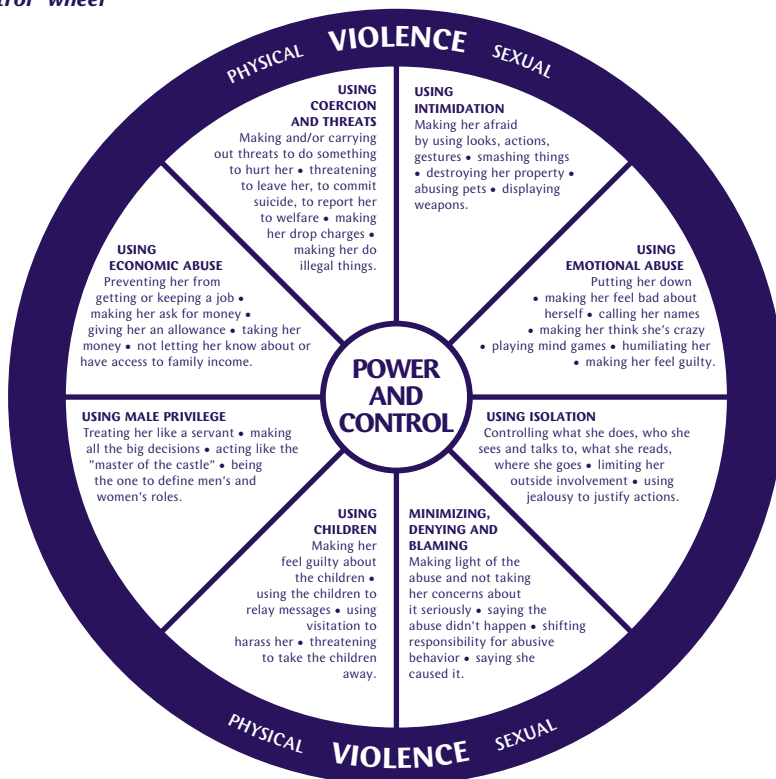
The power and control wheel

The 'power and control wheel' is the main practice tool used by those working with the power and control analysis. The wheel is an effective tool in advocacy and clinical work with victims of violence. Victims use the wheel to find the language to name the violence they have experienced, as well as to understand the pattern and meaning of the violence. As a training tool, the power and control wheel helps people to understand the dynamics of violence and can be used as a 'checklist' when learning to identify partner abuse. As well as speaking to women's lived experiences, the power and control wheel is also effective in helping men who have used violence describe and understand their behaviours (Cunningham, Jaffe, Baker, et al, 1998).

The wheel shown here, used in Women's Refuge training and downloadable from their website,

Figure 1: Duluth
'power and control' wheel

VIOLENCE
PHYSICAL   SEXUAL

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 INTIMIDATION
Making her afraid by using looks, actions, gestures • smashing things • destroying her property • abusing pets • displaying weapons.

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 have access to family income.

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.

POWER AND CONTROL

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 and not taking her concerns about it seriously • saying the abuse didn't happen • shifting responsibility for abusive behavior • saying she caused it.

PHYSICAL   VIOLENCE   SEXUAL

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has only been slightly adapted from the one developed in Duluth. The wheel layout is designed to show that violence is a pattern of power and control, not an isolated incident, and is made up of sometimes seemingly unimportant or subtle behaviours that have a cumulative coercive effect on victims. Actual or threatened physical and sexual violence as the 'rim' holds the 'spokes' of the psychological abuse in place, allowing the tactics to work.

One aspect of domestic violence is not clear from the power and control wheel. While psychological abuse is reinforced by physical and sexual violence, psychological abuse can also occur alone (Murphy, 2002). Murphy argues that the power and control wheel conceals some of the key tactics of psychological abuse, such as separation abuse, inappropriate restriction, over-

protection, using social institutions to support the abuser's dominance, and symbolic aggression, and has developed a more comprehensive wheel of psychological abuse (see below).

