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**MEN AGAINST VIOLENCE: A POST-STRUCTURALIST CRITIQUE OF
THE SCIENCE AND PRACTICE OF STOPPING MEN'S
VIOLENCE TO WOMEN IN AN APPLIED COMMUNITY SETTING**

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ABSTRACT

This research project begins with a post-structuralist critique of the social science theoretical literature surrounding wife abuse. Within this most controversial area of the social sciences five discourses were found to be operating in and informing the field, between them affording a diverse array of theoretical accounts and intervention strategies. These underlying discursive resources are the Liberal humanist 'instrumental' position, the Romantic 'expressive tension' position, Tabula rasa 'learning' theory, Medical 'pathology' and the Structuralist 'social systemic' account. The history and implications of each discourse are discussed.

In a second study a participant observation strategy explored how the Manawatu Men Against Violence collective (MMAV), in the face of this diverse and conflicting field, work to stop men's violence in the community. Through participating in a MMAV 'Stopping Violence' programme, observations concerning the discursive content and structure to the programme were made. It was found through this exercise that MMAV employed four of the five discourses identified in the scientific literature and omitted one; 'pathology'. This was a strategic move on MMAV's part, enabling a variety of intervention strategies, dominated by a Liberal humanist construction of events, around which the remaining discourses were couched. The implications of this discursive structure to the programme are discussed.

A third study explored how the MMAV programme impacts upon participant's subjectivity. Semi-structured interviews prior to and following participation in a MMAV Stopping Violence programme recorded narratives of the men as they accounted for their violence, the violence of others in the community and described their intimate relationships. It was found that exposure to the discourses imparted by MMAV had had an impact upon the men's accounting practices as distinct shifts as well as consistencies in subject positionings were apparent in the post-course interview comparison. Results demonstrated that the men had interacted with the course material and that this had several effects upon their sense of agency. The implications of such shifts and continuities are discussed and recommendations for future research are made.

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INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER ONE

THE PROBLEM OF MEN'S VIOLENCE TO THEIR PARTNERS

This research project addresses the issue of men's violence in intimate relationships with a particular focus on the problem of wife assault and battering. It is concerned with the injuries, deaths and psychological and emotional trauma which occur as a consequence of men's 'domestic' violence. This project explores social science and community responses to men's violence to their partners in the hope of contributing to the process of change.

Men's violence to their partners, wives and girlfriends is a very pervasive and serious social problem in our society, constituting 25% of all violent crimes (Dobash and Dobash, 1988). It's occurrence means that for millions of women in the western world, lives are lived in fear and mistrust (Stanko, 1985), in mental and physical ill-health (Dobash and Dobash, 1992; Edleson and Tolman, 1992; Walker, 1979), and in very real life threatening danger (Dobash and Dobash, 1992; Schechter, 1982). Based on survey data throughout the western world, Sampsel, Bernhard, Kerr, Opie, Perley and Pitzer (1992) claim that approximately a third of women experience life and spirit threatening violence at the hands of a man at least once in their lives. Such violence is most typically perpetrated by a man known to the woman (Dobash and Dobash, 1992; Edleson and Tolman, 1992; Gelles and Straus, 1988; Russell, 1982; Schechter, 1982; Stanko, 1985).

In Western society there is a common idea that the 'home' is a safe haven of security, comfort and happiness; a sanctuary from the harsh spoils of the outside, public and dangerous world (Bograd, 1988; Giddens, 1989). For women, however, the home is the most dangerous place of all to be in terms of the likelihood that they will be subject to severe violence, be it physical, sexual or psychological. Eighty percent of all violence reported to the police in New Zealand is family related (Boyle, 1994). The vast majority of which are assaults by men on women and children, usually in a context of repetitive violence over time (Policing Development Group, 1994). National crime surveys throughout the Western world indicate that 90-97% of all occurrences of 'interspousal violence' are assaults by men against women (Dobash and Dobash, 1979; Gaquin, 1978; Johnson, 1989; McLeod, 1984; Schwartz, 1987; Warral and Pease; 1986). This strongly suggests that the home as a safe haven is a myth, at

least for women. Given this, it is appropriate that the New Zealand Police Commissioner, Richard MacDonald, recently warned New Zealanders that the home was "the most dangerous place for women and children" (Boyle, p15, 1994).

Estimates of the incidence of physical assaults by men against their partners, wives or girlfriends in the Western world vary considerably. A consistent figure which emerges throughout the literature is that 1 in 10 women in the western world are physically abused by the men with whom they are intimate in any given year (Dobash and Dobash, 1979, 1992; Fortune, 1991; MacLeod, 1987; McMaster and Swain, 1989; Sampsel et al., 1992). This estimate is "conservative" because it is based upon empirical studies of violence which occur in a context in which most women are very reluctant to report assaults to the police, doctors, social workers or social researchers (Geller, 1992). Dobash and Dobash (1979), for example, found that less than 2% of a sample of 32,000 wife or partner assaults were reported to the police. If at least one in ten women are physically assaulted by their partners each year then this constitutes a serious problem for women in our society. Furthermore women who are assaulted by their husbands are typically concurrently subjected to other forms of violence such as sexual and psychological abuse (Leibrich, Paulin and Ranson, 1995; Russel, 1984).

The evidence from many studies indicates that most of the violence experienced by wives or partners of violent men are not isolated incidents. For most victims the abuse is both prolonged and severe and occurs as part of an identifiable pattern of systematic and escalating abuse that often extends throughout the lifetime (Church, 1984; Gayford, 1975; Gelles, 1974; Martin, 1983; Nichols, 1976; Petro, Quann and Graham, 1978; Pizzey, 1974; Warrior, 1976). Walker (1979) has documented a pattern, the Battered Woman Syndrome, in which she articulates how violence, once it has occurred, will tend to escalate in severity and frequency over time. A New Zealand example demonstrating this phenomena has been documented by Church (1984). Based on a sample of 101 women in violent relationships, Church (1984) found that for the majority of these women the first assault was relatively minor and resulted in little or no injuries. As time went by however, the assaults increased in both frequency and severity.

In New Zealand the issue of men assaulting their partners is very real and is also of high prevalence. In 1993 20,000 abused women and their children sought sanctuary in New

Zealand's 59 Women's Refuge Safe houses with roughly a half of these survivors requiring medical attention (Hoyle, 1994). The New Zealand Womens Refuge Foundation (1990) "conservatively" estimates that one in ten New Zealand women are victims of violent attacks in their own homes. There are about 30,000 cases of family violence reported to the N.Z. police each year (Boyle, 1994), the vast majority of which involve men attacking women and children. Eighty per cent of "violent incidents" attended to by the police fall into the category of "family violence" (Boyle, 1994; Policing Development Group, 1994).

In the New Zealand context perhaps the most significant study of all has been the New Zealand Justice department's two thousand participant representative study of men's attitudes and behaviours regarding the abuse of women partners. The study revealed that 21% of men had physically assaulted their partners at least once in the preceding year and that 53% had committed at least one act of psychological abuse. Over the entire life span some 35% of these men had physically assaulted their partners at least once and 62% had psychologically abused them (Leibrich, Paulin and Ranson, 1995). A third of men had thus assaulted their partners physically whilst over half had done so psychologically. These results support other findings from throughout the Western world - that a significant proportion of men assault and abuse their women partners (see for example Geffner and Rosenbaum, 1990; Gelles, 1974; Pelton, 1991; Russell, 1982; Straus, 1978; Straus, Gelles and Steinmetz, 1980; Walker, 1979). Furthermore the study revealed that 65% of the men interviewed blame the woman for being hit in at least one circumstance, such as sleeping with another man or making fun of him sexually. The authors concluded that New Zealand men show an underlying acceptance of domestic abuse.

Men's violence to women takes many forms and, as society comes to recognize this as a problem, the terms used to describe such violence and define its scope expand (Edleson and Tolman, 1992). Wife abuse and wife battering typically involve acts of physical and/or psychological violence. Both these sets of behaviours violate a person's sense of autonomy and damage the victim's physical and mental wellbeing (Edleson and Tolman, 1992; Leibrich, Paulin and Ranson, 1995; Pence and Paymar, 1993; Walker, 1979). The general public is probably most aware of men's 'physical violence' against women, as the definitions of such violent behaviour are increasingly defined in the law, through measurement in research, representation in the media and through community actions.

Men's physical violence against women most commonly includes pushing, grabbing, slapping and throwing objects at the victim. At its most severe it includes beating the woman up, choking her, threatening her with and/or using a knife or a gun, forcing her to have sex or engage in otherwise unwanted sexual acts, punching her, biting her and kicking her (Leibrich, Paulin and Ranson, 1995). The recorded frequency of these occurrences has created a situation in which the home is now considered to be the most likely place that a woman will be beaten or murdered (Edleson and Tolman, 1992).

An indication and reflection of the extent of wife abuse and the problem that this engenders for women is the dramatic proliferation of refuges throughout the world which has occurred in recent years (Pahl, 1985). In England for example, from the setting up of the first refuge for battered women in London in 1972, the demand became apparent so rapidly that by 1981 there were about 200 refuges scattered across the country. These provide safe accommodation for thousands of women and their children, giving advice and support for as long as it is needed. In the United States a similar phenomena occurred with many shelters quickly exceeding their capacity to the point where in Minnesota in 1979, 70% of women seeking protection had to be turned away (Schechter, 1982). In New Zealand the first refuge was set up in Christchurch in 1973 and by 1990 there were 54 refuges affiliated to the National Collective of Independent Women's Refuges (New Zealand Women's Refuge Foundation, 1990).

In a survey of refuges in England and Wales, Binney, Harkell and Nixon (1981) found that seventy three per cent of the 656 women residing in the refuges at that time had endured the violence for three or more years. Thirty per cent of the women interviewed had suffered life threatening attacks or had been hospitalized for serious injuries such as having bones broken. The rest of the sample had experienced assaults which included being kicked, pushed into fires or through glass, being thrown against walls or downstairs, being punched and having hair pulled out. Sixty-eight per cent included 'mental cruelty' as a reason for why they left home.

Pahl (1985) similarly reported that the majority of women residing in refuges (62%) had been subject to violent assaults for three years or more, and the injuries from which they suffered ranged from cuts and bruises, through broken bones and damaged eyesight, to ruptured spleens, stab wounds and fractured skulls. Dobash and Dobash (1979) found that the women

they interviewed in Scottish refuges had experienced a variety of different forms of violence, ranging from a single slap, usually experienced early in the marriage or even prior to marriage, to an attack involving kicking, punching and choking; on occasions the men would use belts, bottles or weapons. The most typical attack involved punches to the face and/or body and kicks (Dobash and Dobash, 1979). For the public "domestic" violence is commonly thought to refer to only the minor occurrences, a stereotype which is inconsistent with the evidence from refuges for battered women (Giddens, 1989).

The most extreme outcome from men's physical violence to women is murder (Edleson and Tolman, 1992). Historical and contemporary evidence indicates that the pattern of homicide in Western Society is one in which men are overwhelmingly the killers, usually of other men, but frequently also of women, especially their partners and wives. Women are seldom killers and when they do kill it is usually in self defense (Daly and Wilson, 1988; Dobash and Dobash, 1992). As victims men are usually killed by acquaintances and strangers, and occasionally by a female intimate. Women as victims, however, are most likely to be killed by male intimates in their own homes (Dobash and Dobash, 1992). In the United States, of all women killed between 1980 and 1984, the majority were murdered by husbands, boyfriends and male cohabiters. In Europe women are four to nine times more likely than men to be killed by spouses, ex-spouses, cohabiters and ex-cohabiters (Edwards, 1985, 1989). In New Zealand an estimated one woman a week is killed as a result of men's violence (McMaster and Swain, 1989).

Chimbos (1978) in a study of 'interspousal homicide' in Canada found that spousal homicide is "rarely a sudden explosion in a blissful marriage" (Chimbos, 1978, p67), but more often occurs in a context in which there is a history of escalating violence. It was the "endpoint" in a series of conflicts in which over 70% of victims had reported prior assaults. In another study of "domestic homicide" it was found that 80% of victims had previously made one or more complaints of assault to the police and that 50% percent had made 5 calls or more (Sonkin, Martin and Walker, 1985).

Sexual violence is another form of physical violence frequently directed by men towards their intimate partners. Ironically, while it is sexual violence from strangers that many women greatly fear (Burt and Estep, 1981; Stanko, 1985) and that people tend to think of as a

stereotypical or "real" rape (Field and Bienen, 1980; Ryan, 1988), sexual victimization by men known to the woman is by far the most common form of rape (Gavey, 1990; Hall, 1985; Russell, 1982, 1984; Sonkin, Martin and Walker, 1985). In New Zealand, for example, Gavey (1990) found that, of the 64 rapes reported by a sample of 347 women university students, 61% had been perpetrated by either boyfriends, lovers, "dates", husbands, or de facto partners. Another 17% were perpetrated by acquaintances. Only 9% of rapes were perpetrated by strangers. Similar patterns have been reported by Hall (1985), Kanin (1985), Koss (1985) and Wilson and Durrenberger (1982).

It is estimated that between 9% and 14% of women in the community have been forced to perform some type of sexual act with their intimate male partners against their will (Finkelhor and Yllo, 1985; Hanneke, Sheilds, and McCall, 1986; Russell, 1982). This reflects the fact that, contrary to myth and rape stereotypes, most rapes occur in the home of either the victim or the assailant and involve a male assailant known to the woman (Schechter, 1982; Stanko, 1985) most typically a partner or ex-partner (Russell, 1982, 1984). Among samples of battered women, the rates of those who have been raped by their husbands or co-habiting partners are higher. Over a third of domestically violent marriages or partnerships are thought to involve both sexual and physical assaults (Hanneke, Sheilds and McCall, 1986; Russell, 1982, 1984).

As with other forms of physical violence then, females are at a greater risk of sexual assault from men known to them than they are from strangers (Bograd, 1988; Dobash and Dobash, 1979; Kelly, 1988; Schechter, 1982; Stanko, 1987). Many survivors of physical abuse at the hands of their partners however consider the 'mental battering' that occurs alongside physical violence, or prior to it historically in the relationship, to be worse for them in the long run (Edleson and Tolman, 1992; Marsden, 1978; Walker, 1979).

While traditional definitions of violence tend to stress the overt, such as physical and sexual assault, much of violence occurring in abusive relationships is psychological and covert, which often undermines a woman's confidence and leaves her feeling inadequate, incompetent and deserving of her abuse (McMaster and Swain, 1989). Broadly construed, psychological violence may be considered any behaviour which is harmful for the wellbeing of a spouse (Edleson and Tolman, 1992). Physical violence and the concomitant use of other psychologically abusive behaviours may leave the woman with such poor self esteem that she,

after years of such abuse, believes what the man says and accepts responsibility for his violence (Edleson and Tolman, 1992). Her confidence may be undermined to the extent that she will never seek outside help (Stanko, 1985).

Psychological violence is less clearly defined and understood than physical violence by both the social services and the community at large. It can occur on its own or concurrently with physical abuse. It most commonly includes insulting the woman, putting down her family and friends, financial control, emotional blackmail, stopping her from doing things she wants to do and throwing, smashing, hitting or kicking something. The most severe cases of psychological abuse against women include forcing a woman to do degrading things, humiliating her in public, threatening to hurt her and deliberately destroying and harming things that belong to her (Leibrich, Paulin and Ranson, 1995). Forms of psychological abuse covary with physical forms of abuse and in their own way are no less damaging for the women who suffer from their infliction (Edleson and Tolman, 1992; Gelles, 1980; Leibrich, Paulin and Ranson, 1995; Marsden, 1978; Pahl, 1985; Straus, Sweet and Vissing, 1989).

The small literature on psychological maltreatment suggests that it may be useful to use a continuum to define its occurrence (Garbarino, Guttman and Seeley, 1986). On one end are isolating hurtful behaviours that may occur in most relationships, such as withdrawing momentarily or speaking sharply in anger. On the other end of the continuum is a constant and intentional barrage of one-sided psychological torture, such as yelling and repeating degrading put-downs and demands (Graham, Rawlings and Rimini, 1988). The latter end of psychological abuse continuum almost always accompanies physical violence (Edleson and Tolman, 1992) and frequently precedes it in the escalating pattern of abuse as described by Walker (1979). Most testimonies by battered women relay descriptions of relationships where severe psychological maltreatment occurs frequently and is only punctuated by acts of physical violence (Pagelow, 1991). Many also claim that this is the most damaging form of their abuse (Edleson and Tolman, 1992; Gelles and Harrop, 1989; Marsden, 1978; Pahl, 1985).

Given that men's physical, sexual and psychological violence towards significant women in their lives is a fairly common occurrence throughout western society, it is not surprising that many women and their children will experience personal problems as a result of this. The effects of such abuse often manifest themselves in physical illness, psychological disturbances

and emotional problems (Edleson and Tolman, 1992). Over eighty per cent of women seeking refuge shelter and support need medical attention (Bowen, Straus, Sedlack, Hotaling and Sugarman; 1984). In surveys of the general population, 12% of women who report a violent incident with their spouse have required medical attention as a direct result of their assault (Finkelhor, 1988).

It is not just physical injuries inflicted from the assaults however which damage the battered woman's physical health and well-being. Straus and Gelles (1987) found that women who were victims of severe physical violence were three times more likely to be in poor health in general than women who had not experienced such violence. These women on average spent twice as much time in bed due to other illnesses and experienced significantly more stress related health problems.

Women who suffer from long-term abuse are characterized by low self-esteem, instability in their intimate relationships, anxiety, depression, suicide attempts, substance abuse, psychosomatic complaints and poor functioning in work situations (Bowen et al., 1984; Browne and Finkelhor, 1986; Martin, Beezley, Conway and Kempe, 1974). Gelles and Harrop (1989), using U.S. national survey data from over 3000 women, reported that, among those not being physically abused, 0.3% thought about taking their lives "fairly often" or "very often" during the year surveyed. This contrasted with the 4.6% of abused women who contemplated suicide as frequently. They also found that a strong pattern, with few exceptions, in which "the higher the level of violence experienced, the greater the proportion of women reporting a form of psychological distress" (Gelles and Harrop, 1989, p 407). Similarly women who have experienced sexual violence are over twice as likely to have a range of psychiatric disturbances such as depression, anxiety and drug abuse (Elmer and Gregg, 1967; Lynch and Roberts, 1982; Martin et al., 1974).

There is evidence too that psychological abuse on its own is harmful for the mental and emotional well-being of the women who receive it. Tolman and Bhosley (1991) interviewed women one year after their male partners had been involved in group treatment for battering and found that the continuation of psychological abuse, in the absence of physical violence, was a powerful predictor of the woman's psycho-social problems. Straus, Sweet and Vissing's (1989) study on a general population found that, regardless of the presence of physical abuse,

the more verbal abuse a woman receives from her spouse, the greater the probability that she will suffer from depression.

Women are not the only people who are affected by the violence directed towards them. The couple's children have been called the 'forgotten' and 'unintended' victims (Elbow, 1982; Rosenbaum and O'Leary, 1981a) because of the impact such abuse has on them, either directly from the man or indirectly from observing the violence toward their mother. Recent reviews of the literature have outlined some of the ways in which observing abuse can impact on a child's development (Fantuzzo and Lindquist, 1989; Jaffe, Wolfe and Wilson, 1990). These include lower levels of social competence, lower academic achievement and a variety of emotional problems including depression, suicidal behaviour and insomnia.

Perhaps the worst effect of men's violence in the family on children is its inter-generational perpetuating influence (Finkelhor, 1988). Husbands who witnessed their fathers beat their mothers are more than twice as likely to beat their wives than men who did not grow up in such households (Hotaling and Sugarnan, 1986). Witnessing such violence in one's family of origin is the most consistently demonstrated background factor among wife abusers (Finkelhor, 1988). Straus et al. (1980) found that parents who were themselves subject to severe physical punishment are more than twice as likely to repeat the behaviour with their children. Children who witness their mothers being battered and/or receive violent assaults from their fathers are not destined to be violent as adults as most do not (Herrenkohl, Herrenkohl and Toedter, 1983). The risk however is substantially higher.

An important issue in the area of men's violence to their partners, or 'domestic' or 'family violence' as it is also frequently called, is the language used to define the issues, organizations and individuals involved. The way in which the problem is constructed and labelled is very controversial because different ways of approaching the problem offer different implications for attributing cause and responsibility and thereby afford different, potentially incompatible, policies and intervention strategies for stopping the violence (Bograd, 1992; Dobash and Dobash, 1992; Johnston, 1995; Kurz, 1989; McKendy, 1992).

Feminist positions and organizations most often refer to the problem as being one of 'wife battering', 'woman abuse' or 'men's violence to their partners'. This is because the problem

is defined as being gender-specific, as distinct from a gender neutral 'family' or 'marital' violence which implies that both men and women initiate and implement violence in equal proportions. Feminists, in their formulation of the problem, point out that men beat women more often and more severely than women assault men, and hence that the problem is a gendered one, qualitatively different from other forms of 'family violence', both in etiology and severity (Bowker, 1986; Browne, 1987; Dobash and Dobash, 1979, 1992; Martin, 1983; McMaster and Swain, 1989; Pagelow, 1991; Russell, 1982; Stanko, 1985; Yllo, 1988). This gendered definition of the problem emerged during the initial formulation of the issue when it was first identified and brought to the public's attention by the battered women's movement in the 1970s (Schechter, 1982). Since this time however government departments, academics, the press, social workers and policy analysts have typically subsumed the problem within a more general and gender neutral 'family' or 'domestic violence' (Schechter, 1982; Dobash and Dobash, 1992).

