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Effective approaches to working with male perpetrators of domestic violence in New Zealand

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Abstract

The rate of domestic violence has been increasing around the world today. Even though women do conduct abusive acts towards men, the majority of perpetrators of domestic violence remain men. A Men and Development (MAD) framework is used as an overarching framework for the research because it is believed that problem of domestic violence cannot be tackled if men are not involved.

The purpose of this study is to investigate effective approaches to working with male perpetrators of domestic violence. The specific objective is to identify factors to be considered in programme design and delivery so as to maximize men's engagement in intervention programmes and prevent them from reoffending. The study also explores whether cultural aspects are considered when delivering programmes for perpetrators, particularly for those with Asian, Pasifika and Maori backgrounds and if yes, how much it affects programme delivery.

The data collection took place in New Zealand by interviewing people working for five organisations that have intervention programmes for male perpetrators of domestic violence. It was hoped that the research findings would provide some insights on how to establish and run a centre in Vietnam that offers intervention programmes for male perpetrators of domestic violence. Currently, such programmes do not exist in Vietnam.

The research findings show that cognitive behavioural therapy, the Duluth model, and the strengths-based approach are believed to be effective for working with male perpetrators. Programme components that are important for effective programme delivery include an initial assessment, the existence of both male and female facilitators in a team, timeout planning, and anger/anxiety management. Regarding the cultural aspects, organisations do account for

the cultural backgrounds of perpetrators. For example, during the initial assessment, their clients are asked if they have any cultural requirements that the facilitators should be aware of during the programme. Particularly, some special models are used with Maori perpetrators namely the Tangi Hepi or the Mason Durie model. Maori people can do *hongi* (a traditional Maori greeting) or *karakia* (prayers or incantations) if they wish provided that other clients do not oppose this. Having a Maori facilitator in the team also plays a crucial role for effective communication and better understanding among Maori perpetrators when they take part in the programme.

The Men and Development framework is reflected in programme design and delivery in the organisations even though none of the facilitators named this framework when interviewed. For example, facilitators often talk with their male clients about the positive aspects of being a man and how this can help them improve their relationship with their partners rather than destroying it using violence. The facilitators help the clients navigate away from negative aspects of masculinities. They create conditions for men to work with men in the group, take responsibility for their violent behaviours and help one another in order to change their attitudes and behaviours towards domestic violence.

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Abbreviation

CBT	Cognitive Behaviour Therapy
CSAP	Correctional Services Accreditation Panel
GAD	Gender and Development
HFVIP	Horowhenua Family Violence Intervention Programme Inc.
MAD	Men and Development
MOJ	The Ministry of Justice
TA	Transactional Analysis
UK	United Kingdom
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
USA	The United States of America
WID	Women in Development
WLWVT	Whanganui Living Without Violence Trust

Glossary

Hongi	a traditional Maori greeting in which people press their noses together.
Karakia	prayers or incantations
Taha wairua	spiritual well-being (e.g. meaning, and purpose in life)
Taha hinengaro	mental and emotional well-being (e.g. constructive thoughts and feelings)
Taha tinana	physical health
Tahe whanau	extended family
Ta ao Maori	the Maori world
Whakapapa	kinship
Tikanga	Maori beliefs and values
Wairua	self-realisation
Tapu	self-esteem
Mauri	inner values, sense of power
Mana	other values, achievements, power, influence
Te ao hurihuri	contemporary influences within today's society
Koha	donation
Te reo	the Maori language
Haka	a dance, or a song accompanied by dance
Kakano	the seed
Kapahaka	Maori performing arts and literally means to form a line and dance
Pakeha	a white New Zealander as opposed to a Maori