A power and control view of violence is recognised within the Domestic Violence Act (1995: s3) which says that

> *"a single act may amount to abuse…[and] a number of acts that form part of a pattern of behaviour may amount to abuse…even though some or all of those acts, when viewed in isolation, may appear to be minor or trivial".*

This analysis also adds a new layer of understanding to the 'cycle of violence theory' in which domestic violence is understood to be characterised by a cycle of tension-building,

Figure 2: Psychological abuse 'power and control' wheel – reinforced by social beliefs
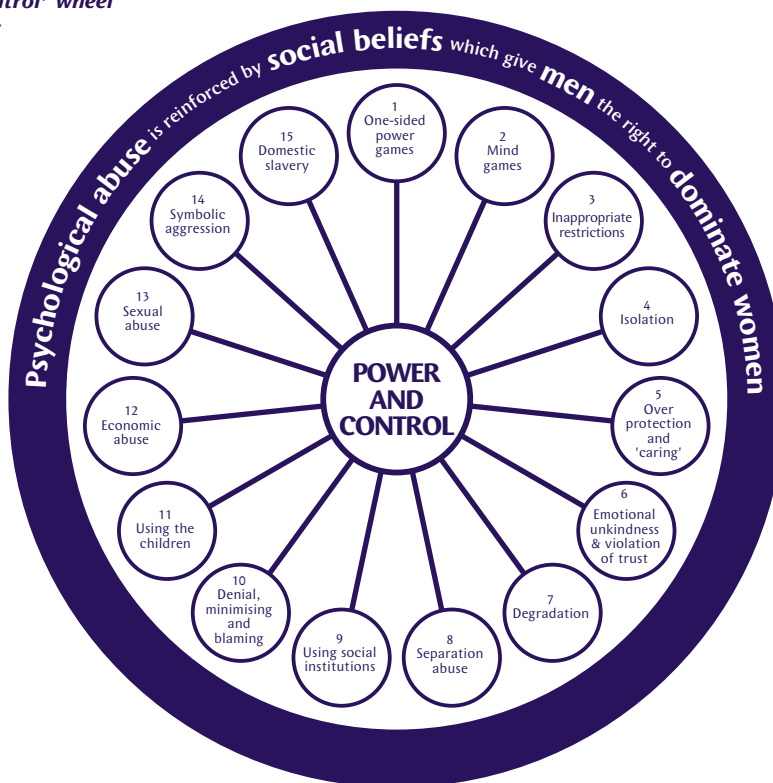
assault/incident of violence, and then abuser's remorse (or 'the honeymoon phase'). For some women, physical or sexual violence is episodic, but their abusers constantly use tactics of psychological abuse to control, dominate, and maintain fear in their victims. Thus the cycle of violence model is sometimes used in Refuge work to help identify how the 'honeymoon phase' can be experienced by women as part of the abuse. Practitioners and other outsiders coming into contact with a family after a serious incident of violence might see the abuser making promises to change, giving gifts and apologies, agreeing to go to a stopping violence programme, and declaring their love. However a victim may have seen this many times before and know that this behaviour is all part of the abuser's excuses, denial, and minimisation of the harm they have caused. The confusion that results from being battered one minute and loved the next, adds to women's trauma.

It is this relentless psychological abuse, a kind of violence that attacks victims' minds and souls rather than their bodies, that helps to explain why women might stay with an abuser. Victims of violence are told so often that they are stupid, crazy, useless, and unlovable that they begin to believe it. Abusers can also blame the victims for the violence and threaten women with whatever they know will hurt (reporting them to Child, Youth and Family, informing the Police, hurting the children, or outing them to friends and family). Abusers isolate women so that they have no friends or whānau to turn to, and strictly regulate and scrutinise women's actions, including their spending, so that women do not have the resources to leave.

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The power and control analysis, along with the wheel tool, have been adapted and given more depth by those considering the intersection of gender, ethnicity, sexuality and disability in the lives of women

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However, there is one practical reason why some women choose to live with their abuser. Women believe it is safer for them and their children to stay. Most domestic violence homicides and serious assaults happen in the few months after victims leave the violent relationship (Gelles, 1997). The victim separating from the abuser, starting a new relationship, or filing for a court order are key 'red flags' in the risk assessment used by the New Zealand Police. In 23 cases of family violence deaths in New Zealand between October 2005 and December 2006, 18 of the families had involvement with the Family Court (Boshier, 2007).