In support of the feminist position however, empirical evidence indicates that men's violence to their partners is more severe and more frequent than women's violence to men. In husband-wife violence men are much more likely both to initiate and to use the most dangerous and injurious forms of violence. Women are more likely to use violence as a means of self defense only and consequently it is typically women who are seriously injured as a result of 'spousal' violence (Browne, 1987; Dobash and Dobash, 1979, 1992; Giddens, 1989; Kurz, 1989; Russell, 1982; Straus et al., 1980; Yllo, 1988).

Whether or not men's violence to their wives or partners reflects different causes from other forms of family violence, as will be discussed in the critique of the theoretical literature (Chapter 4) this is a very controversial point, its magnitude and degree of severity clearly distinguishes it from women's violence to men. In this report therefore I will approach the problem as a gendered one and focus on the problem of 'wife abuse' and 'men's violence to their women partners' specifically. I will avoid gender neutral terms such as 'spouse abuse', 'family violence' or 'marital violence' which obscure the fact that it is predominantly men who physically and psychologically abuse and batter their partners and cause them severe bodily and emotional harm (Dobash and Dobash, 1992; Giddens, 1989; Martin, 1983; McMaster and Swain, 1989; Walker, 1979).

There are however a variety of ways of defining exactly what is meant by the terms 'abuse', 'assault' and 'violence' with definitions ranging from the specific, narrow and physical to the broader and extra-physical (Kurz, 1989). 'Family violence' theorists typically define violence as "an act carried out with the intention or perceived intention of causing physical pain or injury to another person" (Straus and Gelles, 1986, p467). Violence, abuse or battering, from a feminist perspective however, refers to physical assaults, sexual assaults and psychological and emotional abuse, including the destruction of pets and property (Ganley, 1981a). In this study a broad definition of violence, encompassing psychological, emotional and sexual, as well as the most frequently cited physically assaultive behaviour, will be used. Expanding upon the Straus and Gelles (1986) definition with the insights of a feminist perspective, I will use the terms 'violence', 'battering', 'assault' and 'abuse' interchangeably, referring to an act carried out with the intention or perceived intention of causing physical, psychological or emotional pain or injury to another person. I will be looking at men's "assaultive behaviour in an intimate, sexual, theoretically peer, and usually cohabiting relationship" (Ganley, 1981a, p8).

In this introductory chapter the empirical literature documenting the problem of men's violence towards their partners has been presented with a preferred orientation to the construction of the problem being explicated. Whilst the current research project adopts a distinctly different scientific approach to this subject matter to that of empiricism, namely a post-structuralist enquiry, it's parameters and directives are, in part, informed by the empirical work presented here. It is thus from within this empirically defined context that the current research programme emerges. It's specific operations and investigative techniques however are derived through the adoption of a post-structuralist world view, an approach which has enabled new possibilities for exploring the problem at hand.

CHAPTER TWO

THE PRESENT STUDY

Men's violence to their partners, wives or girlfriends is a serious problem in our society, as the empirical evidence to date testifies. From within the social sciences and the community at large a great deal of effort has been directed towards addressing this issue, with the firm intention being to identify the etiological basis for the problem and to develop appropriate intervention strategies to prevent and stop its occurrence. Because there is no one single paradigm for working in the field, the outcome of such work involves a diverse array of conflicting theories and solutions (Bograd, 1992; Dobash and Dobash, 1992; Johnston, 1995; Kurz, 1989; Straus, Gelles and Steinmetz, 1980; Yllo, 1988). One focus of the current research project is to provide an account from a post-structuralist perspective (Gavey, 1989; Weedon, 1987) of the field of knowledge as it stands today theoretically. It is hoped that through engaging in such an analysis, the diversity and conflict of thought which exists within the social sciences surrounding wife abuse will be more usefully understood and a fresh perspective affording new implications can thus be brought to bear upon the problem of stopping men's violence to their partners.

Meanwhile, the 'sexual politics' of feminism (Millet, 1972) confronts men as a group about men's oppressive behaviour towards women (Farrel, 1974; Hearn and Morgan, 1990; Hooks, 1992; Porter, 1992; Rowan, 1987; Ruether, 1992; Seidler, 1991; Snodgrass, 1977; Steinem, 1992; Thome-Finch, 1992). It challenges men about the "personal" and "institutionalized" "changes we have to make, as men" in support of "the women's movement" to create an equal and just society for both men and women (Seidler, 1991, p63). Within this tradition many feminists and pro-feminist men hold that because it is primarily men who batter, injure and kill their partners and because it is men who, as a group, have greater social power in our society, it is appropriate, if not essential, that men take active responsibility for putting a stop to men's violence to women in the community (Cannan and Griffin, 1990; Carlin, 1992; Dobash and Dobash, 1992; Finch, 1992; Hanmer, 1990; Hearn, 1987, 1992; Horsefall, 1991; Jardine and Smith, 1987; Marriot, 1988; McMaster and Swain, 1989; Miles, 1991; Noble, 1992; Segal, 1990; Swain, 1984; Thorne- Schechter, 1982). As one American pro-feminist men's group, the Oakland Men's Project, puts it; "Men's work - to stop male violence"

(Steinem, 1992, pviii). As a man I position myself within this pro-feminist camp and this research as a political activity directed towards this end.

At a grass roots level many men throughout New Zealand have taken up this challenge and have worked towards stopping "men's violence to women" (McMaster and Swain, 1989). An example of such work is the Stopping Violence programme offered by the Manawatu Men Against Violence collective (MMAV) (McMaster and Swain, 1989; Tisdall, 1993). This is a local psychotherapeutic-educational programme for men who have assaulted their partners and is designed to stop their violence towards them. Given the controversial state of knowledge in the theoretical field at present (Bograd, 1992) and MMAV's distinct position as a local, alternative, pro-feminist, grass-roots men's organisation seeking to end men's violence to their partners (McMaster and Swain, 1989; Tisdall, 1993) it may prove to be most interesting and beneficial, for those interested in stopping men's violence in the community, to explore the particular theoretical positions and intervention strategies selected and utilised by MMAV, to see how these are organised and imparted to violent men and to gauge the impact of this programme on the men.

This research project thus aims further to provide a post-structuralist account of the MMAV 'Stopping Violence' programme and to explore the changes in 'subjectivity' which take place in violent men through their participation in this course. The particular 'discourses' (Gavey, 1989; Weedon, 1987) employed and the way in which these are organised and imparted by MMAV could be of great benefit, not only to the violent men who attend these courses, but also in the wider community as it too seeks to free itself of violence. Changes in the subjectivity of the men are of interest because these are reflect the subject positions being taken up and/or resisted by the men in response to their experiences in the course. An examination of the discursive dynamics between those of the men and those of the course may provide additional understandings of violent men which afford new ways in which the broader community might go about preventing and stopping this destructive social problem. For readers not familiar with the post-structuralist concepts employed in this paragraph a detailed account of post-structuralism follows shortly.

Objectives

There are essentially three components to the current research programme. The overall objective to the study is to critique the fragmented and controversial science to stopping men's violence to women, to identify the particular accounts that an innovative, pro-feminist and grass roots collective is employing and deploying to this effect and to gauge and consider the effects of this 'Stopping Violence' intervention strategy in light of the scientific critique. The specific objectives for each component of the present study are as follows:

- (1) To perform a discourse analysis of the social science theoretical literature surrounding wife abuse; a series of legitimated 'scientific' accounts concerning men's violence to their partners.
- (2) To describe in detail the Stopping Violence programme offered by the Manawatu Men Against Violence collective from an insider's perspective, to identify the different discourses being used in the programme and to consider the dynamics of their integration.
- (3) To identify the changes in subjectivity which occur in violent men as a result of their participation in the programme; more specifically to identify the discourses and subject positionings being taken up by the men as a consequence of their participation in the course and to identify the discursive resources being employed by the men which are resistant to change.

To attain these research objectives three qualitative methodological strategies will be employed. To gather the data participant observation (Barnard, 1993; May, 1993) and semi-structured interviewing (Bannister, Burman, Parker, Taylor and Tindall, 1994; May, 1993) procedures will be used. These, along with the already existing social science theoretical literature, will provide the basic 'texts' for the analytical component of the study. To analyse this data, at each of the three stages of the research programme, a discourse analysis technique will be used (Gavey, 1989, 1992; Parker, 1990, 1992; Potter and Wetherell, 1987; Weedon, 1987). A unifying feature of this research is its concern with the post-structuralist notion of 'discourse' - coherent systems of statements which construct objects and subjectivity and which inform social and material practices (Foucault, 1970). This combination of

methodologies provides an appropriate and sophisticated means to identifying and exploring the dynamics of the different discourses at work within the field of wife abuse and to documenting how these are applied and operate in a particular community setting. A more elaborate description of the research procedures can be found in the methodology section (Chapter 3).

This study takes place within a post-structuralist theoretical framework and employs a method for data analysis, discourse analysis, which is consistent with this approach. In order to understand and appreciate the methods and research objectives of this study it may be useful to the reader to provide a brief overview of the history and central concepts to the post-structuralist theory informing the particular goals and methods to this research.

Post-structuralism

Post-structuralism refers to a "loose" collection of theoretical positions (Gavey, 1989, p460) which have developed some of the central insights of Saussurean 'structural' linguistics (Saussure, 1916/1974) and which provide a powerful and radical new paradigm in contemporary social theory (Craib, 1984; Easthope, 1988; McLennan, 1989; Merquior, 1986; Sarup, 1988; Sturrock, 1993; Weedon, 1987). Influential post-structuralist writers for the social sciences include Foucault (1970, 1972, 1981), Derrida (1983, 1991) and Lacan (1977, 1979). Within psychology post-structural debates have been used to redefine ancient theoretical problems and to reconceptualise the subject matter of psychology itself (e.g. Bannister et al., 1994; Doherty, Graham and Malek, 1991; Gavey, 1989, 1992; Henriques, Hollway, Urwin, Venn and Walkerdine, 1984; Hollway, 1989; Parker, 1989, 1991, 1992; Potter and Wetherell, 1987; Shotter, 1990; Walkerdine, 1988).

The form of post-structuralism used in this study is broadly Foucauldian. This is a very useful form of analysis for social psychology because it provides an historically specific account of social relations, subjectivity and social practices (Bannister et al., 1994; Parker, 1992; Weedon, 1987). As Foucault (1981) the "radical historian" (Merquior, 1986) proposes, ways of understanding the world, including other's and one's own behaviour, vary as the structures of language and meaning in which people live their lives in change (Gutting, 1989; Merquior, 1986; Sarup, 1988; Sturrock, 1993). A Foucauldian position allows us to look at and understand the field of wife abuse from a fresh perspective, taking into account our distinct

epoch in history and consequently our distinct 'structures' of language and meaning. In this way some of the debates and controversies within the field of wife abuse may be reformulated in a fresh and potentially more useful way.

Language and meaning are central concepts to the 'structuralist' work of Saussure (1916/1974), a linguist who changed the way we look at language and consequently how we perceive the social and material world (Easthope, 1988; McLennan, 1992; Merquior, 1986; Sturrock, 1993). 'Structural' linguistics identifies a structure to language to which all language users are 'subject'. As with classical linguistic theory language is seen as a system of signs (sounds or symbols) which 'signify' concepts (objects, events) - the 'signified'. The two components of the sign are related to each other in an arbitrary way as there is no natural or essential connection between the sound image and the concept or it identifies. Where Saussurean thinking breaks from the past is through the innovative proposition that not only are signifiers arbitrary but so too is their relationship to the signified realities they refer to (Merquior, 1986; Sturrock, 1993).

Saussure claims that the meaning of signs is not intrinsic to an external objective reality but rather in relation to other signs in the language system. Individual signs do not have an intrinsic or essential meaning to which they refer but acquire meaning through their 'difference' from other signs within the system. For example 'assertion' makes sense as a new concept only when we contrast it with 'passivity' and 'aggression'. Meaning is thus created through language, and language systems are relative totalities which are incommensurable with other symbolic systems (McLennan, 1992; Merquior, 1986; Sturrock, 1993; Weedon, 1987). Thus Saussure argues that language is a social institution and that meaning is a "social fact" (Saussure, 1974, p77)

Saussure's work radically challenges common sense views of language and human agency and in doing so has developed a model for the social sciences known as Structuralism. Structuralism is inherently anti-humanist, reacting against the atomism of liberal-humanism as a dominant ideology in the modern era (Gutting, 1989; McLennan, 1989, 1992; Merquior, 1986). Liberal-humanism is a world view which places individual humans at the centre of social life. The 'self' is seen as being a unique, rational, individual, intentional and autonomous free agent who resides at the centre of all human activity and operates beyond

and through language. In this world view language is seen as a transparent and neutral medium through which ideas are expressed (e.g. Hume, 1911; Satre, 1963). Structuralism, in contrast however, claims that what we take to be real is constructed through language. Structuralism 'de-centres' consciousness, suggesting instead that the logic of the linguistic system governs our thoughts and actions, since we can only think in the symbols offered by the symbolic order. Structuralism argues that individual intentions and actions are constructed and constrained through this structure of relative meanings (McLennan, 1992; Sarup, 1988; Sturrock, 1993).

The structuralist model for understanding human action, has been developed and successfully applied outside of linguistics in areas such as political theory (Althusser, 1969) anthropology (Levi-strauss, 1963), history (Hirst, 1986) and art (Bryson, 1983). Features of this movement within the social sciences include a rejection of individualism or atomism in preference to perceiving 'the parts' in relation to the 'whole'. Structuralists explore the 'modes of interaction' and relationships between the 'elements' of the structure concerned, not cause-effect relationships of a single element in a linear or biographical sense. They recognise elements as being reciprocally dependent upon and determined through others. These 'totalities' are seen as self-regulating and coherent wholes (Sturrock, 1993).

Foucault is an historian who has applied and developed structuralist principles as a strategy for understanding 'whole' periods of history. He looks at the 'relational totality' of an epoch when seeking to understand particular material and social practices and not to the preceding 'causes', which a progressive Liberal humanist conception of history encourages (Hirst, 1986; McLennan, 1992). He sees history as a series of discontinuous wholes with each period having it's own "episteme" (Foucault, 1970) or social-linguistic meaning system and it's own distinct social and material practices and objects. His 'geneological' method locates historical shifts in social practice and once a shift has been discovered he traces the changes that occur in more detail in order to provide an account of changes in "episteme" (Sturrock, 1993).

Foucault approaches his subject matter as an "archaeological" enterprise aiming to give "an intrinsic description of the monument" (Foucault, 1972, p15), the remaining texts and material artifacts of the ancient epoch and culture. Texts, he claims, preserve the 'discursive formations' of a period - the categorical grid or linguistic meaning system which each age

places over reality in order to comprehend it. Foucault's geneological and archaeological methods have enabled him not only to advance the claim that each age organizes its knowledge differently from preceding and succeeding epochs, but also that within the circumference of a particular episteme many different branches of knowledge or discourses exist and that these organise their data according to the same structuralist principles of constructionism and incommensurability (Sturrock, 1993). His applied historical analysis has had radical implications for how we might perceive knowledge and truth. His work points to a relativist standpoint on knowledge and a critical philosophy of science (Gutting, 1989).

Foucault is considered 'post-structuralist', not 'anti-structuralist', because whilst he has applied many structuralist ideas in his work he has developed the Saussurean model further (Merquior, 1986; Sarup, 1988; Sturrock, 1993; Weedon, 1987). Like Saussure he sees language as a social structure which constructs consciousness, subjectivity and social reality, constraining the 'episteme' of what is 'real' and what is 'true' for any individual or social group. Unlike Saussure however he sees meaning structures as being dynamic, multiple and diverse not stable, unitary and static (McLennan, 1989; Weedon, 1987). Meaning is plural (Derrida, 1983; Weedon, 1987) and consciousness in post-structuralism is seen as a site of conflict between competing discourses, as different discourses offer different subject positions for an individual to take up or an institution to impose. For example, a violent man may be hailed as a 'hero', a 'bastard', a 'victim' or as 'sick', depending upon the discourse being employed. Subjectivity is seen as fragmentary and fluid, as the site of conflict and renewal and, as with structuralism, a social, and not a natural, product (Gavey, 1989, 1992; Weedon, 1987).

Post-structuralism thus asserts that there are a multitude of ways of assigning meaning to the world and to the understanding and defining of events and entities within it which are available to people at any time in any socio-historical context (Dews, 1987; Hollway, 1983; McLennan, 1989; Merquior, 1986; Parker, 1992). It pays particular attention to the fact that these different accounts have distinct implications in terms of the strategies and practices these afford in dealing with the world and in the shaping of personal identities, social relationships and societal institutions (Gavey, 1989, 1992; Parker, 1992; Venn, 1984; Weedon, 1987).

Post-structuralists working in the tradition of Foucault are less interested in the validity of claims to truth than they are in the effects of such claims in the organisation of social life.

Foucault suggests that within any structure of language there are many 'discourses' or 'regimes of truth' at work, many different meaning systems, all of which he claims compete for 'truth' or 'common sense' status and power over the organisation of individuals and institutions. His work portrays society and historical epochs as consisting of many 'discourses' or 'truth claims', each with their own social and material implications. His historical work demonstrates how some of these discourses obtain hegemonic 'truth' status and thereby possess great power in constructing and constraining social life (Dews, 1987; Gordon, 1980; Gutting, 1989; Parker, 1992).

The concept of 'discourse' is central to this project's post-structuralist exploration of the field of wife abuse. Discourse refers to an interrelated "system of statements which cohere around common meanings and values" (Hollway, 1983, p131). Such meaning systems are internally consistent and 'construct' objects through their categorizations, descriptions and metaphors of what is real (Foucault, 1972; Parker, 1992). Through their 'construction' and explanation, a discourse implies distinct social organizations, material practices and senses of agency and identity (Gavey, 1992; Weedon, 1987). Discourses, which pre-date the existence of any individual or institution, are used by subjective agents to understand their personal experiences, to define situations and to act in them. The same meaning systems are consequently employed in the construction of institutional organisations and practices. Similarly institutions and subjectivities reproduce discourses and keep them in circulation. "Discourse both constitutes, and is reproduced in, social institutions, modes of thought and individual subjectivities" (Gavey, 1989, p326). These "are a product of social factors...rather than an individual's set of ideas" (Hollway, 1983, p131).

The concept of a 'discursive field' (Foucault, 1981; Weedon, 1987) is used to describe the sum total of co-existing yet different and competing discourses within any particular field of knowledge. A discursive field typically consists of a number of frequently incompatible ways of giving meaning to a particular event or entity (Bannister et al., 1994), with each possessing its own categorizations, definitions and implications. Within any particular discursive field however not all discourses carry equal weight. Some discourses are more accessible than others and some are more 'credible' than others. Discourses which hold firm and prestigious institutional bases are typically the most powerful in society in constructing and reproducing

social practices and experiences of meanings (de Lauretis, 1987; Foucault, 1970, 1972; Gordon, 1980; Gavey, 1989; Weedon, 1987).

For example within the discursive field of family violence, 'mental illness' is frequently cited by scientists, legal practitioners, social workers and the public in general to be an underlying causal mechanism which produces such 'abnormal' behaviour (Schechter, 1982; Walker, 1979). This popular account has much institutional support in contemporary western society as can be seen in the media, science and the helping professions. In contrast 'demon possession', which may have been a perfectly reasonable explanation for violent behaviour in the middle ages (Foucault, 1973), has little institutional support today and is thus rarely put forward as a valid explanation for woman battering. Science has replaced religion or 'superstition' as being a dominant voice in defining 'truth' for society (Foucault, 1973). By implication therapy is now commonly accepted as a more appropriate intervention than is exorcism. Through this 'individual pathology' discourse we are also 'hailed' (Althusser, 1969) to think of ourselves, if we are not wife abusers, as 'mentally well' as opposed to 'mentally sick' and of society and the family as 'well'. As will be shown other discourses within the discursive field of wife abuse would contest these meanings.

Foucault's archaeological exploration of history demonstrates how discourses such as science (Foucault, 1970, 1981), psychiatry (1971, 1975), religion (1973) and law (1975, 1977) have, by gaining public consent and institutional hegemony in legitimizing 'truth', exerted immense 'power' in social regulation, based upon a singular perspective, thereby denying the voices of others. In the modern era science, including the social sciences, has emerged as a powerful 'technology of the social' (de Lauretis, 1987; Foucault, 1970, 1972; Gavey, 1992; Parker and Shotter, 1990). Its definitions impact upon how other institutions define objects and events and these impact on the way in which agents subjected to these discourses think, feel and act. Knowledge, for Foucault, is powerful and legitimated forms of knowledge, such as those endorsed by science, are the most powerful of all in shaping and organising social life. "Power and knowledge directly imply one another" (Foucault, cited in Dews, 1987, p175). The powerful social and material implications of scientific discourses in the modern era serve to make the 'meanings' endorsed by science, and those within the social science field of wife abuse, a political and moral issue worth 'reflecting upon' (Banister et al., 1994; Gergen, 1985; Parker, 1992; Weedon, 1987).