Power and control cannot be ended simply by women leaving the abuser. Stepping up their efforts to maintain control, abusers can increase their use of violence against women and children, and change their tactics. Any contact with the children and victims can potentially provide the abuser with an opportunity to assert their power and control. Practitioners therefore need to be alert to the dynamics of partner abuse, especially the tactics of psychological abuse and the effects on child witnesses and women victims, so that they are not drawn into supporting or participating in power and control tactics. Planning for the safety of all victims of violence is vital, and one key way to do this is to work collaboratively with domestic violence advocates and services (Humphreys, 2007).

Beyond power and control?

The central critiques of the power and control analysis focus on the claim that a gendered perspective fails to explain the diverse

experiences of victims and different forms of violence.

The power and control analysis, along with the wheel tool, have been adapted and given more depth by those considering the intersection of gender, ethnicity, sexuality and disability in the lives of women. For example, a native American women's project, Mending the Sacred Hoop, developed an understanding of the way gendered violence intersects with ethnicity and colonisation that has been used by Māori Refuge workers. Power and control wheels for abused women in same-sex relationships, and women living with disabilities or mental illness have also been developed (see http://www.ncdsv.org/publications_wheel.html).

Some researchers have argued that the power and control analysis should be de-gendered, citing family and interpersonal conflict research that appears to show relationship violence is mutual and that men experience the same amounts of violence as women (Fiebert, 1997 in Kimmel, 2002; Fergusson, Horwood, and Ridder, 2005). Findings of 'gender symmetry' in domestic violence however, have been shown to exclude the context, intentions and effects of the violence. While women may use physical acts of violence, women suffer more frequent and more severe physical, emotional and economic injuries, and are much more likely to feel fearful and have their lives controlled by their partners (Dasgupta, 1999; Gelles, 1997; Johnson, 2005; Kimmel, 2002). While not all violence is power and control, it is the most common kind of violence that comes to the attention of government and community agencies: "When attention is focused upon severe, damaging violence the dominant pattern of concern

remains violence towards women by men" (Humphries and Mullender, 1999: 7).

In the case of child abuse, the power and control wheel can be used to understand the overlap of partner and child abuse. The psychological abuse wheel shows how some violent men use their children as 'weapons' to abuse women, creating both adult and child victims. Another wheel (available at www.womensrefuge.org.nz) shows how partner violence affects children living in the family. Men who are violent towards their partners are known to be more likely to physically harm, psychologically abuse and/or neglect their children, and there is significant overlap between partner abuse and child sexual abuse (Bancroft and Silverman, 2002; Humphreys and Mullender, 1999).

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A child abuse wheel setting out tactics of violence and coercion used against children has been developed (see www.duluth-model.org). The child abuse power and control wheel shows how psychological, emotional and economic abuse, isolation, threats, intimidation, and adult privilege are used together with actual or threatened physical and sexual violence to dominate and control children. Using the power and control analysis, violence towards children by men and women is understood within the context of gendered violence, victimisation and responsibilities for childcare. If both parents/caregivers are suspected of abuse or neglect, this also involves identifying if there is a 'predominant aggressor' (that is, whether one of the adults is using power and control to dominate the other).

Other theories of violence do not replace but can work together with a power and control analysis. Feminist approaches that identify the

workings of power and control at the micro and macro levels align with the ecological model (Krug et al, 2002 in Fanslow, 2005) which considers individual, relationship, institutional, community and social factors that contribute to violent behaviour. Similarly the power and control model does not exclude a focus on individual personality or psychological factors that are emphasised in psychopathological theories of violence, but places these in a wider socio-political context (Cunningham, Jaffe, Baker, et al, 1998).