This post-structuralist exploration of theory and intervention within the field of wife abuse has been informed by the ideas of Foucault and the form of discourse analysis advocated in feminist post-structuralism (Gavey, 1989, 1992; Weedon, 1987) and critical realism (Parker, 1992). These schools of thought make overt use of Foucault's (1972, 1980) descriptions of discourse and the 'power' discourse has in the organisation of personal and social life. Unlike "high" (Parker, 1992), "abstract" (Weedon, 1987) or "radical" (McLennan, 1992) interpretations of Foucauldian post-structuralism however, which typically slide into an apolitical relativistic nihilism (Bhavnani, 1990; Burnan, 1990), these theorists interpret discourses as organizational forces, with real implications for the social and physical world, independent of their ontological status or 'truth' validity. Such critical theorists are interested in the consequences of certain branches of knowledge in the transformation and perpetuation of the social world. "Discourses provide frameworks for debating the value of one way of talking about reality over other ways" (Parker, 1992, p5).

Analysing the discursive field of wife abuse from a post-structuralist perspective will allow us to look at the different discourses present and to discern the effects these are having or could have in the organisation of social life. As Weedon points out, a post-structuralist analysis can enable us to "choose between different accounts of reality on the basis of their social implications" (Weedon, 1987, p29).

Reflexivity - reflecting upon the research

Qualitative research is an interpretive approach to understanding the social world (Bannister et al., 1994), the purpose of which is to provide an account of other people's understandings, in an attempt to interpret and make 'intelligible' their actions (Gergen, 1985), not to lay claim to what is 'true' and what is not. Post-structural qualitative research works from the assumption that interpretations of reality are socially constructed with each interpretative system providing a framework through which agents make meaningful choices concerning their behaviour. Because knowledge is held to be partial and subjective, post-structuralists and other qualitative researchers who share this assumption consider it to be appropriate, if not essential research practice, for scientists to reflect upon their work and to consider the 'position of the researcher' in the formulation and conclusions of the research enterprise (Gavey, 1992; Harding, 1987; Stanley, 1990).

Post-structuralists do not make the claim to be 'objective' in their analysis, as in conventional science, rather they see 'objectivity' as a special form of a socially constructed subjectivity - most typically one which denies it's subjectivity (Hollway, 1989). At best our understanding is an interpretation only, no more or less subjective or valid than any other interpretation. It is considered to be more 'honest' to acknowledge one's own subjective positioning in relation to the construction of knowledge of which one speaks (Bannister et al., 1994; Potter and Wetherell, 1987). By acknowledging the subject positioning(s) from which we undertake our research others can assess the data we derive differently and thus formulate their own conclusions..."readers can then judge the content in the context of perspectives and assumptions by which it was shaped" (Marshall, 1986, p195).

Acknowledging our subjectivity and our role in the construction of a particular version of the social world through our research however does not mean that our accounts have no value. We need not get caught up in and take too seriously the infinite reflexive spiral which can bedevil reflective research (Bannister et al., 1994; Potter and Wetherell, 1987). Having acknowledged our subjectivity and our role in the construction of knowledge we can proceed to analyse peoples' interpretations of events and to look at the implications these have for people's lives. For post-structuralism, knowledge has great power in organising social action and new perspectives and knowledges provide new opportunities for alternative forms of social organisation and behavioural practices (Gavey, 1989; Weedon, 1987) with some forms being more moral, helpful and useful than others (Acker, Barry and Esseveld, 1983; Gavey, 1989, 1992; Gergen, 1985; Jaggar, 1983; Parker, 1992; Weedon, 1987) for addressing and stopping particular social practices, such as wife abuse.

This research project, as with all forms of research, is undertaken by a subjective agent working from a specific social and biographical context. To give the reader an insight into who I am and how I came to do this research, let me briefly introduce myself and my story. My name is Damian and I am a social/community psychologist working in the area of wife abuse. I call myself a social/community psychologist because I am interested in the interplay between the sociology and the psychology of behaviour, between the personal and political. I am producing this text/research report from an academic institution in the western world in the mid 1990s. I am also more than simply a social scientist. I am a white middle class heterosexual male, in my mid-late twenties, with interests and active engagements in art,

friendships, and 'progressive' politics. I was brought up in a christian household where I was encouraged to be concerned with the welfare of others and to dislike injustice. Upon attending university I became interested in marxism and feminism and these critical perspectives have developed my concern for justice and peace.

This research project was first formulated soon after visiting some women friends of mine who were scared of men's violence. I was intending to do a PhD with the Massey psychology department at this point, but I was not certain of my topic. I wanted to do something challenging and meaningful but I did not know what, perhaps something theoretical as I was interested in the philosophy of science. More concretely, a 'stranger rape' had occurred that week within these people's street and one of the women's bedroom window had been smashed late at night the night before I visited. These people were feeling scared and angry at men for this intrusion and threat. They commented on how rape and violence against women were low priority concerns to both the law and the research community in our sexist society. I agreed with them. As they said "they can put a man on the moon but don't know or care about what makes him rape and hurt women". As Susan Brownmiller (1975) claims, all women feel scared of this potential to be attacked at any time by a man. Such a perspective, which locates the problem and responsibility with men, was consistent with my pro-feminist standpoint. As a pro-feminist man I was 'conscious' of the problems of men's dominance and violence in the world. I knew it was men who raped and murdered women and that our society did not challenge this enough. I agreed with the idea that men should take responsibility for putting a stop to this. I decided to change my research project from a theoretical one to a more applied one which had more concrete implications for bettering people's lives. I wanted to help do something about men's sexual violence in the community. I thought that this was an important yet undervalued topic in social science. As a pro-feminist man I felt that this was the kind of research I should be doing.

After reading around the topic I became aware of the empirical 'fact' that men's violence is a common occurrence in the western world and that most women will experience some form of violence at the hands of a man at one time or another. Although I initially began this enquiry by exploring 'stranger rape', I was soon redirected by the literature towards other forms of violence by men towards women, which were much more common yet less frequently talked about - violence in the home. I found that rape occurs more frequently

among intimates and associates than it does among strangers and the occurrence of such events is part of a broader pattern of violence in our society. Women are most likely to suffer from sexual, physical and emotional abuse in either their own or the assailant's home. At least ten percent of women experience various combinations of such abuse and this is a conservative estimate at best. I decided to approach 'wife abuse' as a research problem and not 'stranger rape' because this seemed to be a more appropriate means to helping stop men's violence to women, including stranger rape. Feminist informed texts such as Dobash and Dobash's (1992) 'Women, Violence and Social change' and the Aotearoa-New Zealand McMaster and Swain's (1989) 'A Private Affair: Stopping men's violence to women' were formative texts around this time.

Through the latter text I became aware of grass-roots community groups operating in Aotearoa New Zealand, consisting of men working with men, who worked alongside the women's refuge groups trying to address the problem of men's violence to women directly. I soon approached the local Men Against Violence collective with the intention of finding out more about them. I was drawn to them because they shared a pro-feminist political position that men need to take an active role in putting a stop to men's violence. We talked for a while and whilst they were generally sceptical of academics, they welcomed me as a man who had energy and enthusiasm for working in this area. I joined them soon after and was encouraged to train as a 'stopping violence' course co-facilitator. I was interested and impressed with what they were doing and talked with them about the possibilities of doing research with them. They were interested in critiques and evaluations of their work and valued qualitative research which was a personal interest of mine.

I proposed to explore their psychotherapeutic-educational 'Stopping Violence' programme, the basic cornerstone of MMAV's work in stopping men's violence to their partners. I was curious and wanted to know what philosophies structure such a programme, what happens in one of these programmes and what their effects were on the men who take part in it. I knew that the MMAV people were well intentioned but I did not know what exactly they did nor how effective and useful they were. I drew up a proposal of what I thought could be both interesting to me as a social scientist and useful for MMAV and after a collective deliberation and a few questions they agreed with the idea. As part of my training as a stopping violence facilitator I would be expected to participate in a 'stopping violence' course and I proposed

to use this experience as a basis for analysing the course. I would also interview men who had been violent before and after the course as a means to assess the impact such a course has had on them.

What I proposed was an analysis of the 'discourses' at work in the 'stopping violence' programme, how these operate together and how these effect the men who participate. These objectives form the second and third goals of the present study, as are listed above. I had to explain the concept of 'discourse' and my interest in it to the collective. These research goals reflect my personal enthusiasm and respect for 'qualitative' research as an insightful, valid and useful social research instrument. Earlier, when I had been exploring sexual violence more specifically, I had been very impressed with Wendy Hollway's (1981) discursive analysis of the trial of Jack the ripper and Walby, Hay and Soothill's (1983) work on the role of discourse in the social construction and cultural legitimation of 'stranger rape'.

Until this point I had not engaged in a discourse analysis, although I had had experience working with other forms of qualitative research and was aware of it's existence. From the works of Hollway (1981) and Walby et al., (1983) on the cultural construction of rape, I came to see discourse analysis as being a most useful, insightful and appropriate strategy for exploring any social practices, including men's violence to women. I was enthused by the potential insightfulness of using a discourse analysis and the prospect of using a participant observation technique as part of this process. The study seemed new and exciting and I felt good about getting involved with such an active, well meaning community group in which men were taking responsibility for men's violence. The discourse analysis of the theoretical literature surrounding men's violence to their partners was a complimentary idea which made a lot of sense to pursue given the research that would follow and the controversial nature of the field.

As I began this study I was clearly pro-feminist and this is strongly reflected in my research goals and the formulation of the problem. I acknowledge this subject positioning as an integral part to this work. This pro-feminist orientation is reflected further in my journal writings concerning why I was embarking on this work with MMAV. Firstly, I was, as has been mentioned, 'politically' enthused about working with MMAV because they were a pro-feminist group of men taking responsibility for men's violence. I was wanting to contribute to this

movement and considered documenting and analysing the innovations of this grass-roots organisation to be relevant to them reflexively, of interest to other men who work or seek to work in the area of stopping men's violence and also of significance to the broader community.

Secondly, I considered violent men to be violent to their wives or partners as part of their patriarchal prerogative. Of all the theories available which account for men's violence I considered this feminist perspective to be the most convincing explanation. I thus began this research project thinking that wife assaulters were sexist men who expect and demand power in their relationships and who are, in the last instance, bullies who see their place as being at the head of the house. As the literature analysis will demonstrate however this is only one perspective among many which seeks to account for wife abuse. Within this critique I have not written from the position of a pro-feminist writer, although this was tempting. Throughout the critique I have taken up the position of a post-structuralist observing the field from the outside and in doing so have attempted to outline the various accounts available and to represent these voices in their own right.

Because one's subject positioning is not stable and changes over time I agreed with both my supervisor and Bannister et al. (1994) that keeping a journal of my progress and development in relation to the research problem is good 'reflexive' research practice. Over the period of this research programme my ideas have changed and developed as my experience with violent men has grown and this I think is important to acknowledge and to document. Transformations in the way I think and feel about these men and their violence have occurred and these are 'reflected' upon in this study where it is contextually appropriate. These changes have typically occurred during the participant observation period, which was an intensive, rich and intimate experience, and during the process and analysis of interviews, which again brought about changes in my perceptions through intensive interaction with the data and intimate discussions with the men.

The post-structuralist theory, in which this research is grounded, has developed for me from reading about the theoretical roots of discourse analysis. I have long known that 'truth' is a difficult notion and post structuralist concerns with the implications of truth regimes, such as Hollway's (1981) work, make much sense to me. If some interpretations of reality are better

than others for stopping men's violence then I am open to exploring the discourses available and bearing witness to their effects. As the feminist post-structuralist Chris Weedon (1987) points out, some discourses are better for feminist concerns than others.

The Manawatu Men Against Violence collective (MMAV)

This study involves a post-structuralist exploration of the Manawatu Men Against Violence Collective (MMAV) whose intention it is to stop men's violence to women (Tisdall, 1993). Their mission statement is "to help reduce all forms of violence and abuse and promote healthier lifestyles and relationships by providing services to men within an individual, family/whanau and community context" (MMAV, 1994, p1). MMAV are a pro-feminist organisation "concerned to see any inequalities in the community addressed ...promoting the well-being of women...and reducing male violence in the community" (Tisdall, 1993, p16). MMAV engage in a variety of intervention strategies to achieve this effect. Their programmes are designed to be educational, preventative, developmental and rehabilitative. They provide these services within a warm, user-friendly yet professional context.

The 'stopping violence' programme is of particular interest in this study because it is designed specifically to enable domestically assaultive males to stop their violence. This programme occurs alongside other MMAV services, such as a 24 hour phone support service, individual counselling, men's therapy groups, listening and communication skills groups and various community education seminars. In these services men are listened to, supported and validated but are also, especially within the stopping violence programme, taught a structured programme and are confronted about their behaviour (Tisdall, 1993). On average three hundred and fifty men come to MMAV for help each year (MMAV, 1994).

MMAV consists of a collective of 30 men of whom two are paid staff who co-ordinate and manage the office on a day to day basis and who offer counselling and group work. They have one office, a large group room and access to two smaller counselling rooms. A small management committee make collective decisions and steer the organisation and these people are accountable to the rest of the group. All members are welcome to attend these monthly meetings and these are frequently attended by women's refuge representatives. There are several additional part time group facilitators who are paid for their work with groups one or two nights a week.

MMAV was established during a public meeting in Palmerston North in 1981. This was at a time when a number of men's groups from around the country were beginning to address the issue of men's violence and this can be seen as a response to the increased public awareness of wife battering incidence rates, brought to the attention of the community by the women's refuge movement (Tisdall, 1993). Anger management Programmes were imported from America and adapted to the New Zealand cultural climate by Williams and McMaster (1984) and Swain (1984) and these programmes inspired and developed work in the area of men's violence as the 1980s developed. Prior to the development and implementation of these programmes the prevailing attitude of the existing social services was that very little could be done for men who assaulted and battered their partners (Lloyd-Pask and McMaster, 1991).

MMAV is part of a national network called Men For Non-Violence (NZ) which formed in 1991. MFNV (NZ) has developed a standardized model for 'stopping violence' programmes which is used throughout the country by all groups affiliated within the national organisation (Tisdall, 1993). MMAV's stopping violence programme is thus based on a national programme agreed upon and developed from the collective of grass roots men's organisations. The stopping violence programme runs for one evening a week for eight weeks, following an initial introductory all day session. Two paid co-facilitators run each session.

The organisation is recognised by governmental agencies such as the courts who frequently order domestically violent men to attend the 'stopping violence' group. The majority of men who attend MMAV programmes are self referred, responding to advertising or word of mouth publicity. Forty percent are referrals from the Justice Department, Community Corrections, District Court, Police, Health Services, Solicitors and other counselling agencies. In the stopping violence programme about half the men are referred through a mandatory court order. MMAV receives funding from a combination of grants, from sources such as the Department of Social Welfare and Community Organisation Grants, and fees for services from individual users and agencies such as the Department of Justice (Tisdall, 1993).

The majority of men who come to MMAV seeking help are between the ages of 25 and 35 with ages ranging from early teens to late 60s. Most are of European descent whilst 16% identify themselves as Maori. A third of these men are unemployed. Sixty two percent of the men have children and half of these have their children living with them. Thirty eight percent

are married or in defacto relationships and a third are 'separated' from their ex-partners. A third have no school qualifications whilst one fifth have a tertiary qualification (Tisdall, 1993).

Ethical issues

This research project is being conducted within the ethical guidelines of Massey University and the New Zealand Psychological Society and recognises the need to protect participants from any potential harm that may come about as a result of research and to preserve participants' psychological well-being, values and dignity at all times. Permission to carry out this study was granted by the Massey University Human Ethics committee in July, 1994 subject to the following conditions:

(a) Informed consent:

That all participants in the study would be fully informed about the research goals and process and their rights within it, both orally and in writing. In this way participants could make an informed decision as to whether or not they would agree to participate in the study. Each person involved was provided with a written rationale for the study informing them of the purpose of the research, the method by which these goals would be obtained, what was required of them and of what would happen to the information gained from the research. Each person also had the opportunity to raise questions and to discuss the research with the researcher. If a person agreed to participate it was made clear to him that they could withdraw from the study at any time or censor sensitive pieces of information that they did not wish the researcher to take away. The participant observation group received a copy of the original research proposal, as a group, and after a group decision making process, verbal consent was given. For the individual interviews information sheets and consent forms were read, discussed and signed by each participant prior to the interview.

(b) Confidentiality:

That all persons engaged in the research would remain anonymous and their participation in the research confidential. All participants were assured of remaining anonymous and great care was taken to ensure that this happened. Materials produced in the course of the research (observations, tapes, tape transcripts) were kept in a safe private place, stored in a locked office filing cabinet. All names recorded were replaced by pseudonyms and a list linking codes to real names was stored separately in another safe place which was again

accessible only to the researcher. Any publications arising from the study are to be published in a form that precludes the identification of any participant.

This study meets the ethical requirements of both the Massey University Human Ethics Committee and also the MMAV management committee. Both have approved of and support this research project.

METHOD

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

There are three data collection methods employed in this research programme. These are participant observation, semi-structured interviewing and literature searching. Discourse analysis is the central research methodology and this unifies and connects all three phases of the research project. The first study involves a discourse analysis of the social science theoretical literature surrounding wife abuse. The second study involves a participant observation and discourse analysis of a 'Stopping Violence' programme. The third study involves the semi-structured interviewing of men attending the Stopping Violence programme both prior to and following their participation. Again, a discourse analysis will be performed on this data. In effect the literature gathering, participant observation and semi-structured interviewing procedures are used as methods of providing 'texts' for discourse analysis.

Discourse analysis

One way of engaging in social research which is consistent with a post-structuralist analysis of language and the role meaning structures play in the construction and regulation of social life is through employing the strategy of discourse analysis (Bannister et al., 1994; Gavey, 1989; Parker, 1992). Discourse analysis is a relatively new, yet well established method in psychology (Banister et al., 1994; Potter and Wetherell, 1987) of which not all forms are post-structural, reflecting both the diversity of perspectives by which language is approached and the variety of purposes which govern linguistic research (Potter and Wetherell, 1987; Potter, Wetherell, Gill and Edwards, 1990) (e.g. Hollway, 1984; Squire, 1990; van Dijk, 1985).

Discourse analysis, as it is used here in this Foucauldian tradition of post-structuralism, involves the study of 'texts' with the aim of identifying the discursive patterns of meaning which inhabit and inform the text (Bannister et al., 1994; Gavey, 1989; Parker, 1992). It involves the careful reading of texts with the aim of identifying the discrete meaning systems employed in the understanding of personal and social phenomena and entails an analysis which is attentive both to detail in language and to the wider social picture. It operates on the post-structuralist assumptions that there are many possible constructions of reality, that the subjectivity which produces texts are fragmented, inconsistent and contradictory as a result of

this, and that texts realise the various discourses available in the social, cultural and historical context of the author (Gavey, 1989; Parker, 1992). It is the analyst's role to tease apart the discourses at work in the text (Bannister et al., 1994).

Identifying the discrete discourses underlying and informing texts is an interpretive task in which the researcher simultaneously immerses themselves in and takes a critical distance from the textual material at hand. There is no set method for identifying discourses however (Gavey, 1989; Potter and Wetherell, 1987) as "each step rests on a bedrock of intuition" (Parker, 1990, p191). "Perhaps the first step in successful discourse analysis (is) the suspension of belief in what one normally takes for granted, as we begin to think about how a practice is constructed and what it assumes rather than seeing it as a mere reflection of an unproblematic reality" (Potter and Wetherell, 1987, p104).

A discourse, appearing in any form of text, paints pictures of reality which can be reduced to a "regulated system of statements" (Henriques et al., 1984, p105). This interrelated "system of statements...cohere(s) around common meanings and values" (Hollway, 1983, p131) or 'constructions' (Parker, 1992) and can be identified in this way. Identifying the discrete discourses inhabiting a text involves the careful reading of the text with a view to discerning the patterns of meaning, contradictions and inconsistencies existing within it (Gavey, 1989). According to Potter and Wetherell (1987, p149), this involves a search for "recurrently used systems of terms used for characterizing and evaluating actions, events and other phenomena (which are) constituted through a limited range of terms (and are) organised around specific metaphors and figures of speech".

In order to identify the different systems of meaning, intuition as well as careful consideration and observation is required (Hollway, 1989; Parker, 1990) as the discourse analyst attempts to "get a sense of what (each discourse) feels like as a coherent whole" (Parker, 1992, p14). This involves a search for the 'implicit' or 'overlapping' themes (Billig et al., 1988; Gavey, 1992) of construction which cohere and contrast within the text. Once these themes or coherent systems of meaning are identified a discourse analyst will deliberately systematise the different ways of talking so the reader can more easily understand them (Parker, 1992).

Parker (1992) has identified seven criteria which facilitates the identification and teasing apart

of discourses, thus removing much of the 'confusion' (Bannister et al., 1994) involved in the identification of the discrete meaning systems informing a text. In providing these criteria Parker (1992) does not advocate a set 'sequential' method but rather he offers these 'steps' as a guideline to be emphasised differently in different ways, depending upon the research focus (Burman and Parker, 1993; Coombes, 1996). In the following section I will briefly outline the strategies employed in this research project to incorporate each of the criteria as advocated by Parker (1992). Reflecting the Foucauldian tradition, Parker begins with a working definition of discourse as "a system of statements which constructs an object" (Parker, 1990, p191). He maintains that it is essential, as the analysis proceeds, to step back and revisit early stages of the analysis as it develops to make sense of selected pieces of the text.