Conclusion

The power and control analysis continues to be widely used not only by Women's Refuge, but by other service providers and practitioners working with women, children and men affected by family violence. In family violence programmes and interventions worldwide, the power and control analysis predominates (Cunningham, Jaffe, Baker, et al, 1998). Since the mid-1980s, government policy has reflected the power and control analysis - from the early work of the Family Violence Prevention Advisory Committee to *The First Report* of the Taskforce on Violence within Families (2006, p.4), which states that:

> *"perpetrating violence within families, including establishing fear and the threat of violence, is usually a deliberate strategy to exert domination and power over others. Physical violence is often only one part of a range of strategies which may include psychological abuse and threats, financial abuse and sexual abuse, all of which create*

Figure 3: Child abuse wheel
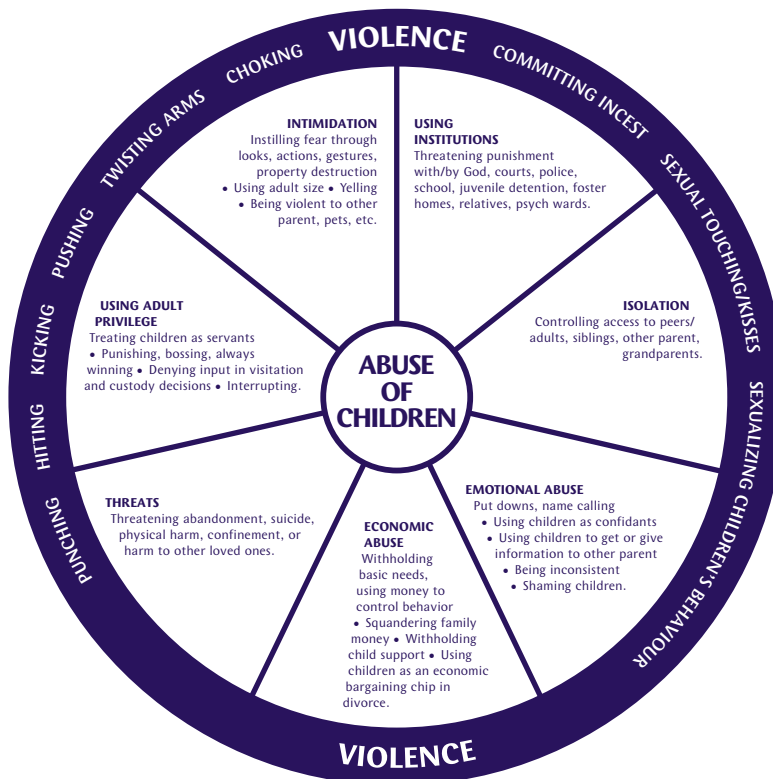
> *a context in which the perpetrator feels entitled to control the behaviour of others. Understanding that family violence operates within a context of power and control is crucial to keeping families safe."*

A knowledge of the tactics and effects of power and control, and the wheel tools, can aid practitioners in their efforts to identify, understand and respond to the violence and coercive control that affects children and their families. Whether children are the indirect victims of partner abuse, or the direct victims of violence, their safety will be enhanced by paying attention to how some men use power and control to dominate their families.

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The issue of violence and intimidation against social workers

Nova Salomen

There are many aspects to the role of a statutory social worker that make it a unique and challenging vocation. A worker fuelled with passion and motivation can make a significant difference to a child's or family's life. To be in such a privileged position as a statutory social worker is not to be underestimated. Working with children, young people and their families does provide workers with a rewarding and positive experience.

On the other side of this coin, however, a challenge for social workers is managing situations of intimidation or threats of violence by someone involved in a case. This is especially challenging when social workers are trying to engage with families and to create an environment that fosters change.

Practitioners work with violence and intimidation against children, and sometimes their family members, and this is an issue that is openly discussed in case planning and supervision. Violence and intimidation against the worker, however, is not so openly discussed. Research indicates that violence and intimidation toward social workers during the process of their work is under-reported (Rowett, 1986; Udy, 1986).

In New Zealand researchers found that a substantial level of client violence and threatening behaviour was occurring and was accepted as 'part of the job' (Beddoe, Appleton and Maher, 1998). The researchers found that 25 percent of those exposed to violence and threatening behaviour did not report the incidents to their supervisors or managers.

The purpose of this article is to raise awareness of this issue, and to assert that it is not just a 'part of the job' and that reporting incidents of violence or intimidation is vital to staff safety and wellbeing, as well as the safety and wellbeing of children and young people. The article concludes with a number of supports and strategies available to practitioners within Child, Youth and Family.

Impact on the worker

Over the past 20 years, more than two dozen research studies have addressed the issue of client violence and intimidation toward social workers. Smith (2006, p. 77) describes the impact that violence can have,

> "...threatened workers are unable to think at all - extreme fear often brings people to a halt in many respects. They cannot think as their mind 'goes blank'..."