A discourse is realised in texts

A 'text' is anything which possesses "delimited tissues of meaning reproduced in any form that can be given an interpretive gloss" (Parker, 1992, p6). Parker (1992) broad definition of a text broadens the application of discourse analysis beyond exclusively linguistic forms. His definition of a text includes formal and informal speech, transcripts, documents, stories and even images, architecture, bodily movements and social practices, all of which convey specific social meanings and thereby 'realise' and reproduce discourses. The particular texts used in this study include the social science theoretical literature, interview transcripts and a social intervention practice.

A discourse is about objects

There are two levels of 'objectification' involved in Parker's (1992) discourse analysis, both of which are incorporated as central features of this study. Firstly, the analyst seeks to identify the particular objects 'constructed' within the text and thereby given a 'reality' by the author/reader. Secondly the analyst will locate these constructions within an 'objectified' system of meanings. "A discourse is about objects and discourse analysis is about discourses as objects" (Parker, 1992, p9). Throughout this research project both levels of objectification will be addressed. As constructions are identified in the analysis they will be located within a broader system of meanings - objectified discourses.

A discourse contains subjects

The various objects constructed within and through a discourse afford a distinct "sense of self"

through positioning the subject within "a particular space" amongst the constructions (Parker, 1992, p9). This discursive space constrains and enables "particular types of self to step in" (Parker, 1992, p9) thus effectively "hailing" the subject (Althusser, 1971) to act and experience themselves and the world in a way which is consistent with the particular discourse(s) realised. Subjectivity is an effect of the subject positions afforded through a discourse and this analysis will be sensitive to the subject positions and senses of subjectivity which are evoked through the texts explored.

A discourse is a coherent system of meanings

The notion of discourse as a 'regulated' or 'coherent' system of meanings explicitly realises Foucault's use of the term (Parker, 1992, p11) in which discourse is construed as an interconnected system of statements constructed around other meanings in an internally consistent manner. The interconnected objects and subjectivities which are constructed through a 'regulated' meaning system avails a coherent world view to the user of the discourse. Discourse analysis in this research involves a search for coherent meaning systems in which constructed objects and subjectivities and their implications for action cohere together in a meaningful and consistent way.

A discourse is historically located

Because contemporary discourses have emerged at some point in the past a complete "discourse analysis cannot take place without locating it's object in time" (Parker, 1992, p16). Through this research practice the "structure and force" (Parker, 1992, p16) of a discourse can be more fully appreciated as the historical forces leading to the discourse's adoption in contemporary life are explored and articulated. In this research project each discourse as it is identified through the various texts explored will be located within the broader social and historical context from which it has emerged. To achieve this Foucault's genealogical history, in which qualitatively different epochs are distinguishable through the institutional dominance of different discourses, will be employed as a guide. Discourses found in the contemporary social sciences will be traced to a time in which they emerged to gain institutional power.

A discourse refers to other discourses

"Discourses embed, entail and presuppose other discourses" (Parker, 1992, p13) through drawing upon the concepts, analogies and metaphors constructed in other discourses which

appear useful and appropriate to filling the 'spaces' within a particular discourse. "The systematic character of a discourse includes its systematic articulation with other discourses. In practice, discourses delimit what can be said, whilst providing the spaces - the concepts, metaphors, models, analogies - for making new statements within any specific discourse" (Henriques et al. 1984, pp105-6). Parker suggests that being aware of this feature of the dynamics of discourse facilitates analysis through reading for ways in which objects constructed through different discourses "overlap, where they constitute what look like the same object in different ways" (Parker, 1992, p14). Discursive co-articulations will be explored and addressed throughout the research project. Discourses identified in the various texts will be compared and contrasted with one another and overlaps in their constructions and implications will be noted as part of the 'objectification' process.

A discourse reflects on its own way of speaking

A discourse as it is elaborated and established within a text frequently contrasts itself with common meanings constructed through other discourses, thus subtly positioning itself as 'different'. The contrasts involved in this process require the author of the text to take a 'reflexive' standpoint and to evoke explicit contrasts with 'implicit meanings'. The elaboration of these 'hidden meanings' (Billig et al., 1988) constitutes the task of explicating the reflexive process involved in the elaboration of the text. In this study subtle differences in meaning implied by each discourse, as well as the explicit contrasts, will be elaborated upon as each discourse is identified and distinguished from others within the texts of concern.

Parker (1992) describes these seven features of discourse as a necessary and sufficient criteria for identifying discrete discourses at work within any given text. He also offers three 'auxiliary' features of a discourse which, he claims, ought to be considered in any discursive research project. These auxiliary features concern the politics of discourse analysis and the role of discourse in the broader social system. Stated briefly, once discourses have been identified, an analysis should be attendant to (a) the role of a discourse in supporting institutions and institutional practices; (b) it's role in the reproduction and/or propagation of power relations in society; and (c) it's 'ideological' consequences in terms of social relations and material effects. These broader concerns for the implications of discourses within society as a whole reflect the interdisciplinary nature of post-structuralist work. Given the context of this research project the institutions I will be concerned with are those which legitimate or

challenge men's violence to their partners in the community. The dynamics of power explored in this piece of research includes a consideration of the struggle by the protagonists of each discourse to establish dominance and hegemony within the field at large and this will necessarily involve an examination of the power dynamics inherent in each discourse. The ideological effects I will explore are those implications of each discourse for subjectivity, social relations and action norms.

These three auxiliary features of discursive implication, as well as the seven point criteria for the identification of discourses as proposed by Parker (1992), will be incorporated throughout this research as a guide for the identification and exploration of the discourses being realised and reproduced within and through the various texts explored.

Study (1): A Post-structuralist reading of the theoretical literature surrounding wife abuse.

In this study the social science theoretical literature accounting for wife abuse was explored and analysed discursively. All books and journal articles pertaining to the field, which were accessible to the researcher were read and re-read several times in search of commonalities and variations in the way in which theorists and interventionists throughout the social sciences accounted for and explained wife abuse. 'Implicit' or 'overlapping' themes (Billig et al., 1988; Gavey, 1992) in the various ways in which wife abuse has been defined, explained and implicated for a specific form of intervention were observed and reflected upon by the researcher over a period of several months in which I was intensively engaged and immersed in the research literature. By paying particular attention to themes, language features and metaphors used in the various accounts and by employing Parker's (1992) criteria for identifying and distinguishing between discourses, I came to identify five distinct discourses to be operating in and informing the field of wife abuse. Attention was paid to the distinct ways in which causes were constructed and subject positions constituted for and about the men concerned. Variations in social practices and intervention strategies implied by these constructions were observed to accompany these in a coherent and consistent way.

Each recurring theme, once identified as a potential discourse informing the social science theoretical literature, was subjected to a validation check; through re-reading the material and searching for alternative frameworks; through ensuring that all features of a discourse were

present; through checking for distinction from other discourses; and through checking for internal consistency within the discourse itself - ensuring that the dominant metaphors, subjectivity, causal constructs and implication procedures afforded through the discourse fitted together. 'Intuitive' hunches (Hollway, 1989; Parker, 1990), derived through immersion in the literature, were empirically checked and validated in this way and it was through this dialectical process, in which many hypotheses were abandoned or modified, that the discourses presented in this study were identified.

The five systems of meaning, were then systematised and explicated for presentational purposes. The various social science theoretical standpoints, and there are a multitude of these, through which the discourses are realised, are presented as demonstrative 'texts' in this report, within the context of each discourse as it is presented to the reader. As each discourse was identified an account of the cultural and historical context from which it has emerged was sought through a reading of historical and anthropological texts. Furthermore, a consideration of the societal implications and consequences for each discourse have been included within its presentation and discussion.

Study (2): A participant observation of the MMAV Stopping Violence programme.

The focus of this study is to provide an account, in light of the theoretical literature, of the Manawatu Men Against Violence collective's 'Stopping Violence' programme. Through participation in the MMAV Stopping Violence course my aim is to describe what happens in one of these courses and to provide a post-structural analysis of this culturally and historically specific event. As demonstrated in the literature overview, there are many conflicting ways of accounting for and intervening in the field of wife abuse, which makes the area a particularly controversial and difficult one to work in, with no agreed upon rules and agendas. In this study I seek to answer broad questions such as; What goes on in a MMAV Stopping Violence programme? Does the MMAV course realise and reproduce the discursive resources identified in the theoretical literature? How does it do this? Which discourses are employed and which are not? I am particularly interested in identifying the theoretical ideas and tools being utilised by MMAV and to see how these are integrated together in the programme. What are the components to the programme? What is the temporal order of events? What materials and activities are employed? Which discourses do these ideas, materials and practices realise

and reproduce? Are there any contradictions or tensions between the discourses employed by MMAV? If so, how do MMAV deal with these tensions?

Participant observation is research strategy which involves the engagement in and experiencing of a social scene as a means to understanding it. It is a systematic and disciplined study in which the researcher is the central instrument through which knowledge about the social situation is apprehended (Barnard, 1993; May, 1993). Participant observation refers to:

The process in which an investigator establishes a many-sided and relatively long-term relationship with a human association in it's natural setting, for the purposes of developing a scientific understanding of that association
(Lofland and Lofland, 1984, p12).

The method involves what Hunter and Whitten (1975, p5) characterise as "trying to come to an appreciation of our 'subjects' way of life through immersing ourselves in it...while at the same time attempting 'objectively' to observe, describe and analyse their social behaviour".

Participant observation is a research strategy which has been employed from a variety of research perspectives, including Marxism (Pryce, 1986), ethnomethodology (Cicourel, 1976) and feminism (Campbell, 1981; Eaton, 1986), as a tool to understanding and describing what goes on in any particular social setting. The participant-observer method is thus not limited to any single research perspective (May, 1993). It's use in this post-structuralist analysis can be seen as reflecting further it's versatility as a research tool which affords ways to exploring a social scene which might otherwise be inaccessible (Barnard, 1993; Seymour-Smith, 1986). Like Foucault's history (Merquior, 1986) participant observation is interested in exploring the underlying 'forms' of interaction and the systems which inform and structure social practices (May, 1993). Here I am particularly interested in observing and identifying the discursive resources/forms which underlie the programme.

A participant observation strategy is used in this study, not only as a means to exploring the course content but also to observe how this material is imparted to the group and how the group responds to this. This is to gain an appreciation of the social dynamics inherent in the situation. To achieve this I'll be asking questions such as: What happens during the different components of the course? What do the facilitators do? What do the men do? How do the facilitators interact with each other and with the men and visa versa? What situations arise and

how do the clients and the facilitators deal with these? How is the material and course content presented and imparted to the men? How do the men react to the positions advocated by MMAV? Do they accept or resist certain discourses? If so, how and which one's? How do they respond to discursive tensions and contradictions? How does the men's behaviour change over time? How do the men respond to challenges? What sorts of challenges are made? Do the men support or challenge each other? In this way an appreciation of the whole social scene, including an account of the subtle processes which occur during this social practice, can be gained.

As has been discussed previously however, I am not going into this social scene seeking to apprehend uninvolved objective and complete observations which can be used to surmise the group. This would be an impossible goal (Bannister et al., 1994). I acknowledge that I am going into the situation with distinct purposes and a distinct subjectivity which is influencing my observations and experience. In particular I am a post-structuralist social scientist attending to the programme's content at a theoretical level and am interested in the men's reaction to this at a social level. I am also, among other things, a pro-feminist man seeking to learn more about ways in which violent men's violence to women can be stopped.

Procedure:

Permission to attend this group and to participate as a participant observer was granted by both the facilitators and the participants of the group. The facilitators gave their consent two weeks before the group began, when MMAV initially gave their consent to the research proposal as a whole. This occurred at one of the monthly management meetings at which I was present to answer questions and explain the project. A copy of the research proposal as it was handed to MMAV several weeks prior to this meeting can be located in Appendix 1 of this report. The participants in the group programme gave their consent to this particular study during the first session of the programme.

The study was proposed to the men early in this session through a verbal request and an extended explanation. The group was also provided with a copy of the MMAV research proposal and this was passed around and discussed by the group as a whole as they considered the proposal. I presented myself equally as a member of MMAV training to become a MMAV facilitator and as a Massey researcher, pointing out that I was here to find out more about the

programme and that I would be evaluating it through observations and interviews in the weeks to come. It was made clear at this point however that I would not be interviewing these men, but another group. I identified myself as a man who did not have a problem with violence and so was not here for 'stopping violence' training. I acknowledged however that I thought there was a lot that I could learn from this course as a person, as well as a trainee facilitator and researcher, and that I was looking forward to taking part in it and learning new skills. I spoke about how the research would be used both for MMAV as a feedback device for what they/we are doing and as a research exercise for my own degree at Massey. The facilitators voiced their support for the project adding that they would appreciate it, from MMAV's perspective, if the group agreed.

At first the men were uncomfortable with this situation and felt reluctant to participate. Some voiced fears of being spied upon. Others indicated that they did not mind. After reading through the research proposal and discussing the research as a whole, the men agreed to participate on the explicit grounds that MMAV would benefit from the research and that all names would be kept anonymous. They reserved the right to censor information as it arose, an event which never eventuated. A copy of the research proposal was kept in the MMAV office and was available to anyone who was interested in reading it further. It took a while for the men to feel comfortable with this situation but because they saw me as one of the MMAV team, because I met them as a person and talked about the study more with them during the tea and lunchbreak of the day, and because I participated as one of the group they soon, I think, became used to the intrusion of this 'outsider'. I was not the only 'outsider', it should be noted. Another trainee-facilitator was present also and his presence was identified and accepted by the group also, albeit with similar reluctance.

Data gathering involved participating in the group as a member **and** observing the social situation at hand. By participating in the group I was able to become part of the scene and to gain an insider's perspective of the group dynamics at work, this being the principle advantage of the participant observer research strategy. During the interval periods I would write brief 'field notes' in a note book, which would represent the observations I had made and committed to memory through a mnemonic memory technique. I tried to attend to as much information existing within the parameters discussed above as I possibly could. As part of this extensive and deliberate process key words would be associated with images, jotted down in

a notebook and at the end of each session, while the events were still fresh in my mind, I would go home, expand upon these, reflect upon the evening and write up my notes more fully. This resulted in an enormous amount of information.

I used more than one kind of journal to keep my full observation notes in. As the anthropological ethnographer Micheal Jackson (1989) points out there are several different kinds of information available to us when we participate in and observe a social scene and these are all valid and important when we seek to provide an account of that scene. The journals used in this data gathering process reflect the different forms of information which were most apparent to me as I tried to write and provide an account of my experiences. One consisted of social observations, another of my subjective reflexivity and a third consisted of my analysis of events as a social scientist. Once the course was completed I attempted to condense this great wealth of data into a briefer, more manageable narration of the programme, starting from the first day and finishing on the final night. Based on the third journal I analysed the programme from a post-structuralist perspective. Practices and objects were related to the discourses which were informing their construction and employment in the programme, and these observations have been footnoted to the narrative describing this programme, as a supplementary text.

Because the complete narrative account made of the programme was too large to be presented in it's entirety in this report, selected pieces of the account will be presented, with the intention being to demonstrate both the discursive field operating in the programme and the overall kinds of activity which occur as part of the group process. An overall narrative flow is maintained throughout with selected pieces being presented in detail. The summated account presented in this study is intended to convey to the reader an appreciation of what happens in one of these programmes in a condensed but illuminating form.

There are three different subject positions which appear as voices in the account presented in this report. Within this presentation I provide an account of the course (a) as an observer of the group activity as it occurs on a moment to moment basis, (b) as a subjective reflective agent and (c) as a discourse analyst identifying the discursive forms underlying the course. These three complimentary perspectives, reflecting the three layers of information recorded in the three journals during data collection, do not necessarily represent mutually exclusive

positions. It is acknowledged that these voices are constructions, having most likely influenced each other in reciprocal ways, reflecting the overlapping discursive resources available to the researcher when engaging in the facets of the fieldwork. Because they offer different sources of information however, together providing a more complete account of the programme as it has been experienced by this participating observer, it is appropriate to include each within the narrative (Barnard, 1993; Jackson, 1989).

The observation commentary position is the dominant voice to the narrative. It appears more frequently than any other and can be identified through its use of the present tense and its impersonal descriptions of events. The more personal use of 'I' language, found also throughout the narrative, is indicative of the position of personal reflection in which the researcher shares parts of his own subjective experience as he participates in and reflects upon the course. In contrast, this voice is spoken in the past tense. Footnoted to the narrative, at the bottom of the page, clearly separated by a thin line, is the voice of the discourse analyst who observes and comments on the practices, objects and events operating within the programme, identifying the discursive context underlying their construction and implementation. Where appropriate this voice refers back to the legitimated cultural resources identified in the post-structuralist theoretical literature review (Study 1).

The course has been broken up into three stages in this report; a beginning stage, a middle stage and an ending stage. Each stage is separated by its own distinct themes and issues yet each shares a sense of continuity and overlap with the remainder of the course. The different stages are presented as a chapter in their own right and a fourth chapter is used to explore and discuss the dynamics of the course from a post-structuralist perspective. The nine session course begins with two introductory sessions on a Saturday morning and afternoon followed by seven evening sessions on Thursday nights.

Study (3): A post-structuralist exploration and comparison of violent men's narratives prior to and following participation in a MMAV 'stopping violence' programme.

This third study sought to explore the changes in subjectivity taking place in violent men as a consequence of their participation in a MMAV stopping violence programme. This study employed a semi-structured interview technique to elicit stories and accounts from the men

both prior to and following participation in a MMAV stopping violence course. The study sought to explore the discursive resources being employed by the men at each interview stage and to document any shifts taking place in the men's constructions and subject positioning of themselves, others, objects and events. Any such changes in the men's subjectivity occurring over the period of the course could, tentatively, be linked to the men's exposure to the particular discursive forms found to be underlying the MMAV programme as identified in the participant observation exercise (Study 2).

Given that interviewing, as a research strategy, greatly facilitates the exploration of how individuals subjectively make sense of their social world and their actions within it (May, 1993), it was decided that an interview format would constitute the most appropriate means for gathering the rich and pertinent 'narrative data' required in this investigation. Semi-structured interviewing was considered to be the most effective strategy towards this end because it simultaneously invites participants to share their personal stories and accounts of violence whilst allowing them to speak in their own terms (Bannister et al., 1994; May, 1993). Structured interviews were considered to be too constricting for interviewees and thereby inappropriate for a post-structuralist study such as this one, which seeks variation and diversity of thought and opinion. It was considered more appropriate to provide the men with greater latitude to provide an account of their actions and their world view in their own words. On the other hand however, some structure to the interview was considered to be desirable in the interests of providing a means to comparability between interviews. Unstructured interviews or 'focus' interviews, whilst rich and deep, were considered to be too unpredictable and potentially too difficult to allow a comparative analysis (Benny and Hughes, 1984; May, 1993).

A semi-structured interview schedule was thus constructed and employed to present the men with a series of topics for discussion. The schedule essentially consisted of three core issues to be explored and discussed in the interview. These points of discussion were derived in part from my experience as a participant-observer in the MMAV stopping violence programme. Because I wanted to explore how the course had impacted upon the men this seemed most appropriate. As Whyte (1984) notes; "Observation guides us to some of the important questions we want to ask the respondent(s)" (Whyte, 1984, p96). Firstly, and most basically, I considered it pertinent to hear how the men accounted for their violence. How do they

describe what happened? Why did they do it? Who or what was responsible for their actions? What did they need in order to be non-violent? Secondly I was interested in how the men construed 'family violence' in the community and what could be done about 'men's violence in the home' in general. From these discussion points I hoped to discover the discursive resources being employed by the men to account for their own and the violence of others and to bear witness to the implications of these constructions for action and agency. Do these constructions change as a consequence of participation in the course?

The third point of focus to the interview schedule involved an exploration of gender issues within the men's relationships. Coming from a pro-feminist background and from witnessing the strong presence of a feminist perspective in the MMAV programme, I was very interested to explore and to document how the men spoke of their partners and the gender roles they prescribed and described within their relationship. I considered this to be a further relevant issue to discuss with the men; to be explored in a discursively analytical sense. How do the men talk about women and men and does this change as the course progresses? As with the preceding studies this study sought to analyse the meaning structures inherent in the transcripts in such a way as to be attentive both to the detail of language and to the wider social picture.

Procedure:

Thirteen men attending a MMAV stopping violence course in 1995 were interviewed prior to participating in one of several courses held that year. All but two of these men were subsequently re-interviewed in the follow-up post-course component to the study. One of the men did not attend the course in full, having moved to another part of the country prior to completion whilst another didn't make it to the course at all. The participants all volunteered to take part in the study. They ranged in age from 24 to 45 with the average age being thirty one. Six of the men were ordered from the courts to attend the course whilst seven volunteered to attend. Most were of European descent whilst two were Maori.

The recruiting process in this study, whilst long and difficult, proved ultimately to be an effective means to gaining volunteers. It emerged as a result of a meeting between myself and the MMAV office in March 1995. Because MMAV would not divulge names and phone numbers to me directly, due to ethical concerns such as confidentiality, MMAV proposed sending an invitation and an information sheet, to be constructed by myself, to each of the

men enrolled in an upcoming course. For the remainder of the year each man due to attend a MMAV stopping violence course was invited in writing to participate in an 'evaluation study' of the programme. A brief invitation was included within a MMAV letter sent out to each man confirming their place in a course and informing them of the time and place in which it would start. Included alongside this letter was a 'study information sheet' (Appendix 2), which introduced myself and outlined the purpose and conditions of the research, and a 'consent form' (Appendix 3) for men interested in participating in the study to fill out and to return to MMAV. The 'study information sheet' informed the men about the aims and process of the study and outlined the conditions of the research contract. The men would have the right to remain anonymous, to withdraw from the study at any stage and to receive a copy of the report when completed.