New Zealand research carried out in 1996, on behalf of the Aotearoa New Zealand Association of Social Workers, by Beddoe, Appleton & Maher was consistent with international research in this area. The authors completed a survey with 551 respondents. Ninety-one percent of respondents reported experiencing one or more types of violence in the course of their work. Both verbal and physical abuse were counted and in many instances practitioners reported more than one incident. Of note is that in 18 percent of cases the perpetrators of violence were co-workers. This is an area that requires further exploration and the same considerations should be made as for violence perpetrated by a client or their family member.

Beddoe (2001, p. 333) comments on the reality of social workers witnessing, on a daily basis, the short- and long-term effects of abuse on our clients, and how we understand that abuse can be hidden and leave no visible scars yet the consequences of emotional harm can be just as devastating as a beating. Beddoe goes on to comment that when practitioners examine their own experiences, there is a tendency to minimise the impact on social work practice and personal relationships. Frequent exposure to abuse can lead to a professional environment within which levels of violence or threatened violence are accepted, and where abuse is met with denial, minimisation and possible victim blaming.

Thus the normalisation of violence in the workplace has the potential to impact negatively on the worker personally and professionally. It can and does impact on practice decision making. Experience and qualification does not make a social worker immune to the effects

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of intimidation and potential violence. It is often perceived that practitioners are able to tolerate a certain amount of verbal abuse and intimidation and that this is part of their resilience factor.

The research also suggests that many practitioners experience some degree of stress following an incident of abuse, and that this can negatively impact on their ability to practice.

'It's war out there' and 'practice by remote'

The current literature on this subject has identified two strategies that practitioners may adopt when confronted with emotional and/or physical harm. The first involves being staunch and fearless and as Beddoe et al (1998, p. 336) state developing a view that "it's war out there". This response involves direct and aggressive intervention. The use of authority may become extreme, with little attempt at engagement and mediation with the family.

The second type of response is one of "practice by remote" (Beddoe et al. 1998, p. 336). That is, operating in a passive and avoidant manner. All casework may be conducted via the telephone or third parties or, if absolutely essential to have face-to-face contact, in the office.

It is easy to see that, with either of these responses, the safety and wellbeing of the child or young person may be compromised. This is to say nothing of how the worker might be feeling, in order to evoke such responses. Social workers, anecdotally, are known for their ability to empathise with the people with whom they work, and to react in an extreme or remote manner can certainly be labelled as out of character.

Reporting incidents of violence and intimidation

Another area identified in the literature notes that social workers often under-report threats or intimidation and that it may be perceived as a sign of not coping or a lack of practice competence.

The non-reporting of violent incidents and threats in practice is a broader issue of organisational concern. Practitioners can be either reluctant to report violence and/or the violence can be minimised or seen as being an expected part of the job.

There are many reasons why violence and intimidation against practitioners should be reported, including the protection and wellbeing of the worker and the wellbeing of the next worker.

Given the already highlighted information in relation to the impact on the worker in such a situation, the need to report is outstanding.

Littlechild (cited in Macdonald & Sirotich 2001, p. 107) suggested that incidents of violence (and intimidation) need to be reported to management so that colleagues undertaking future work with the person are able to take precautions in order to prevent a reoccurrence.

Rowett (1986) undertook a study in the United Kingdom in relation to whether social workers inform management about violence and intimidation from clients and their families. According to his study

> "both assaulted and non-assaulted social workers painted a common picture of the typical assaulted social worker as someone who sought out riskier situations, confronted the client, challenged unnecessarily, was more demanding and less flexible, and less

able to detect potentially violent situations and handle them once they had arisen" (Rowett 1986, p. 121).

This description was based on people's assumptions and did not necessarily reflect an accurate picture of the worker.

Rowett's study also found that those who had reported had received "inappropriate or inadequate managerial responses when they had been assaulted" (Rowett 1986, p. 125). Under-reporting will only be improved if practitioners have a low tolerance to violence and intimidation. It should not be an accepted part of the job and if staff are modelling pro-social values, any level of violence or threatening behaviour is unacceptable.