When a volunteer responded to this letter one of the MMAV office staff would ring to inform me, providing me with a name and a telephone number. In this way thirteen men volunteered over the space of ten months; typically two or three men per group. I would ring the volunteers and introduce myself as a member of MMAV and a researcher from Massey University. I informed the men that I was helping MMAV to evaluate their programme as part of a research project I was working on for a post graduate degree. I would answer any questions the men might have concerning the research and we would discuss the purpose and practicalities of the interview. If the man was still interested in participation, we would set up an interview time and place.

A pilot study, testing the effectiveness of the interview schedule, was carried out with the help of three MMAV 'stopping violence' facilitators prior to the collection of interview material. From the mock trial and the constructive feedback offered the interview structure was modified and tested again with these men before finally being implemented. This process occurred for each of the interview schedules. A copy of the pre-course and post-course interview schedules can be located in Appendix 4 of this report. All interviews were recorded on a small portable tapedeck using Teac C90 cassettes.

Interviews occurred either at a MMAV interview room or at the participant's own home, during the day or early evening. Interviews took place in an informal atmosphere with attention being paid to achieving rapport. The interviewer and interviewee would meet each

other and share a little of their personal lives before beginning the interview. The research contract would be discussed once more and the interviewer would check that the interviewee understood the purpose and process of the interview and that he understood his rights to stop the interview at any time. Once relaxed and ready to begin a broad overview of the interview structure was given, the tape recorder was switched on and the part of the interview focusing on data collection took place.

As has been discussed the interview was semi-structured by a thematic guide with supporting questions and an array of probes and invitations for the men to expand on issues raised. The interview itself was very much a parallel process (Bannister et al., 1994) in which I was very focused upon both (a) listening intently to what the interviewee was saying and (b) reflecting on how this related to my interests and interview schedule and working out what to say and when to say it. Questions and facilitative comments were orientated to the particular position(s) of the participants. The men were given plenty of room to respond on their own terms to the various open-ended queries and these were explored and adopted as the interview progressed. Follow ups and probes, encouraging the interviewee to elaborate on a train of thought were used frequently as were other facilitative practices such as repeating back what's been said and non-verbal prompts such as nodding. Interviews typically lasted for an average of 40 minutes with the shortest interview being 18 minutes and the longest being 60 minutes in duration. The recorder was then switched off, and the interview completed with attention being paid to closure issues and the participant's satisfaction with the process. The interviewer then thanked the person for their participation and, following the pre-course interview, informed them that they would be called after the course for the follow up interview. Follow-up interviews followed the closure of the course by 8 to 10 weeks. Here the men were called directly by myself and an interview time and place arranged. Following the second interview the men were informed that they would receive a copy of the interviews and a summary of them in the near future. They would be asked to check the transcripts and the interpretations I had made of them and to respond to them by offering feedback.

The 24 taped interviews were transcribed in full by a research assistant. As each of the participants were assured of remaining anonymous, great lengths were gone to ensure that confidentiality was maintained. The tapes and transcripts were kept in a safe private place, locked in an office filing cabinet. All names recorded were replaced by pseudonyms and a list

linking codes to real names was stored separately in another safe place which was again accessible only to the researcher.

The transcripts were read over several times to 'immerse' myself in the data in preparation for a discourse analysis. The aim of this post-structuralist analysis was to identify and to tease apart discourses at work in the men's talk; to see how the use of language in the texts/transcripts function in the world and how it represents it. In short to explore variations in construction and implication (Bannister et al., 1994; Macdonnel, 1986; Potter and Wetherell, 1987) employed by the men as they account for their violence, the violence of other men in the community and of their gendered relationships. Because discourse analysis involves a search for relationships among systems of statements, the first step involved searching for regularities in the data, in order to identify recurring constructs and patterns of talk in the men's accounts as a group.

Through reading and re-reading the transcripts several times over, 'immersing' myself in the data (Stiles, 1990), a number of regularities in the men's talk were identified. Through a dialectical process in which abstract categories concerning emergent patterns of meaning were checked and developed against the interview material itself, several themes in each section of the interview were identified. Once identified these themes were then labelled, drawn together and liberally illustrated with quotations from participants.

Because meaning adheres not only in the text but in our construction and reading of it, analysis is inevitably selective and constitutes one possible reading of the text among many (Bannister et al., 1994; Reason and Rowan, 1981). For this reason it was considered appropriate to consult others at this point and to receive feedback from them concerning my interpretations of the interview data. I engaged in what Bannister et al. (1994) refers to as an 'investigator triangulation' validity check in which research assistants, 'friends willing to act as enemies' (Torbett, 1976), read over my work and the original transcripts and offered feedback on my analysis. Whilst it is recognised that there is no such thing as completely valid research which captures and represents an unchallengeable 'truthful' view of reality (Bannister et al., 1994), an 'inter-rater' or 'investigator triangulation' check can give the analysis greater credibility and validity through affording a wider array of perspectives on the material (Bannister et al., 1994; Oakley, 1985; Reason and Rowan, 1981; Stiles, 1990). My

thematic interpretation of the interview data was consequently checked by two independent people for omissions (had the researcher overlooked any information of relevance?) and alternative interpretations (could statements and themes be interpreted any differently?). Minor adjustments occurred as a result of this 'consensus' validity check with a few themes being added and a couple being reconceptualised as a result of this feedback process.

The recurring 'themes' in the men's talk, once defined and consensually agreed upon were, as in the discursive work of Billig et al. (1988) and Gavey (1992), located within social discourse. The themes in the men's talk as a group were documented and analysed from the post-structuralist position holding them to be personalized versions of a limited number of culturally and historically shared discourses (Bannister et al., 1994; Gavey, 1989; Weedon, 1987). The next step then was to identify and define the social discourses being employed within these constructions. Parker's (1992) seven point criteria was once more used to this end. Where appropriate the legitimated discursive resources identified in the post structuralist literature review (Study 1) were re-employed to categorise the recurring features of the men's narratives. Themes were also explored for their role in representing alternative, resistant or subjugated knowledges - discourses not legitimated in social science literature but none-the-less culturally available.

This process of immersion in the data, theme identification, consensual validation and location of themes within discourse was carried out firstly with the pre-stopping violence group interviews and a few months later with the post-group interviews. Themes and discursive resources employed common to each group and unique to each group became apparent and this formed the basis for comparing the two. Differences were noted and linked to the course structure and content as identified in the participant observation exercise (Study 2).

A letter was then sent to each of the eleven participants who had completed the course. The letter contained transcripts of the man's pre and post course interviews, a summary of each and a brief questionnaire asking the men for an assessment of the perceived accuracy of the interpretations made in the summary. In this way participants were invited to comment on the accuracy of the researcher's interpretation of their story, a 'testimonial validity' check (Stiles, 1990). The employment of this second validity check serves to strengthen the credibility of the research findings (Bannister et al., 1994; Oakley, 1985; Stiles, 1990).

This letter, questionnaire and an example of a participant's interview summaries can be located in Appendix 5. Four of the men responded to this letter. Three indicated that they perceived the summary to be accurate and made no further comments. One man however, whilst considering the summary to adequately represent what was said in the interviews added new ideas to his post-course account of events. These additions, whilst interesting in their own right, complimented the overarching themes discovered in the study and thus did not alter the research findings.

Upon completion of the interpretive part to this investigation, a second letter summarising the results of the study was sent to each participant. This can also be viewed in Appendix 6 to this report. This letter fulfilled a researcher obligation, as stated in the research contract both verbally and in the 'study information sheet', to inform participants of the findings to the investigation.

STUDY ONE

A POST-STRUCTURALIST READING
OF THE THEORETICAL LITERATURE
SURROUNDING WIFE ABUSE

CHAPTER FOUR

A POST-STRUCTURALIST READING OF THE THEORETICAL LITERATURE SURROUNDING WIFE ABUSE

This post-structuralist reading of the social science theoretical literature surrounding wife abuse seeks to identify the different discourses at work within the field, to elaborate on the history and implications of each discourse and to illuminate the dynamics of conflict and tension which exist within the field as it stands today. It is not an attempt to produce a new theory, but rather to produce a post-structuralist account of the existing state of knowledge. Given the post-structuralist position that science exerts great power in constructing subjectivities and constraining potentials for social action and that institutions, such as science, are sites of contest between discourses, reflecting on the discursive field and observing the effect this has on the community is an appropriate task to undertake as we seek to eliminate men's violence from women's lives.

Within the social sciences there are multiple theories surrounding the etiology of wife abuse. These come from a range of disciplines, such as anthropology, psychiatry, sociology, criminology, biology, social work and psychology, and subsequently feature a variety of hypothetical constructs. These theories are typically realist scientific theories (Bhaskar, 1978; 1989, McLennan, 1989; Parker, 1992) in that they postulate 'real' essences and mechanisms to be underlying and causing men's violent behaviour. There are themes within this diverse array of theory however, which transcend disciplines and tie seemingly different theories together through shared or overlapping conceptualisations, metaphors and definitions of what constructs and mechanisms constitute and underlie the problem. It is these 'implicit' or 'overlapping' themes in construction (Billig et al., 1988; Gavey, 1992) which constitute and reflect the discrete discourses identified and explored in this overview.

Through a critical reading of the social science literature five distinct discourses were observed to be co-existing and operating within the discursive field of wife abuse, of which any one or any combination of discourses could be employed to explain this phenomenon. Each discourse has its own constructions, which are internally consistent, and its own distinct implications for institutional practice which can be seen to be operating in the community. In explicating

and distinguishing between these discourses I am interested in producing an account of their central constructs, their dominant metaphors, their histories, the subjectivities they engender and the implications these have for the social and material world.

As will be shown there are times when the various constructions and explanations derived from these discourses will not 'fit' with other discursive positions and this is where conflict over meaning within the field and over practical implications within the community occurs. These discourses are not necessarily exclusive however. Indeed the constructions engendered within each can support other discourses in insightful and illuminating ways. As Foucault (1972) and Parker (1992) point out, discourses are realised in communicable tissues of meaning - 'texts' - and that within any text any number and combination of discourses may be present. This post-structuralist overview takes the position that the different scientific theories are 'texts' which systematically draw upon particular cultural resources or discourses when providing accounts of behaviour and events. As will be seen, sometimes a theory will draw upon and actualise more than one of the social science discourses when explaining wife abuse. 'Theory' is being used here in the empirical sense of the word, referring to an integrated set of ideas which explain a set of observations (Chalmers, 1982; Wolpert and Richards, 1988).

The five discourses identified here as informing and constituting the social scientific discursive field of wife abuse are labelled as follows: (a) pathology; (b) expressive tension; (c) instrumental power; (d) social system and (e) learned behaviour. Each of these discourses will in turn be described and discussed, with each one's dominant metaphors and implications for practices, subjectivities and relations in the material and social world being made explicit. Furthermore each of these 'scientific' discourses will be contextually located within the broader cultural heritage of discursive meanings from which it draws upon, reflects and reproduces. The specific scientific theories which draw upon each of these scientifically legitimated cultural resources are presented in detail within the context of each discourse as it is outlined and discussed. In the event of a theory drawing upon more than one discourse, the theory-text will be placed within the discourse it most explicitly realises whilst it's connections to the other discourse(s) from which it draws will be pointed out and discussed.

Discourses within the discursive field of wife abuse

Historically, the response to the plight of battered wives from the social sciences has, until relatively recently, been one of neglect and disbelief, leaving the situation unchanged and shrouded in secrecy, fear and shame (Gelles and Straus, 1979; Schechter, 1982; Star, 1980; Watts and Courtois, 1981). This failure to recognize and address the problem of violence against women in the home, dubbed the 'the omitted reality' by Kincaid (1982), persisted throughout the twentieth century until the feminist movement brought the issue to public attention in the early 1970s (Dobash and Dobash, 1992; O'Brien, 1971; Schechter, 1982; Steinmetz, 1986). When at last the scientific and social service community did respond to this issue, their response was typically to locate 'pathological' causes to this seemingly 'rare' and 'abnormal' situation. This response was two-fold. They either attributed the cause of the man's violence to his psychological 'sickness' or to the woman's, for 'precipitating' the abuse (Hutchings, 1988; Walker, 1986). Explanations from a variety of perspectives have developed this approach to the problem further and thus this discourse is very much apparent in the literature today.

Discourse (a): Pathology.

In this account men's violence to their wives or partners is understood and constructed as a rare and 'abnormal' phenomenon and is explained through an underlying 'pathology' of which wife abuse and violence in general, is considered to be a 'symptom'. As will be discussed, constructs such as biological anomalies, deviant personality traits, faulty marital systems, abusive families of origin and alcoholism are all employed to 'pathologise' some feature of the context in which wife abuse occurs. Through jargon and metaphors such as 'disorder', 'symptom' and 'cure' these interconnected constructs reflect more broadly a **Medical discourse**. Such a discourse proposes that it is useful to think of 'abnormal' behaviour as reflecting a disease, an illness or an unusual aberration which is unhealthy and in need of 'treatment', 'cure' or 'therapy'. The agent, in this distinct schema of events, is constructed as operating below an optimal level of functioning and thus cannot be held to be fully responsible for his or her symptoms (e.g. violence). He is a 'victim' of an aberration of some kind.

The Medical model is an ancient account of physical health and wellbeing in Western culture and dates back to days of antiquity. This model has gradually become a dominant way of

thinking about 'abnormal behaviour' in the Western world, reflecting the employment and deployment of this cultural resource during the rise of science in the modern era, during the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries (Davison and Neale, 1987; Pichot, 1994). Modern medical-scientific explanations for 'abnormal' behaviour construct 'pathological' causes in a logical world of cause and effect. These 'modern' constructs have replaced 'supernatural' causes of 'abnormality', such as 'demon possession', which in the 'dark ages' of Western history were considered an acceptable, reasonable and common sense explanation, informing distinct intervention practices such as 'exorcisms' (Davison and Neale, 1987). This Medical 'pathological' discourse, unlike a 'demonic' explanation, is clearly present within the contemporary discursive field of wife abuse and can be readily seen to underlie and inform the following theories.

Initially **Psychopathological** explanations for men's violent behaviour to their partners simply extended the dominant psychiatric perspectives surrounding child abuse developed in the 1960s (Dutton, 1988; Gelles, 1973, 1985) (e.g. Snell, Rosenwald and Robey; 1964). As with this issue, which, one decade earlier, similarly came to the public's attention quite suddenly, the most immediate and frequently cited explanation for the abuser's 'abnormal' behaviour was some form of 'mental illness' (Breines and Gordon, 1983; Dutton, 1988; McIntyre, 1984; Ptacek, 1988a). From this most pervasive perspective wife abuse was typically seen as being one further instance of a seemingly rare 'family violence' and thus the same mechanisms were thought to be in place (Breines and Gordon, 1983).

As with child abuse, explanations employed by social scientists and the social services to understand the batterer's behaviour reflected both clinical DSM classifications and more traditional psychoanalytic diagnoses and explanations. Frequently used clinical categories included, as they do today, sadism, passive-aggressive personality disorders, depression, anti-social and pre-morbid personality disorders, obsessive compulsive disorders, paranoia, psychosis, neurosis, alcoholism and pathological dependency (Breines and Gordon, 1983; Deschner, 1984; Faulk, 1977; Lion, 1977; Oates, 1979; Shainess, 1977; Simmons, 1987; Spitzer, Feister, Gary and Pfohl, 1991). Organic 'deficiency' theories from psychiatry and biology have also been used to explain the onset of such mental 'illness' (e.g. Elliot, 1976; Langevin, Bain, Wortzman and Hucker, 1988; Money and Ehrhardt, 1972).

Psychodynamic explanations have tended to focus more on the underlying psychodynamics of violent men's 'rage attacks' and their 'poor impulse control', a result of traumatic childhood experiences and/or poor attachments with domineering, uncaring or unreliable parental figures. Anxious and ambivalent attachments in early life are thought to lead to 'love/hurt/rage reactions' being displaced onto the parentified wife or to 'self defensive attacks' on one's partner as one tries to, unconsciously, re-establish a safe level of intimacy within yearning for intimacy and fear of intimacy attachment conflicts. In other case scenarios responses to threats become exaggerated uncontrollable rage due to the impaired ego functioning, which again is a result of earlier 'traumatic experiences' (Adams, 1989; Bowlby, 1980, 1984; Dobash and Dobash, 1992; Ptacek, 1988a). Bowlby's (1980; 1984) attachment theory is a good contemporary example of this psychodynamic perspective on wife abuse in which poor attachments in early life pre-dispose one to be anxious and defensive in adulthood.

Once the problem was exposed wife abuse was thus initially diagnosed as being one symptom of an underlying psychological disorder. Batterers 'diagnosed' within either clinical, psychiatric or psychodynamic frameworks were typically offered long term 'therapy' as the most appropriate 'cure' to their 'illness', with a 'prognosis' of violence disappearing upon cure of the underlying malady (Adams, 1988a; Carden, 1994).

More recent **psychological profiles** of the batterer, emerging from clinical observations and more specific psychometric testing, suggest that the typical batterer is not so much 'sick' as that he suffers from cognitive, affective or behavioural 'deficits' in various 'normal' attributes. Commonly cited intrapersonal characteristics of wife abusers include (a) low self esteem accompanied by high levels of dependency on and suspiciousness and jealousy of their spouses (Bernard and Bernard, 1984; Feazell, Mayers and Deschner, 1984; Goldstein and Rosenbaum, 1985; Sonkin, Martin and Walker, 1985); (b) inexpressiveness of emotions with a greater likelihood of interpreting aversive arousal as anger (Dutton, 1988; Ganley, 1981b; Gondolf, 1985a); (c) fear of intimacy (Dutton and Browning, 1984; Purdy and Nickle, 1981; Taubman, 1986); (d) high power/control needs (Dutton and Strachan, 1987; Walker, 1984); (e) above average levels of hostility and anger (Bersani, Chen, Pendelton and Denton, 1992; Maiuro, Cahn and Vitaliano, 1986; Maiuro, Cahn, Vitaliano, Wagner and Zegree, 1988); and (f) the presence of depression (Flournoy and Wilson, 1991; Hale, Zimostrad, Duckworth and Nicholas, 1988; Maiuro et al., 1988; Saunders and Hanusa, 1986).

Commonly cited interpersonal behaviours of wife abuse include (a) spouse specific communication skill deficits such as assertion and listening skills (Allen, Caslyn, Fehrenbach and Benton, 1989; Dutton and Strachan, 1987; Holtzworth-Monroe and Anglin, 1991; Maiuro et al., 1986; Morrison, Van Hasslet, and Bellack, 1987); (b) difficulty expressing affection and forming trusting relationships (Allen, Caslyn, Fehrenbach and Benton, 1989; Barnett and Hamberger, 1992; Dutton and Strachan, 1987; Rosenbaum and O'Leary, 1981b); and (c) a tendency to minimize the severity, frequency and consequences of their abusive behaviours, or to blame their violent actions on alcohol, stress or their wives' provocation (Arias and Beach, 1987; Bernard and Bernard, 1984; Holtzworth-Munroe and Hutchinson, 1993; Sonkin and Durphy, 1982; Riggs, Murphy and O'Leary, 1989; Rosenbaum and Maiuro, 1990).

Personality profiles do not constitute a comprehensive theory of abuse as such but they do identify some useful and specific personality defects of which a 'clinician' can attempt to correct. From this perspective a wife beater may not be seen as 'sick' so much as he is an otherwise normal person who suffers from 'low self esteem', 'poor communication skills' and/or other specific cognitive, affective or behavioural deficits, such as an 'anger problem' (Ptacek, 1988a). This fits well with the clinical observation that most batterers lead otherwise 'normal' lives (Stanko, 1985; Stordeur and Stille, 1989; Walker, 1979). Whilst not advocating 'psychopathology' as such, this approach is similar to the pathological models in that it positions the man's violence as a product and 'symptom' of an internal aberration or 'abnormal' defect. Consequently the individual needs 'corrective' training or therapy from an expert in the field.

Victim precipitation theories propose that the victims of abuse possess 'pathological' characteristics which trigger their victimization, such as desiring abuse, possessing overbearing and controlling personalities, and/or otherwise engaging in provocative behaviours such as putting undue stress upon their partner (Adams, 1988a; Babcock, Waltz, Jacobson and Gottman, 1993; Block and Sinnott, 1979; Breines and Gordon, 1983; Finkelhor, 1979; Kaufman, 1992; Ptacek, 1988a).

Freud, for example, considered many women to be passive, in want of domination and to be '**masochistic**' because of the sense of inferiority derived from their 'penis envy' and because of the way in which these women 'resolved their oedipal complex' (Deutsch, 1944; Freud,

1953). For many psychologists this translated into the theme that some women will receive sexual pleasure from beatings (Hutchings, 1988; Pagelow, 1981). Battered women, as a consequence of this prevalent myth, were commonly constructed by social service providers and social scientists alike to be inviting their abuse, in order to satisfy their unconscious need for suffering and pleasure in pain, by provoking the violent behaviour of their partners (McIntyre, 1984; McMaster and Swain, 1989; Walker, 1986).

Women have subsequently been hypothesised as 'inviting' their abuse in a number of ways. For example 'excessive nagging' has been cited as driving a man to the brink of violence (Breines and Gordon, 1983; Pagelow, 1981; Walker, 1979) as has women's superior ability to verbally and emotionally attack a man, which leaves him purportedly with violence as his only option of defence (Babcock, Waltz, Jacobson and Gottman, 1993; Deschner, 1984; Goode, 1971; McIntyre, 1984; Ptacek, 1988a).

Social research into victim precipitation theories suggests however that battered women do not differ from women in non-battering relationships in any significant way, other than in the cognitive, behavioural and affective symptoms which occur as a result of being in an abusive relationship (Follingstad, Brennan, Hause, Polek and Rutledge, 1991; Gelles and Harrop, 1989; Houscamp and Foy, 1991; Walker, 1979; Wilson, Vercella, Brems and Benning, 1992; Woods and Campbell, 1993). Thus the evidence suggests that battered women are not abnormally 'provocative'. Walker (1979) has labelled the pattern of symptoms which occurs as a consequence of ongoing abuse the 'battered woman syndrome' and includes this under the DSM IV category 'Post Traumatic Stress Disorder'.

Another approach to understanding wife assault, which implicitly draws upon a pathological model, is the **family systems approach** to 'conjugal' or 'marital' violence (Giles-Sims, 1983; Lane and Russell, 1989; McIntyre, 1984). This perspective holds the causes of wife abuse do not lie so much in the 'sick' or 'deficient' minds of individuals, but in the 'dysfunctional relationship' itself (Carden, 1994; Cook and Frantz-Cook, 1984; Everstine and Everstine, 1983; Margolin and Burman, 1993; Neidig and Freidman, 1984; Sprenkle, 1994). One of the basic premises of systems theory is that all parts of a system contribute to the maintenance of homeostasis, defined as the tendency of a system to maintain a dynamic equilibrium and to undertake operations to restore that equilibrium whenever it is threatened (Goldenberg and

Goldenberg, 1985). The family system works continually to maintain this homeostasis, even when it is achieved through such 'dysfunctional' means as violence.

From this perspective family or marital therapy is advocated as the most appropriate intervention in marital violence. The goal of which is to create 'healthier interactional dynamics' within the 'relationship structure' so that such 'symptoms' of the 'dysfunctional system' will disappear. The specific positive and negative 'feedback loops' which gear the system towards violence or non-violence are addressed and 'constraints to non-violence' are developed within this 'cybernetic' context (Breunlin, Schwartz and Mac Kune-Karrer, 1992; Lane and Russel, 1989; Sprenkle, 1994).

There are a multitude of studies which demonstrate a strong correlation between **violence in the family of origin** and violence from a man to his partner in later life (Barnett and Hamberger, 1992; Beasley and Stoltenburg, 1992; Capper and Heiner, 1990; Fagan, Stewart and Hansen, 1983; Rosenbaum and O'leary, 1981a; Schuerger and Reigle, 1988; Star, 1983; Stordeur and Stille, 1989). This suggests that violence in the family of origin strongly contributes to the likelihood of abuse in later life, hence the 'intergenerational transmission of abuse'. Documentations of this prevalence amongst batterers of either witnessing violence between one's parents and/or being abused oneself by one's parents range from 35% (Straus, Gelles and Steinmetz, 1980) to 80 % (Fitch and Papantonio, 1983; Roy, 1982; Waldo, 1987). In one study which explored violence in over two thousand American families, it was found that "the sons of the most violent parents have a rate of wifebeating 1,000 times greater than the sons of non-violent parents" (Straus, Gelles and Steinmetz, 1980, pp100-101). Roy (1982) surveyed 4000 cases of spouse abuse in New York and found that in 80% of cases the man had come from a violent home. Abused and non-abused women do not differ however in either their witnessing of abuse or victimization as a child (Rosenbaum and O'Leary, 1981).

The significance of such experiences in childhood have been debated as to how these influence the man's violence in later life. Social learning theorists (as in the learning discourse) claim that it is through the observation of violence as a means of solving conflict and/or dealing with stress and the observed reinforcement which accompanies this, that teaches the young male these strategies, as opposed to other more constructive ways, of achieving such ends (Bandura, 1973; Dutton, 1988; Ganley, 1981b). More psychodynamic orientated theorists however, as discussed above, suggest that it is through being abused and experiencing

the instabilities of parental figures fighting which leads the boy to experience and repress severe depression, anxiety and anger, which manifests itself through impulsive acts of rage in later life (Davis, 1987; Hotaling and Sugarman, 1986; Sonkin, Martin and Walker, 1985). The meaning of this observed intergenerational pattern of violence is thus interpreted differently from different discursive positions.

Another factor which has been found to be associated with wife abuse is **alcoholism** (Bays, 1990; Edleson and Tolman, 1992; Miller, 1990; Schuerger and Reigle, 1988; Stordeur and Stille, 1989; Suh and Abel, 1990). Batterers are significantly more likely than non-batterers to have problems with alcohol (Bays, 1990; Hayes and Emshoff, 1993; Tolman and Bennet, 1990) and are frequently found, 20-80% of the time, to have been drinking at the time of the abuse (Bernard and Bernard, 1984; Carden, 1994; Hayes and Emshoff, 1993; Kantor and Straus, 1989; Sonkin, Martin and Walker, 1985). Although the precise role of alcohol in family violence is ambiguous (Hayes and Emshoff, 1993), one popular perspective is that alcohol acts as a depressant of frustration tolerance and thus disinhibits one's avowal of social norms and responsibilities whilst simultaneously releasing inner negative feelings which would 'normally' not be expressed as violence (Bushman and Cooper, 1990; Carlson, 1984; Gelles and Straus, 1979; Hayes and Emshoff, 1993; MacAndrew and Edgerton, 1969).

The observation that alcohol intake correlates with violence does not mean that alcohol causes violence however (Hayes and Emshoff, 1993). Hidden risk factors which may pre-dispose the person to both violence and regular alcohol use frequently co-exist in a person's life (Gorney, 1989). For example a man may drink to reduce anxiety or tension (Carlson, 1984; McMaster and Swain, 1989), to increase social confidence (Browne and Finkelhor, 1986; Garbarino, Guttman and Seeley, 1986; McMaster and Swain, 1989), to cope with depression (Ganley and Harris, 1978; Sonkin, Martin and Walker, 1985), unemployment (Carlson, 1984) or as a means to cope with conflict in a relationship (Finkelhor, 1986; Rhodes and Jason, 1990). Furthermore it may be that batterers choose to drink before a pre-meditated violent act in order to evade responsibility through having a legitimate 'excuse' (McCagy, 1968; Silva and Howard, 1991).

Alcoholism can thus be interpreted as being either a causal agent, a mediating factor or a co-existing acausal agent in wife abuse. To the extent that alcoholism shares similar discursive functions to other 'pathological' theories it too can be considered 'pathological'. It is similar

in the sense that it positions the violent man as being temporarily 'abnormal'. He is out of control of his behaviour through having a diminished sense of what is real and acceptable and through 'disinhibited' and more powerful violent drives from within. This account thus similarly reduces his responsibility for his actions (McCagy, 1968; Silva and Howard, 1991). The association of alcohol with wife abuse can be interpreted from other discursive positions however, such as constituting a means to cope with an already existing state of high tension and thus high potential for violence (as constructed in the 'expressive tension' discourse), or it can be interpreted as a 'rational' means to 'excuse' unacceptable behaviour (as in the 'instrumental' discourse) (McCagy, 1968; Silva and Howard, 1991). The relationship between alcohol and wife abuse thus constitutes a further example of how discourses can intersect at the same point, whilst interpreting the meaning of objects differently.

In summary violence against one's spouse is, from this **pathological** discursive perspective, 'abnormal' and is understood as being 'symptomatic' of an underlying 'pathology'. Everyday statements such as "He was drunk", "He's a maniac", "He's a monster", "Like father like son", "What did she do to get him so mad?" "It takes two to tango" and "He only did it because he's insecure and he loves you" all reflect the deployment of this Medically informed discourse in daily life. This discourse positions abusing men, through their misfortune, as being victims of an etiology which is beyond their control. It thus reduces their responsibility for their violent behaviour because as the reasoning goes, it is not until the anomaly which the violence is indicative of disappears or is otherwise treated, that the violence will stop. Therapy, be it marital or individual, more often than not focusing on issues other than violence such as paranoia, self-esteem, interaction patterns or alcoholism, is a common intervention operating from within this discourse.

This Medical 'pathology' discourse on men's violence to their partners sets up distinct organisational practices within society in the form of the doctor/expert - patient dichotomy in which the battering male is constructed as being in need of 'expert' help. Clinicians, operating from a diverse array of therapeutic perspectives, are unified in this institutional implication and indeed depend upon this for their livelihood. They enjoy the high social status afforded through the institutional legitimacy of this discourse. In this state of affairs they are the knower/healer, the violent man however is a passive and sick subject. We give him 'pity' for his condition, not blame. He has less power than the doctor/expert and this is intimately

connected with his constructed lack of responsibility for his actions and his 'underlying problem'. The 'circular' reasoning inherent in this discourse, that violence reflects an underlying abnormality which causes violence, and the implications this has for our understanding of and approach to the problem of wife abuse is controversial, as we would expect, from the perspective of other discourses, as will be seen.

Discourse (b): Violence as an expression of inner tension.

Well established within the social science literature on aggression is a distinction between 'instrumental' and 'expressive' forms of violence (Berkowitz, 1983; Breines and Gordon, 1983; Gelles and Straus, 1979; Gondolf, 1985a; Myers, 1993; Steinmetz, 1986). 'Expressive' violence refers to violent acts which are used as an end in themselves. These are thought to be driven by 'impulsive forces from within', such as 'anger' or 'tension', and usually involve causing injury and pain to the source of their distress. This form of violence has been described as 'hot' (Myers, 1993). Instrumental violence however involves violence as 'a means to an end'. Inflicting pain or injury, for example, as a punishment to 'induce' another person to carry out some act or refrain from an act - 'cool' violence (Myers, 1993).

This distinction between these two forms of aggression has proven to be a useful one in terms of explaining different animal and human aggressive behaviours and there is evidence which suggests that different parts of the brain are activated depending upon whether the violence is primarily expressive or instrumental (Marler, 1974). Discourses of instrumental and expressive violence, as significant cultural resources employed within the area of aggression and violence in general, understandably constitute further discourses used within the discursive field of wife abuse.

In the '**expressive tension**' discourse violence is perceived to be expressive of stress and tension and is seen as a medium through which this energy is dissipated. The dominant metaphor is one of a hydraulic substance which builds up in the organism and is released through aggressive activity. In this discourse wives, along with husbands, children, friends and strangers, become the unfortunate targets of an 'emotive readiness to 'aggress' which has built up in the perpetrator. In psychology this account can be traced to Freud's (1915) conceptualisation of the person as an entity who must contend with irrational inner impulses. Freud's theorising about aggressive motivating 'forces from within' reflects the **Romantic**

world view of the pre Enlightenment, yet post Dark ages, 16th and 17th centuries, through which humans were widely understood as being at the mercy of 'inner emotional forces' or 'passions' (Gergen, 1991). "Reflecting the romanticist heritage, these primordial energies (are thought to) disrupt consciousness (and) offset rationality" (Gergen, cited in Misra, 1993, p405). It is from this Romantic cultural background that Freud developed his very influential account of aggression and violence.

Instinct theories of human aggression hold that there is an innate aggressive tension in human beings that is part of our genetic make-up and has enabled our survival throughout history. Both Freud (1915) and Lorenz (1966), two most significant theorists in Western psychological thought, perceive 'aggressive energy' as an 'instinctual drive' that builds up in the organism and needs to be released or discharged regularly. If it is not discharged regularly, a 'tension' will build up in the organism until it explodes or until an 'appropriate stimulus' releases it (Bateson, 1989; Kutash, 1978; Myers, 1993; Schuster, 1978; Sipes, 1973). Such a perspective holds human aggression to be inevitable and, given the amount of time one spends at home, domestic violence to be not unlikely. 'Catharsis' of aggressive drives, for example through aggressive sports, yelling or through watching violence on television, may form the best solution to the problem of marital 'aggression' from this biologically deterministic perspective (Myers, 1993).

Some sociobiologists have argued that this genetic pre-disposition in humans to be violent is significantly stronger in males because of the different genetic make up of men (e.g. S. Goldberg, 1979; Hamburg, 1971; Maccoby and Jacklin, 1975). The main argument here is that because men have more of the androgen 'testosterone', they innately have stronger aggressive drives than do women (Maccoby and Jacklin, 1975; Mazur, 1983). Wife abuse thus reflects men's greater natural tendency to aggress. The evidence which supports this claim draws from numerous sources such as cross-cultural studies in humans (e.g. S. Goldberg, 1979; Whiting and Edwards, 1973), hormonal manipulations in monkeys (e.g. Eaton, Goy and Phoenix, 1973; Young, Goy and Phoenix, 1964) and correlational studies of testosterone and behaviour in both male and female human subjects (Ehrhardt and Baker, 1974; Kreutz and Rose, 1972; Rose, Gordon and Bernstein, 1972). These pieces of evidence are very controversial however and there are numerous studies which do not support this overall conclusion (Adkins, 1979; Doering, McGinnis, Kraerner and Hamburg, 1980; Goodall, 1986; Mazur, 1983; Olssen 1989;

Salzman, 1979). From other discursive positions however, such as the broader 'social system' account of violence, this form of reasoning, like the pathological model, is very conservative, explaining things as they are through an immutable genetical argument. S. Goldberg's (1979) *The Inevitability of Patriarchy* is a good example of this point.

Building on Freud's innate tension model with insights from behavioural psychology, the popular **frustration-aggression hypothesis** of violence proposes that aggression occurs as a natural and biologically driven 'response' to environmentally induced 'frustration' (Dollard, Doob, Miller, Mowrer and Sears, 1939). Frustration occurs and tension grows when our motivation to achieve a particular goal is strong, when we expect gratification from it and when this goal is blocked by some external constraint. According to this perspective an increase in tension, or an 'emotional readiness to aggress' (Berkowitz, 1989) is thought to accompany this frustration and this in turn needs to be released, via aggression. The target of such expression may or may not be the source of one's frustration. Often a safer target is chosen to 'displace' one's aggressive energy onto. Additionally this frustration can be stored up in the individual as anger/tension until a 'trigger' releases it and he or she explodes in a seemingly unwarranted rage of violence.

This theory has much empirical evidence to support its explanation of violence (Berkowitz, 1989) and this is readily applicable to wife abuse. The theory also provides an insight into why men may direct their violence towards their women partners. They may store up their 'frustration' as 'tension' and 'release' them on their partners where the immediate consequences are fewer than with 'unsafe' targets such as other men or authority figures. Additionally because the home and family life tends to be a focus of high personal involvement and thus high frustration, this pre-disposes the home to be a source and location for violence (Hotaling and Straus, 1980). Reflecting this perspective, men who explode in a violent rage with their partners are frequently defined as having an 'anger problem'. This explanation for men's violence thus informs many of the 'anger management' approaches to stopping violence. Men are taught to be aware of their bodily tension and to regulate this through a variety of means such as assertion, exercise and relaxation training.

Another theory which compliments this view of why men may be violent to their partners, which draws upon and actualises both this 'expressive tension' discourse and the broader

'social system' discourse, is the **male emotional funnel system** as proposed by Gondolf (1985b). In this scenario men's emotional experiences are narrowed as a consequence of their gender socialisation. This social-cognitive theory is based upon the observation that men are more likely to interpret arousal as 'anger' rather than any other 'primary' emotion, such as fear, depression, hurt, jealousy, insecurity or resentment (Dutton, 1988; Ganley, 1981b; H. Goldberg, 1979, 1987; Gondolf, 1985b; McKay, Rogers and McKay, 1989). The consequences of this cognitive labelling pattern is that men are more likely to explode into a rage and become violent in an emotionally charged situation. This perspective holds that because men, in general, have been socialised to be both unaware of and inattentive to their sensitive and 'feminine' emotions, preferring to play out the role of 'the male stereotyped tough guy', they are vulnerable to feelings of frustration, pain and distress 'building up inside them', with little opportunity for 'expression' or 'release'. When men do become aware of this tension, it is more likely to have reached high proportions, they are more likely to label it as 'anger' and they are less likely than women to be able to cope with this tension non-violently.

Sociologists of the family have proposed that the particular **social organizational features of the family** make conflicts of interest and frustration to be more likely and more intense, because of their personal nature, and thus the potential for violence to be greater than in other kinds of social groups (Farrington, 1980; Hotaling and Straus, 1980; McCall and Shields, 1986; Straus, 1980a). The following 'features of family life' are thought to predispose the family in general, and particular families specifically, to be more likely to experience high degrees of 'stress' and 'frustration' and thus greater potential for violence: (a) Members spend more time interacting with each other than with others outside the system, therefore the chances of conflict are higher; (b) The range of activities members engage in is diverse, more so than other networks, and consequently these frequently impinge upon each other; (c) Age and sex differences ensure greater potential for differences of interest and priorities; (d) The family is the only institution that assigns roles on the basis of age and sex not competence or interest, hence frustration and pressures to live up to expectations; (e) The degree of commitment is high and thus there is a greater intensity of involvement and emotional vulnerability; and (f) Relationships are prone to stress due to the inherent instability of dyadic systems (Hotaling and Straus, 1980). The family is thus 'structurally prone' to conflict and frustration, predisposing it more so than any other institution to tension and internal violence.

The **Social structure theory** of violence combines the sociological 'social fact' that different forms of deviance are unevenly distributed between groups throughout the social structure (Durkheim, 1952; Merton, 1938) with the empirical observation that violence is more common and more severe among 'lower socio-economic groups' (Bowker, 1984; Gelles and Straus, 1979; Hamberger and Hastings, 1988; Hotaling and Sugarman, 1986; Straus, Gelles and Steinmetz, 1980; Straus and Smith, 1990; Sugarman and Hotaling, 1989). It further postulates that people in lower SES groups suffer from 'greater stress and frustration' due to their position in the 'social structure' and that this is a most significant mediating variable linking position in the social structure and violence. Lower SES people typically have lower incomes, minimal education, poor housing, greater unemployment, poorer health and are more isolated from social supports as a consequence of their poverty (Coser, 1967; Farrington, 1980; Gelles, 1974; Giddens, 1989; Gil, 1979; Shaw, 1931; Straus, Gelles and Steinmetz, 1980; Straus and Smith, 1990). Since life chances are less in lower SES groups, 'frustrations' are higher and combined with the greater 'stresses' associated with poverty and a lack of skills and resources to deal with these effectively, this pre-disposes this group to greater marital conflict and, when the 'stress' and 'pressure' becomes too great, to marital violence (Bowker, 1984; Farrington, 1980; Gelles, 1974; Gil, 1979; Hamberger and Hastings, 1988; McCall and Shields, 1986; Straus, Gelles and Steinmetz, 1980).

This perspective thus holds that it is not that upper class people do not believe in using force or are less violent than the lower SES groups, but only that they have less experience of the 'stress' and particular 'stressors' which trigger marital violence. This perspective thus combines a social structural analysis with the psychological notion of frustration and tension leading to violence. Empirical investigations do demonstrate an association between external stressors and wife abuse (e.g. Barling and Rosenbaum, 1986; Gelles and Straus, 1988; Makepeace, 1983; Neidig and Freidman, 1984; O'Leary, Arias, Barling and Rosenbaum, 1985; Straus, 1980b). Social class correlates of wife abuse however are controversial. Although it is commonly found that batterers are significantly more likely to come from lower income groups (Gelles and Cornell, 1990; Hamberger and Hastings, 1988; Hotaling and Sugarman, 1986, 1990; Kantor and Straus, 1987; Straus, Gelles and Steinmetz, 1980; Straus and Smith, 1990) other authors have suggested that this finding may be an artifact of class biased data collection (Ashbury, 1987; Torres, 1987; Walker, 1979).

The association of alcohol with wife abuse has been documented already in the pathological discourse. The interpretation put forward from this 'expressive tension' position is that alcohol is frequently used as a means to help deal with feelings of stress and tension. If greater degrees of tension influence the likelihood of violence (Berkowitz, 1989; Straus, 1980b) and the likelihood of drinking alcohol as a means of coping (Carlson, 1984; Finkelhor, 1986; Rhodes and Jason, 1990; Sonkin, Martin and Walker, 1985) then alcohol may simply be a correlating but non-causing agent in wife assault (Hayes and Emshoff, 1993; Silva and Howard, 1991). This discursive position also supports and 'co-articulates' the 'conventional' interpretation of alcohol as being a depressant of frustration tolerance or a trigger for violence. The tension which one may try to deal with through alcohol may be more likely to manifest in violence once the alcohol has reduced one's social inhibitions.

In summary, this Romantic '**expressive tension**' discourse sees violence as a 'natural' manifestation of high degrees of 'inner tension' and/or personal 'frustration'. It positions the agent as being subject to 'powerful forces from within' over which he or she has little agency or 'control'. The emotional content of such inner forces leading to wife abuse might more specifically include anger, rage, stress, jealousy, hurt and frustration. This 'inner tension' or negative affect that builds up in the organism helps to explain wife abuse through several avenues, as the diverse array of theories listed above demonstrate. The home is constructed as a likely source of stress and frustration and men in general are constructed as biologically and culturally pre-disposed to become violent in response to this.