Parallel process

Practitioners understand the impact of physical and emotional harm on children and young people and act to reduce or prevent such harm. It makes sense that this knowledge and practice is translated to the impact of emotional and physical violence against adults, in particular statutory social workers. It is a parallel process. Social workers consider safety and wellbeing paramount for children and young people. Therefore it makes sense that, in order to provide these states for children and young people, practitioners need to be safe and well themselves.

Practitioners will work with victims of family violence to develop safety plans, and to address how they can get themselves in a position to make good decisions around their safety and that of their children. This is also a process that workers themselves need to go through to make sure they are safe and well.

Practitioners realise that when working with children, they would ensure their safety and

seek the appropriate supports for them. There is no reason not to provide the same safety and support for workers.

A question practitioners need to ask when faced with an intimidating or threatening situation is: has the experience impacted on my practice response and, if so, what wider issues emerge from this?

If the answer to the above question is yes and the experience has impacted on decision making or engaging with clients, it is important to share this with someone, ideally a supervisor. This in itself may present as a challenge and if practitioners feel uncomfortable with this, talking with a colleague may be helpful. The important thing is to tell someone who can assist. Workers should be able to trust each other and work in an environment that supports safety and wellbeing.

It is important to listen when someone confides that they are afraid or that they have just been threatened. Professionals have a responsibility to ensure colleagues are supported when they become aware of intimidatory or threatening behaviour. This includes advising managers and Police if required, in order to put in place supports and safety strategies.

Child, Youth and Family supports and strategies

A number of supports are available to staff within Child, Youth and Family.

Supervision is pivotal. Part of the supervision process involves responding appropriately when social workers disclose, and also detecting

any change in the worker's practice style or presentation. It may be a subtle shift in a practitioner's language and how they talk about clients or it may be overt.

The practice frameworks provide a structure for practitioners to use to help engage families and include them in a safe and manageable way. For example, are we thinking about the whole child: safety, security and wellbeing? If a practitioner is scared to visit the home or meet with the parents, then one can only imagine how scared the child may feel living in the home. If this is an issue, it is important to discuss this with a supervisor.

The practice triggers are a starting point from which to develop further questions in relation to the impact this situation may be having on the worker and subsequently the practice response. Questions may include has the worker withdrawn from engaging with this family and is the worker being overly coercive because of the intimidation?

Child, Youth and Family encourages staff to report incidents of intimidation and threats to Police. It has a policy that specifically covers the role of Police in relation to managing reports (The Violence Prevention Code of Practice). The policy provides clear information on the roles and responsibilities of all parties, and also details potential risks and possible reactions by staff to violent situations.

Child, Youth and Family also provides an employee assistance programme (EAP) and critical incident stress management (CISM).

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EAP provides a supportive and confidential service to practitioners whose work is being affected by work or personal concerns. Qualified counsellors, external to Child, Youth and Family, are available to assist practitioners to address the concerns and put in place support strategies.

CISM is used to define an integrated system of interventions that is initiated by a critical incident. A critical incident is any event that evokes an emotional or physical reaction that causes distress to the worker. CISM is designed to address this normal reaction by staff and assist them to recover. It is a free and confidential service and is easily accessible through a supervisor.

Beyond these policies and procedures it is also the responsibility of all staff to support their colleagues when they have been intimidated, threatened and/or assaulted. Frontline staff, including support staff, are all faced with the same challenges and may be exposed to a dangerous or threatening situation at any time. Practitioners want to feel safe and supported in their workplace, and supporting each other is fundamental to ensuring such an environment.

Conclusion

In order to model pro-social values the message must be clear, that violence of any nature is unacceptable. This message is particularly important to hear right from the start of a social worker's training and career, and then for the same message to be reinforced throughout their employment. It is a collective responsibility to ensure practitioners are safe in order to work safely with children, young people and their families.

If this article has raised any anxiety or caused distress, please talk with a supervisor or someone you trust in order to ensure your safety and wellbeing. Child, Youth and Family staff can contact EAP on 0800 327 669 or 0800 EAP NOW.