Batterers employ this discourse when they explain their violence through statements such as; "I flew into a rage and just lost control", "I've been under a lot of pressure lately", "She makes me so mad", "He has a filthy temper" and "I just lashed out, I was that mad". This discourse also informs 'anger management' interventionist approaches which teach people how to harness or 'manage' or their 'inner tension' non-violently, through a variety of means such as assertiveness, exercise and relaxation training. Their violence is typically defined as an 'anger' problem. Anger management strategies typically focus on preventing the build up of this negative affect and the control of one's behaviour in times of vulnerability to these 'overwhelming forces' (Sonkin and Durphy, 1982; Stordeur and Stille, 1989). Additionally this discourse is used in socialist interventions at a socio-structural level which seek to reduce the 'violence-provoking' stress created by society, including reducing poverty, inequality and

unemployment and providing for adequate housing, feeding, medical care and education opportunities.

This discourse naturalises a violent response through reference to an ‘innate’ tendency in all humans to aggress in times of tension. In contrast to the ‘pathological’ position, violence is not necessarily abnormal although it may be unacceptable within the culture at large. This discourse overlaps with the ‘pathological’ model however and ‘co-articulations’ between the two afford an array of treatment packages which address the ‘underlying’ anger or stress thought to be causing the violence. Anger management and stress management training, when employed to solve ‘anger problems’ are examples of this co-articulation. Other examples include psychotherapies aimed at exploring the ‘underlying’ dynamics of anger or reducing frustrating ‘interactions’ in the home. Not all ‘pathologies’ can be reduced to ‘inner tension’ however and likewise not all ‘tension’ is pathological. The ‘inner tension’ constructed through a Romantic world view, when ‘released’ through violence against wives however, is unacceptable in contemporary western society and so this discourse represents a threat to the existing moral and social order when violence is naturalised in this way. The ‘modern’ social world, in contrast, operates on the principles of Liberal humanism, a world view which came to replace Romanticism at the turn of the Modern era. It is this world view to which we now turn.

Discourse (c): Violence as an instrumental power strategy.

According to Max Weber, a founding sociologist, power is the exercise of one’s will in the pursuit of individual goals of action, regardless of resistance (Gerth and Mills, 1991). The understanding of violence as a goal directed power strategy draws upon the wider Liberal humanist account of the person which replaced the Romantic world view as the dominant perspective of the human subject at the turn of the ‘modern’ era, during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (Gergen, 1991; McLennan, 1992; Williams, 1983). The **Liberal humanist world view** positions agents as ‘rational entities’ who are fully ‘conscious’ and in control of their ‘free willed’ ‘goal directed’ behaviour. These agents develop and integrate personal ‘values’ and ‘beliefs’ as they ‘grow’ and develop their ‘awareness’ (Chandler, Holden and Kolander, 1992; Rogers, 1951). The individual is the bounded autonomous entity at the centre of his or her intentional actions and achievements, and these actions

frequently give rise to 'meaningful' conflict between individuals and groups of individuals (McLennan, 1992).

'Instrumental' violence, as distinct from Romantic 'expressive' violence, involves the 'use of force' and aggression as 'a means to an end' or as a 'strategy' towards a 'higher goal' beyond the immediate gratification of 'releasing' 'inner forces' or 'tension' (Berkowitz, 1983; Breines and Gordon, 1983; Gondolf, 1985a; Myers, 1993; Steinmetz, 1986). From this standpoint violence may be employed as a strategy for a variety of purposes, for example to resolve conflicts, to remove stressors, to get one's way, to assert dominance over others and/or to enhance one's self esteem or self concept. Violence, including wife assault, is constructed as an 'intentional' act through which these goals are 'rationally' obtained. Theories drawing upon this discourse assume violent agents to be purposeful and meaningful agents who are autonomous, possess 'free will', are in control of their behaviour, are goal directed, and meet their needs through the most 'rational' means available to them; force. Because all individuals in this world view are held to be free worthy agents possessing moral rights, the abuse of another human agent is strongly challenged as immoral. There are several theories which, implicitly at least, employ an 'instrumental' discourse in their formulation of the problem.

Exchange theory (Blau, 1964; Homans, 1961), drawing on concepts from classical economics and behavioural psychology, suggests that individuals are rational agents who engage in a cost benefit analysis of their interactions. Human interaction is thought to be guided by the pursuit of reward and avoidance of punishment and costs. As an insight into understanding family violence this means that "people hit and abuse other family members because they can" (Gelles, 1983a, p157). If men can be violent towards their wives to attain certain 'rewards', such as tension release, getting one's way or being a 'real man', without having to face too many costs, such as police intervention, physical retribution from his wife, community shame or having her leave him, then the man is more likely to engage in such violence than if the case was otherwise (Ellis, 1989; Gelles, 1983a; Gelles and Cornell, 1990; Prasad, 1994).

Exchange theory highlights the community structure and 'response' to wife abuse as a factor which implicates potential 'costs' and 'rewards' for men's violence. Gelles (1983) proposes that because husbands and boyfriends are bigger and usually have access to more financial resources than wives and girlfriends they are less likely to fear any immediate retributions for

their violence, such as physical retributions or wives leaving them. Furthermore because of traditional values and norms in Western society surrounding the separation of 'the privacy of the home' from that of the 'public sphere' (social system discourse), public involvement such as police intervention in a 'domestic affair' is typically resisted. This consequently has a further impact on the man's 'rational behaviour' (Gelles and Cornell, 1990). Studies exploring the impact of police on wife assaults indicate that, when police do intervene in domestic assaults as they would public ones, the pro-active policies and interventions at least half the likelihood of future assaults (Langer, 1986; Sherman and Berk, 1984). Such a 'cost' is thought to make the behaviour less 'rewarding' to the man. Exchange theorists thus support legal reforms and community deterrents of 'private' domestic assaults.

Alfred Adler's (1928) **Individual Psychology** proposes an intra-psychic account of men's violence in which he claims every individual is subject to natural 'feelings of inadequacy'. Men, he claims, learn through observations of powerful men in the community to resolve this through developing and acting upon a 'will to power'. Violence is one means available to all men which can have the effect of making him feel 'powerful' whereas women, he claims will resolve their feelings of inadequacy through developing a 'will to community' through their observations of women (Ritchie and Ritchie, 1993). Because men are physically larger and stronger than women, a man's sense of power can be attained relatively easily through dominating and directing violence towards less powerful wives and children. This theory thus realises constructions from both the Romantic 'inner drive' and Liberal humanist 'intentionalist' world views.

Similarly Kaplan's (1972) **Self-Attitude theory** proposes that 'deviant' acts, such as violence, may be the result of an individual's struggle to cope with negative self-attitudes. Individuals who lack self esteem are seen as being prone to adopting deviant patterns of behaviour as 'a means to feel better about themselves', to achieve a more 'positive self-identity' and to be 'perceived more positively' from peers. This theory realises both 'pathological' (low self esteem) and 'instrumental' (goal orientated) discourses of violence. Empirical data indicates that self esteem in men and one's sense of masculinity are positively related and this is so for both violent and non-violent men (Balcom, 1991; Long, 1993). Applied to male violence, this theory suggests that aggression allows men to feel more tough and powerful and thus gain self and 'social affirmation' from reaching a 'cultural ideal' of how a man should be. Aggression

thus provides a vehicle for improved self identity in men who may be lacking in self-esteem through matching masculine stereotypes in our culture. This theory thus also draws from the 'social system' account (social approval for reaching masculine ideals) when explaining men's violence specifically.

From sociology, **Conflict theory** assumes that 'conflict' is an inevitable part of human interaction (Coser, 1967; Dahrendorf, 1968; Simmel, 1950). Imbalances, tensions and 'conflicts' of 'self interest' are thought to occur among the interrelated parts of all social systems. When group members are deeply involved with one another, as in the family, a very high degree of members' energies are likely to be mobilised by these 'conflicts' and these can be very intense in character (Coser, 1956, 1967). From this perspective, violence occurs frequently in the family because violence in this system, as opposed to other more public institutions, serves as a powerful means of 'resolving conflicts' and advancing one's 'self interests' (Bersani and Chen, 1988; Gelles and Cornell, 1990; Steinmetz and Straus, 1974). Such a strategy is a less effective means to resolving conflicts in the public world. Additionally violence can be used as a 'means' to reducing the build-up of tension, as described in the 'expressive tension' discourse, by putting a stop to conflict or other 'frustrating' circumstances (Berkowitz, 1983; Breines and Gordon, 1983; Dutton, 1988; Ganley, 1989).

Similarly **Resource Theory**, as articulated by Goode (1971), suggests that all social systems rest to some degree on 'force' or its threat by members of a system and that all members of a system have invested interests in the way in which the system is organised. The greater the resources a person has at his or her disposal, such as income or community prestige, the more 'power' this person has in influencing the 'family organisation'. The more resources a person can command however, the less likely it is that he or she will use violence or physical 'force'. Violence is typically used as a resource only when other resources are insufficient or lacking. Thus a husband who has less education, poorer interpersonal communication skills or a job which is lower in prestige and income than his wife, may resort to violence to maintain power in the system. A wife who is fed up with her husband not listening to her may throw something at him to make him take her seriously (Babcock, Waltz, Jacobson and Gottman, 1993). Violence is thus a means to establishing or maintaining degrees of control within a system.

More recent applications of this theory suggest that this instrumental violence is most likely to occur when one's social status and thus one's 'expectations for power' are inconsistent with one's 'actual power' in the family organization and decision making process. Empirical comparisons of differing income and educational levels between partners have found that when a man's status and power is lower than his expectation he is more likely to use force to attain his expected degree of input (Hornung, McCulloch and Sugimoto, 1981; O'Brien, 1971; Woffordt, Mihalic, Mernard; 1994). In explaining wife abuse this theory thus works well when combined with the feminist insight, discussed below, of traditional sex role expectations of male dominance. When a man's expected status and degree of input is not being fulfilled within the system men may draw upon the 'ultimate resource', violence, to meet this expectation. This theory of organisations has much cross-cultural and empirical evidence to support its utility as a tool for understanding wife abuse (Gelles, 1974; 1985a; Levinson, 1989; Rodman, 1972; Warner, Lee and Lee, 1986).

The Feminist socio-political perspective proposes that wife beating is a 'controlling' behaviour that serves to create and maintain 'male dominance' and an 'imbalance of power' between a husband and wife (Adams, 1989; Bograd, 1992; Dobash and Dobash, 1992; Martin, 1983; Pagelow, 1992; Pence and Paymar, 1993; Schechter, 1982; Walker, 1986). This position also maintains that men's violence and 'controlling strategies' cannot be separated from the cultural and social-structural context in which it occurs. This context being the patriarchal institutions, sexist norms and the historical legacy of male dominance which socialises men and supports, condones and legitimates their violence to women (Dobash and Dobash, 1992; Murphy and Meyer, 1991; Pagelow, 1992; Pence, 1989; Russel, 1982; Schechter, 1988; Straus, 1980c; Walker, 1981; Yllo and Straus, 1990). By suggesting that violence against wives is an 'instrumental power strategy' inflicted by men against women, condoned and supported within the normative 'social system' at large, feminist theory offers a further example of a theory which draws from more than one discursive resource.

The traditional patriarchal family, with the man at the head of the household, existing within a male controlled and male defined social order, which supports and legitimates his authority, is the basic feminist construct in accounting for the pervasiveness of wife abuse. For it is here, in the intimate relations of the family, that gender based power and status differences within our society are especially confronted, maintained and reinforced (Bersani and Chen, 1988;

Dobash and Dobash, 1979; Yllo, 1983). "Men are culturally prepared for the role of master of the home even though they must often physically enforce the 'right' to exercise this role. They are socialised to be dominant and women to be subordinate" (Pence and Paymar, 1993, p5). According to Bograd (1984), "Violence is the most overt and physical form of control wielded by men as a class over women" (Bograd, 1984, p559).

From a feminist perspective wife abuse is thus much more than a physical interaction occurring among deviant families in stressful situations, as in the 'pathological' and 'tension expressive' discourses. Rather, it is seen as a complex and prevalent social and political problem which reflects the institutional and cultural traditions of our patriarchal or 'male dominated' society. Men's violence to their partners is seen as 'goal orientated' and 'intentional' and as being legitimated, supported and condoned within the 'patriarchal' and sexist 'social system'.

Cultural traditions within our ideological 'social system' such as beliefs in; the natural superiority and higher status of males; male 'ownership' within marriage; a man's home being 'his castle' and; women being responsible for a man's emotional well-being, along with norms constricting wives' activity to the domestic sphere and an equating of masculinity with economic, social and physical power, all predispose wives to be victims of men's controlling tactics (Bograd, 1988; Dobash and Dobash, 1979, 1992; Margolin and Burman, 1993; Martin, 1983; McCall and Shields, 1986; Pence and Paymar, 1993; Pressman, 1989; Stordeur and Stille, 1989). Social institutions such as the legal system, the economic structure, the social services, science, religion and the media have all been shown to support, legitimate and to perpetuate the existing patriarchal system of social relations within the family and society as a whole (Birns, Cascardi and Meyer, 1994; Bograd, 1988; Carden, 1994; Dines, 1990; Dobash and Dobash, 1979, 1992; Fortune, 1993; Ganley, 1989; Gilligan, 1982; Gutsche and Murray, 1991; Martin, 1983; Pagelow, 1992; Schechter, 1982; Stanko, 1985; Woffordt, Mihalic and Mernard, 1994).

Social research from a feminist perspective has demonstrated strong associations between wife abuse, male domestic authority and male control over economic resources within the family (Adler, 1981; Bowker, 1983; Hillier and Foddy, 1993; Kalmus and Straus, 1982; Kantor and Straus, 1987; Russel, 1988; Woffordt, Mihalic, and Mernard, 1994). Straus, Gelles and

Steinmetz (1980), based on data from their 1975 representative survey, reported that wife abuse was eight times more likely to occur among couples with husband-dominated versus egalitarian decision making styles. Cross-cultural studies have also demonstrated an association between male dominance in social and domestic life and the prevalence of wife abuse within that society (Bowker, 1984; Breiner, 1992; Hillier and Foddy, 1993; Levinson, 1989; Morley, 1994; Prasad, 1994; Sanday, 1981). David Levinson (1989), for example, reviewed ethnographic studies from 90 cultures around the world and found that in those societies where wife abuse did occur it tended to occur more frequently and more severely in societies where (a) males controlled the family's wealth and resources, (b) males held domestic authority, (c) social restraints prevented women from divorcing or leaving their husbands, and (d) there was an absence of women only social support networks and working groups.

The solution to the problem of wife abuse from a feminist perspective calls for a change to the traditional structure of the patriarchal family and a radical revision to the patriarchal institutions and 'normative' foundations which support this structure. Thus people who adopt this feminist perspective tend to be generally sceptical of changing individual men as a means to stopping men's violence to women (Stordeur and Stille, 1989). They see anger management strategies (expressive tension discourse) and the various therapies (pathology discourse) as being too narrow in their focus to seriously address this problem. Because, however, more than half of women helped in refuges will return to their violent partners, most feminists will support the idea of 're-educating' violent men (Aguirre, 1985; Giles-Sims, 1983; Stone, 1984; Walker, 1979). They do this alongside other social and political actions however, such as increasing the legal consequences for battering, educating the public about sexism, supporting equal rights and equal pay opportunities for women and providing choices for victims of abuse, such as refuge and second stage housing (Aguirre, 1985; Adams, 1988b; Armstrong, 1983; Avis, 1992; Burstow, 1992; Dobash and Dobash, 1992; Herman, 1990; Pence, 1989; Pence and Shepard, 1988; Schechter, 1982).

The focus when working with batterers from a feminist perspective is to 're-socialise' them - to educate and to challenge the men in regards to their controlling behaviours and their sexist expectations of both themselves and their partners (Adams, 1988b; Adams and McCormick, 1982; Brygger and Edleson, 1987; Gondolf, 1985b; Pence and Paymar, 1993; Pence and Shepard, 1988). Because violence is seen as purposeful, men are held to be one hundred

percent responsible and accountable for their behaviour. No 'excuses' for the man's violence, such as alcoholism, provocation or other 'pathology' is accepted (Adams, 1988a; 1989; Avis, 1992; Ganley, 1989; Herman, 1990; Kaufman, 1992; Pence, 1989). Violence is uniquely defined as 'any means by which one person attempts to control another'. The Power and Control Model, as devised by Duluth practitioners in 1984, is a classic tool in this respect and is commonly used in feminist informed approaches which work with violent men and victims of men's violence (Pence and Paymar, 1993). The model proposes that physical violence occurs alongside and supports other controlling tactics such as emotional abuse, intimidation, threats, economic control and minimizing, denying and blaming the woman for the man's abuse, all of which support the man's 'dominance' in the relationship. All of these behaviours are thus defined and confronted as 'violence'.

In summary, violence can, employing a Liberal humanist world view, be constructed as an **instrumental means to gaining power** over other people and this strategy may be employed for a number of reasons. For example violence can be used to end conflicts of interest in order to get one's way and/or to avoid the tension that these induce. It can also be used to increase one's self worth, to gain peer approval, to punish or to prevent one's losing face in a conflict situation. Men have been taught and encouraged to maintain power over women in our culture and thus violence may be 'legitimately' used as an authoritative device, 'justifiably' used for any of these reasons when arguing or fighting with one's partner.

This discursive position is particularly distinct from both the 'expressive tension' and 'pathological' accounts of violence in that the subject is constructed as being intentional, free willed and totally accountable for his or her 'choices' in behaviour. The discourse does share some discursive overlap with the implications of these other models however. This is not too surprising given historical connections and thus interconnections, between these discourses. The Liberal humanist and Medical 'pathological' world views have emerged simultaneously in the 'modern' era with the rise of science and Liberalism and this could account for the construct of 'personal growth' co-articulating both a Liberal humanist and a Medical 'mental health' concern. It evokes sentiments of a 'healthy' mind which is reaching for his or her 'full potential' as an integrating and creative human. A person who has grown in this capacity functions at an optimal level of being. A person who does not 'grow', who does not reach his or her potential, however, may be considered deficient, lacking in some quality such as self

esteem, confidence or integration. This person may be constructed as mildly 'pathological' and need 'therapeutic' help accordingly.

Some Romantic informed interventions also draw upon and co-articulate Liberal humanist assumptions. Liberal humanism replaced Romanticism as the dominant ideology of the modern era but this has not removed Romantic constructions from circulation, only from dominance (Gergen, 1991). Constructions informed from each discourse can be seen to be operating 'together' in the field today. For example, 'anger management', a concept derived through the Romantic 'expressive tension' 'hot' account of violence, implies 'management' of tension. Management requires the Liberal humanist faculties of 'awareness', 'will' and 'choice'. Anger management thus co-articulates constructs from both discourses.

Statements concerning violence such as "I was in the right", "I couldn't back down", "She shouldn't have said that", "A man's home is his castle", "Might is right" and "She was pissing me around and pissing me off" all reflect men's intentional use of a power strategy to obtain their 'will' in everyday contexts. The implication of this discourse for stopping violence is to offer violent men new, non-violent ways of attaining their goals in a conflict situation - such as negotiation, conflict resolution and assertion skills. Educational institutions are important here. Building self esteem and security through means other than 'control', such as through facilitating 'personal growth' in groups and individuals, is also advocated as an appropriate intervention strategy.

Harsher community responses to men's violence, such as public shame and legal consequences are called for too within this discourse. The law, protecting the rights of individuals whilst holding intentional beings accountable, is a distinct implication from this discourse and this can be seen to be operating more and more as the problem of wife abuse is acknowledged by the wider society. A further implication from this position is to alter the 'private meanings and goals' violent men have developed, through 'developing' their 'personal awareness' and 'rationality'. The feminist position indicates that the individual's growth and development have been 'corrupted' by a sexist 'social system'. Amendments to this 'developmental' problem could be facilitated through educational settings or through the media where new 'awareness' can be fostered. As can be seen in feminist theory the individualism inherent in the Liberal

humanist world view is challenged strongly and overtly by a 'Structuralist' world view (Giddens, 1989; McLennan, 1992), to which we now turn.

Discourse (d): Wife abuse as a consequence of the broader social system.

This discursive position uniquely constructs wife abuse as a logical extension of various 'cultural norms' and 'institutional practices' existing in Western society. This **Structuralist account** (Giddens, 1989), of a 'normative heritage' existing in a culturally bound and relative 'social system', constructs men as being 'socialised' to become violent in general and women and wives to become victims of men's abuse.

The idea of 'norms' within a 'culture', which are 'learned' culturally relative standards for acceptable behaviour within a 'whole way of life', can be traced back to the formal beginnings of an applied 'science of the social' in the dawning of the modern era, in the late eighteenth century (Jenks, 1993; Williams, 1983). This discursive innovation, formally developed within the new disciplines of anthropology and sociology, broke with a history of 'biological' approaches to individual and collective behaviour posing instead Structural explanations for social and anti-social behaviour (Jenks, 1993). Although ideas of collective thought had preceded this move in social philosophy (e.g. in the works of Locke and Kant) the notion of 'culture' for the vast majority of people reflected an evolutionary perspective in which case 'culture' was typically equated with 'civilization' or one's degree of 'education', with other societies being considered 'primitive' (Jenks, 1993; Williams, 1983).