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Book reviews

Essential Theory for Social Work Practice

By Chris Beckett
Published in 2006 by Sage Publications Limited,
London, UK
ISBN 1-4129-0873-6

Reviewed by Deena Coster

Knowledge, skills and theory are the main tools in a social worker's kit. In his book, Chris Beckett explores how social work theory underpins this knowledge and skill. It is an excellent text in an introductory sense for social work students, as well as a good refresher for practising social workers who want to reflect on where their practice framework originates.

The link between theory and practice in social work has been discussed in other literature, but Beckett has his own belief regarding the importance of realism in social work. He contends that "theory is only useful if it equips social workers to do a better job in the conditions that actually exist".

This book contains a number of case studies and exercises that would help a beginner social worker develop an understanding of social work and start to build their own knowledge base.

There are four distinct parts to the book that all follow a simple and readable format. The first part looks at what social workers do and how they do it, the second at how to create change in others, the third part analyses the types of roles that social workers have, and the fourth is about how the link between theory and practice can be enhanced.

Beckett's idea of realism in social work permeates this book. He explores the concept that social work is not a distinct practice that is driven purely by theory. However, in saying that, Beckett still states that social workers need to know what their job is and how they go about doing it.

Beckett's conclusion is that a "gulf" between theory and practice will continue to exist. He says that because of this, social workers need to reflect on their own practice and be aware of any judgements or assumptions on which their practice is based.

This book is essentially a 'back to basics' look at what social work is about. It is about assisting social workers to achieve the main aim of social work – positive change in others. It would be recommended reading for any social work practitioner.

Deena Coster is a Senior Practitioner at the Porirua office of Child, Youth and Family.

Secret lives: growing with substance – Working with children and young people affected by familial substance misuse

Edited by Fiona Harbin and Michael Murphy
Published in 2006 by Russell House Publishing, UK
ISBN 1-903855-66-7

Reviewed by Megan Chapman

Studies in the UK suggest that, for the majority of local authorities, substance misuse is an integral factor in over one-third of child protection cases. It is likely a similar situation exists in New Zealand. In child protection much focus tends to be on encouraging parents to address their substance misuse. However this book aims to aid practitioners and managers in the identification, assessment, treatment, and ongoing support of the children of substance misusers. It provides a welcome focus on the child and young person and their myriad difficulties that result from living in substance misusing households.

Some of the difficulties for children outlined in this book include:

- born withdrawing from a substance
- lack of attachment to parental figures
- poverty and lack of provision of basic needs
- children taking inappropriate responsibility for siblings
- unpredictable, inconsistent lifestyle and instability
- stigma and shame
- living in secrecy and isolation
- exposure to violence and offending.

Secret Lives brings together the work of various researchers, managers and practitioners through its 10 chapters. They share their recent knowledge and experience in developing services to help improve responses to children in substance misusing households and young people who are beginning to misuse themselves.

The age-old issue of interagency collaboration in a field where services are largely adult-oriented is highlighted. Three chapters of the book are devoted to evaluating innovative group work and whole-family treatment services already in existence in the UK.

The remaining chapters explore the following issues:

- what children need in order to be resilient in substance dependent families
- the needs of children brought up in such families when they are placed in alternative care
- the impact for children where both substance misuse and domestic violence are issues
- the difficult issues of treatment and change from a child's point of view
- developing relationships with adolescents that encourage change and resilience
- the impact of sibling substance misuse on other children in the family.

This book is very informative and contains up-to-date research to assist with practice that is easily translated to the New Zealand arena. The chapters are all easy to read and many include practice scenarios. Each chapter is self-contained, making it possible to select the relevant chapters, rather than having to read the book as a whole.

Megan Chapman is an Advisor in the Office of the Chief Social Worker, Ministry of Social Development.

Aims

: To provide discussion of social work practice in Child, Youth and Family.

: To encourage reflective and innovative social work practice.

: To extend practice knowledge in any aspect of adoption, care and protection, residential care and youth justice practice.

: To extend knowledge in any child, family or related service, on any aspect of administration, supervision, casework, group work, community organisation, teaching, research, interpretation, inter-disciplinary work, or social policy theory, as it relates to professional practice relevant to Child, Youth and Family and the wider social work sector.

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strengthening relationships between mothers and children in the
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power and control in family violence

violence and intimidation against social workers

child, youth
and family