The earliest definition of 'culture', as it is understood in the social sciences today, emerged in 1871 through the writings of Edward Tylor (Tylor, 1958). Tylor (1958) conceived of 'culture' as being a 'learned complex whole way of life' which included 'ideational components' such as knowledge, beliefs and morality and 'normative practices' such as customs, art and law. The identification of these 'social structures' underlies the present 'cultural constructionist' movement which pervades the social sciences (Jenks, 1993). Applied to violence this position explains wife abuse as a social action which reflects other social practices and beliefs 'within the whole' 'social order' such as 'norms' of violence, privacy and male dominance. This perspective suggests that violence in general is accepted as being relatively normal in western society and that violence against wives, whilst not being the norm for all of society, reflects this and other supporting norms in an internally consistent manner.

Wife abuse is thus seen as an extension of the normative 'social system', a perspective which is most explicitly in conflict with the 'pathological' discursive position which holds such behaviour to be 'abnormal'.

In this Structuralist discourse the emphasis is on how agents act within the ideological constraints afforded by the 'social system' (Parsons, 1952). The 'rationality' of the 'social system' is posited as a more powerful determinant of behaviour than is the individual posited in the Liberal humanist discourse, and thus there is a great tension between this Structuralist position and the Liberal humanist discourse (McLennan, 1992). The implication for stopping men's violence from this discursive perspective is to modify the 'normative constraints' within the whole 'social system' so that men and women are socialised more appropriately.

The **Subculture of Violence thesis** (Wolfgang and Ferracuti, 1967) provided an innovative perspective on violence in the 1960s. This theory postulated that specific 'subcultural groups' develop norms and values which legitimate and condone the use of physical violence to a greater extent than is deemed appropriate by the dominant culture and that this has implications for wife assault. It is these groups, it is proposed, that accept and engage in violence and are thus more likely to assault spouses and partners. Studies within this paradigm have typically focused on lower SES groups (Coser, 1967; Wolfgang and Ferracuti, 1967) because, as discussed above, of reported social class differences in the prevalence of violence (Gelles and Cornell, 1990; Hamberger and Hastings, 1988; Hotaling and Sugarman, 1986, 1990; Kantor and Straus, 1987; Straus and Smith, 1990). The focus of studies from this perspective however, in contrast to the emphasis placed on 'stress' and 'tension' described earlier, concern the social norms and values that legitimate and condone such violence within these groups.

Such studies have found that lower SES populations are more likely to (a) possess attitudes which define situations as requiring a violent response and (b) to legitimate and condone such violence. Lower SES groups are also more likely to possess an aggressive definition of masculinity and a strong sense of honour and deference within that system (Coser, 1967; Lewis, 1967; Rosenstock, 1975; Wolfgang and Ferracuti, 1967). Thus wife abuse could be explained as one facet of a 'violence accepting' subculture.

Bowker (1984), after studying various groups of violent men throughout the socio-economic structure extended this sub-cultural model to transcend social class when explaining wife abuse. Bowker (1984) has found empirical evidence of discrete male peer subcultures, which are more likely to be violent to women, existing throughout society independently of socio-economic status. He found these peer groups to normalise and justify wife assault and violence to other family members and to demand complete domination over their families. These men, he claims, are typically part of a male social network with regular meetings at work, in sports clubs, and/or at bars etc, which continually reaffirm the idea that 'a man must keep his woman in line'. This subculture thesis thus posits norms and attitudes such as an acceptability of violence and a belief in male dominance in the home to be features of specific subcultural peer groups. Smith's (1991) research, with battered women describing their partners' male peers, supports Bowker's theory.

Rather than limit this form of analysis to 'subcultures', other theorists have extended this perspective to encapsulate our society as a whole as being a **Culture of Violence** (Benedek, 1993; Emde, 1993; Marois, 1989; Ruppert, 1994; Stordeur and Stille, 1989; Straus, 1980d; Walker, 1986; Walters, 1975; Whitaker, 1993; Whitaker and Pollard, 1993) in which violence accepting norms are prevalent throughout society and are not limited to discrete, deviant subcultures (Birns, Cascardi and Meyer, 1994; Margolin and Burman, 1993; Parker and Toth, 1990; Walker, 1986). This theory suggests that people in Western society from all social backgrounds, are socialised to accept, condone and, potentially at least, be physically violent (Avis, 1992; Campbell, 1993; Graverholtz and Koralewski, 1991; McMaster and Swain, 1989; Ritchie and Ritchie, 1993; Remafedi, 1990; Root, 1984; Walker, 1986). We live in a culture which glorifies violence and makes heroes out of those who use physical force in settling grievances (Emde, 1993; Lystad, 1986; McCall and Shields, 1986; Straus and Baron, 1990; Whitaker, 1989).

According to these theorists there is much societal support in the Western world for the use of violence which legitimates, inspires and reinforces violence in the family as is demonstrated and reinforced through the many 'culturally legitimated forms of violence' (Baron and Straus, 1988) such as violent sports (Marois, 1989; Russel and Pigat, 1991; Seager, 1993; Zanni and Kirchler, 1991) and violence in the media (Bridgman, 1993; Cumberbatch, 1991; Ghinzzoni, 1988; Straus, 1980a; Wood, Way and Chachere, 1991). Cross cultural studies indicate that

violence against women is more likely to occur in cultures in which other forms of violence, such as child abuse and murder, are common and less violent means to resolving conflict, such as negotiation or assertion communication, are not normative (Breiner, 1992; Carrol, 1980; Levinson, 1989; Masumura, 1979; Sanday, 1981).

Alongside this acceptance of violence, **family norms** in Western society permit family members to physically assault each other, particularly for the purposes of childrearing, where such violence is culturally justified and sanctioned (Gelles and Cornell, 1990; Margolin, Sibner and Gleberman, 1988; Starr, 1988; Straus, 1980a). Straus (1980a, 1980d) has proposed that this cultural norm frequently extends beyond parent-child relationships to the marital relationship itself, where there is, at least implicitly, some approval and support for the use of violence on the part of husbands against wives, hence the claim "The marriage license is a hitting license" (Straus, 1980d, p39). National surveys reveal that 24% of men and 22% of women would classify "minor" physical assaults between spouses as normal. Furthermore this 'normal' family violence is 'normatively' considered to be a "private affair" (McMaster and Swain, 1989) occurring in the privacy of the home, beyond the legitimate concern of the wider community (Dobash and Dobash, 1979; Gelles and Cornell, 1990; Schechter, 1982).

In support of Straus's (1980a; 1980d) theory that violence between spouses is acceptable in Western society, Stark and McKevo (1970) found that a quarter of American adults approved of intimates hitting each other in some circumstances. Straus (1980d) similarly found that men and women who convicted men of assaulting a woman in a mock trial were significantly more likely to give more lenient punishments if the victim was a wife or girlfriend compared to her being a stranger. Also Genteman (1984) found that 19% of women see wife assault as being justified in some circumstances.

Violent culture theory with its emphasis on family norms and the general acceptability of violence in Western culture is supported by the insights of sex-role socialisation theory of men's violence. Combined, these perspectives suggest that male violence is not so much abnormal as it is an extreme but understandable outcome of existing norms and values. From this perspective violence against wives cannot be separated from the social context in which it occurs and of what is considered to be 'normal' and acceptable social and intra-family

behaviour (Bersani and Chen; 1988; Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Carden, 1994; Dutton, 1985; Edleson and Tolman, 1992; Garbarino, 1977; Gelles, 1983b).

Sex role socialisation theory compliments the culture of violence model in that it suggests that distinct cultural 'norms' for each 'gender' operate in society, are socialised into boys and girls from an early age and lead to males being encouraged and rewarded for being competitive and aggressive (Avis, 1992; Birns, Cascardi and Meyer, 1994; H. Goldberg, 1979, 1987; McMaster and Swain, 1989; Marriot, 1988; Salzman, 1979). Research indicates that from birth males and females are subject to different messages concerning their appropriate behaviour from parents (Block, 1984; Giddens, 1989; Weitman, Birns and Friend, 1985), schools (Ramsay, 1989; Sadker and Sadker, 1986; Spender, 1982), peer groups (Charlesworth and Dzur, 1987) and from the media (Birns, Cascardi and Meyer, 1994; Meltzoff, 1988).

Males learn through various role models and from the expectations of those around them, not only to be more aggressive and competitive but also to be more individualistic and self-orientated; to be more likely to endorse violence as a problem solving strategy; and to be less emotionally expressive than girls (Birns, Cascardi and Meyer, 1994; H. Goldberg, 1979, 1987; Marriot, 1988; Miles, 1991; Ritchie and Ritchie, 1993; Stanko, 1985; Stevens, 1994). Within Western culture men's 'masculinity' is linked to strength, achievement, domination and one's ability to be the primary wage earner in the family. Women in contrast have been socialised to be passive, supportive and to be concerned with their physical appearance and the welfare of others. They are taught that their roles as wife and mother will be their most important roles in life and it is their responsibility to maintain their marriages at all costs (Birns, Cascardi and Meyer, 1994; Corey and Corey, 1990; McCall and Shields, 1986; Steinmetz, 1986). Men thus learn to be violent as part of the acquisition of a prevalent 'social norm' and 'expectation' that real men are tough, don't back down and will use violence to resolve conflict. They are taught to be breadwinners and women are encouraged to locate themselves within the 'privacy' of the home.

Other male socialisation theories build on the notion that whilst boys are encouraged, reinforced and applauded for their aggressiveness, competitiveness and willingness to stand pain, they are also socialized to become like soldiers; to objectify others, control their emotions, and to intimidate their 'enemy' (Brod, 1987; Enloe, 1988; Good, Gilbert and Scher,

1990; Kimmel and Mesner, 1989; Stevens, 1993). Boys are 'taught' these lessons of violence from socio-cultural mediators such as the media, sports, toys, parents, coaches and other men. On an interpersonal level this socialisation process means that men can and frequently will objectify their partners and discount or ignore their feelings. Empathy training is thus considered to be an essential requirement in working with men who batter, given that men who have the capacity to empathise are less likely to hurt their partners (Bograd, 1994; Edleson, 1984; Ryan, 1993; Stevens, 1994).

Another construction from male socialisation theory thought to lead men to be violent to their partners is the 'homophobic' nature of masculine ideology in which intimacy and support from other men is commonly feared by men as being unsafe and are stigmatized as feminine (Corey and Corey, 1990; H. Goldberg, 1979, 1987; McMaster and Swain, 1989; Stordeur and Stille, 1989; Swain, 1985). This leads to many men having relatively superficial relationships with other men (Corey and Corey, 1990; Ganley, 1981b; Marriot, 1988; McMaster and Swain, 1989; Phillips, 1987) and thus the tendency to have women as their primary source of intimacy. This has the effect however, of causing many men to become excessively emotionally dependent upon their partners (Bernard and Bernard, 1984; Maiuro, Cahn, Vitaliano, Wagner and Zegree, 1988; Marriot, 1988; Sonkin et al., 1985). This can set the stage for heightened vulnerability in men: (a) to being deeply and easily emotionally hurt from their partners, which may produce sudden and unexpected rage, as in the 'expressive tension' discourse (Gelles and Cornell, 1990; Hotaling and Straus, 1980), and (b) to be insecure about 'losing' their partners. Such insecurity is considered to be a basic motivation for men trying to control their partners, as in the 'instrumental power' account of violence (Gondolf, 1985b; Maiuro et al., 1988; Saunders, 1982; Wallace and Nosko, 1993).

Women's socialisation too contributes to the high prevalence of abuse. Women have been taught to 'stand by their man' and to blame themselves for relationship problems and even their own victimisation (Birns, Cascardi and Meyer, 1994; McCall and Shields, 1986; Pagelow, 1981; Walker, 1979). Thus many women remain in abusive relationships in the hope that things will improve if and when they 'get it right'. Factors in the social environment too can prevent women from leaving violent relationships. They face realistic fears of a drop in income, through having fewer occupational skills or having to give up their jobs when in

hiding, of having nowhere to live, or of losing one's children through the legal system (Dobash and Dobash, 1979, 1992; Pagelow, 1981; Schechter, 1982; Stanko, 1985).

Sex role socialisation can indirectly lead to men being violent in ways which extend beyond the socialisation of men's competitive and violent behaviour specifically, and this has implications for the other discourses discussed in this overview. For example, sex role stereotypes can impact upon marital violence through the creation of conflict which can arise when men and women's sex-role expectations are incompatible. For example a man may expect his wife to keep their house clean or to stay at home while he works because this is what he has grown up to expect from women. If she doesn't do this then he may consider her to be a 'lousy wife'. Sex role socialisation thus has direct implications for the 'expressive tension' discourse in that men may find it frustrating, distressing and/or stressful when their (sexist) expectations are not met. Additionally, as the feminist perspective on men's 'instrumental' use of violence informs us, men frequently think they have the right to dominate and control their wives and thus consider it their right to punish their partners for not doing what he thinks she 'should'. Conflict and violence thus can easily arise out of sex-role expectations (Davis, 1987; Stordeur and Stille, 1989), especially in these changing times for men and women (Glasser, 1986; Kimmel, 1987) and this impacts upon men's violence to their partners in many ways.

Men's gender socialisation to be inexpressive about their emotions, strong, rational and in control (H. Goldberg, 1979, 1987; Gondolf, 1985b; Marriot, 1998; Ritchie and Ritchie, 1993) can impact at a 'pathological' level of men's functioning also. The personality profile of the batterer discussed in the 'pathological' discourse shares much in common with socially defined ideas and ideals of what constitutes a real man (Corey and Corey, 1990; H. Goldberg, 1979, 1987; Gondolf, 1985b; Miles, 1991). The real man is trained to not communicate nor to be expressive of his emotions because this shows him to be vulnerable, out of control and therefore 'unmanly'. 'Real men' may thus become 'pathological' in their communication skill deficits yet 'normal' in conventional masculine traits. Men's frequent inability to communicate emotionally with others may manifest itself in outbursts of anger and violence, as discussed by Gondolf (1985b).

Furthermore, it has been argued that **cultural traditions** within our society devalue women

and this further increases their likelihood for being targets of abuse (Bograd, 1988; Dobash and Dobash, 1979, 1992; Martin, 1983; McCall and Shields, 1986; Pence and Paymar, 1993; Pressman, 1989; Stordeur and Stille, 1989). Given women's lower status in our society, violence directed at them is not considered to be so 'serious' as to be a priority public problem. Some feminist theorists have argued that we live in a 'misogynist' society in which women, for all the low status roles they represent, are subtly, and at times not so subtly, regarded with contempt (Burstow, 1992; Dobash and Dobash, 1979; Dworkin, 1974; Ussher, 1992). Pornography, for example, encourages the objectification and abuse of women (Atmore, 1986; Burstow, 1992; Dworkin, 1989; Jarvie, 1991; Malamuth and Donnerstein, 1984) as does the media in general which frequently sensationalises, trivialises and romanticises men's violence against women (Donnerstein and Linz, 1986; Fortune, 1993; Linz, Wilson and Donnerstein, 1992; Meyers, 1994; Moliter and Sapolsky, 1993; Remafedi, 1990; Schechter, 1982; Zillman and Jennings, 1982).

In summary, this discourse suggests that our Structural 'social system' provides a context in which men's violence to women is constructed and constrained. Because 'culture' exists prior to any individual, it is the norms and values surrounding violence, masculinity, femininity, family and heterosexual relationships within the culture at large, which constitute the problem and cause of men's violence to their partners. Men's and women's experiences and behaviour are seen as being grounded in and reflecting the socio-cultural heritage in which they live and it is these ideological constraints which are held to be responsible for the individual man's violence. In such a discourse human subjects are thus positioned as lacking in any real sense of agency beyond what is determined by 'social structures' (McLennan, 1992).

Everyday statements such as "Boys will be boys", "He just went a little too far this time", "It's just a domestic", "I only pushed her", "It's a woman's lot", "She was out of line" and "He doesn't know how to express himself" all serve to legitimate or to minimise the significance of the man's violence and reflect the various cultural norms identified through this discourse's linguistic resources. Intervention strategies which employ this discourse focus on subverting traditional social relations in our society and on changing particular social norms through education, consciousness raising, pressuring the media and changing laws such as the outlawing of child spanking in Switzerland (Ritchie and Ritchie, 1993). Educational campaigns along the lines of "It's not just a domestic" and "No-one deserves to be abused", mandatory

police intervention law reforms, feminist equal rights and anti-pornography groups all work within and from this discourse which seeks to stop the violence. The implication is to change the socialising process by which violence is glorified, by which boys become aggressive men, by which women are constructed as second class citizens, by which 'domestic violence' is ignored and by which men become dominant and women dependent. The power relations between men and women are most explicitly challenged in this discourse as it seeks to subvert traditional gender stereotypes and relationship 'structures'.

Norms and values surrounding the family, violence and masculinity at present need to be altered or eliminated so that such values and norms are no longer conducive to wife assault specifically and violence in general. This position, is adverse to the individual autonomy proposed by Liberal humanism. Consciousness and subjectivity is determined not by the individual agent, as a creative integrating source of meaning, but by the logic of the 'social system'. As explicated in feminism, the Structuralist position holds that individual goals, purposes and subjective meanings are those of the social system. Re-socialisation of individuals and 'radical' changes to the wider social structure are both essential for wife abuse to stop. Both discourses however converge on the implication of police involvement and community awareness as being important variables for change in violence patterns to occur. The 'social system' discourse goes much further than this, requiring change to the 'structures' of society such as in the media, education and the church.

The 'social system' position is similarly adverse to the 'pathological' model of domestic violence. Individual 'pathology' implies that the 'social system' is 'healthy' while the individual is not. This discursive position holds rather that it is a 'sick society' which has as a symptom violent individuals. It is inherently more 'political' as it seeks to subvert traditional power structures throughout the community. Beyond this fundamental conflict between these camps however the 'social systemic' discourse can inform and co-articulate with a 'pathological' discourse implicating and drawing upon the Romantic 'expressive tension' account in the process. Where men are trained to be emotionally inexpressive they have problems communicating and this can lead to emotional and behavioural 'pathology' as has been discussed. A social systemic discourse can integrate and inform other discourses in this way. Dominant constructs from each of the other positions can be employed within this framework. 'Pathology', 'stress' and 'tension' and distorted 'rationality' can all be placed

within the context of a destructive normative social system. This position consequently encourages a focus upon prevention and community change rather than individual therapy, anger management training or retribution.

Discourse (e): Violence as learned behaviour.

Within psychology, in particular behavioural psychology, and within the social sciences generally, there is a pervasive discourse of human behaviour which holds that all behaviour, including violence, is 'learned' from 'experience'. This approach to human consciousness and behaviour can be traced back to the nature-nurture debate which has featured in Western thought since the Greek philosophers in the days of antiquity (Candland, 1993; Hamlyn, 1987; Horowitz, 1995; Trigg, 1988). Behavioural traditions in individual psychology stand firmly on the side of the coin which holds that all behaviour and all mentalistic events are learned and thus represents a scientific school of thought grounded in this world view. A traditional metaphor surrounding this discourse is the notion of the mind and person as a 'clean slate' (tabula rasa) at birth which, through experience, is 'imprinted' with or 'taught' ways of being in the world. This learning discourse thus positions agents as 'conditioned' robot-like passive 'receptors' of 'learning experiences' who learn both 'attitudes' and 'specific behaviours'.

The practical implications of a scientific model of how a 'clean slate' becomes an agent of violent behaviour has much to offer the field of wife abuse, as can be seen in the numerous intervention strategies which have been informed, in part at least, by a learning discourse. Because this perspective provides a model of how behaviour is learned and changes, it provides a means by which violent behaviour may be 'modified'; a resource employed in all interventions informed by the discourses cited previously. Because violence is constructed as a behaviour learnt through experience, learning theory contrasts strongly with the disease model implicit in the 'pathological' account.

The **Social Learning** analysis of aggression (Bandura, 1973, 1977) was a hallmark in the psychological literature explaining aggression and violence (Segall, 1983). This being so because social learning theory broke away from the Romantic 'drive' theories of violence, which had until its emergence dominated the field within psychology, and because it developed 'behaviourism' to provide a more comprehensive and workable account of violence. Social learning theory has its roots firmly entrenched in the behavioural school of western

psychology, which emerged as a science with Watson (1913) and was developed and popularised by Skinner (1938, 1953). These theorists emphasised the environmental determinants of individual behaviour. As an explanation for aggression classical behaviourism was not sufficient however and thus was seldom used to explain the onset of violence (Segall, 1983). Reflecting the 'cognitive revolution' in psychology, social learning theory has built upon traditional behaviourism by contributing the insight that cognitive processes and content too can be 'learnt' and that this has further implications for the understanding and 'modification' of 'behaviour' (Bandura, 1986). By providing a more complete and comprehensive model of aggression as a learned social behaviour, this theory has had an enormous impact within the discursive field of wife abuse, both in understanding the phenomenon and in affording interventions for stopping it (Dutton, 1988; Ganley, 1989).

Bandura (1973, 1977) provides much empirical data in support of his theory that violence is learnt through (a) trial and error reinforcement learning, as in classical behaviourism, and (b) through observational learning or 'modelling'. He thus contributes to empirical psychology the idea that violent 'behaviours' can be 'learnt' through 'observation' as well as through trial and error. By watching 'models' engage in violent behaviour, for example in one's family of origin, in the movies or in one's school yard, and through experimenting with these behaviours and being 'rewarded' or 'reinforced' for employing their use, such behaviours can become a significant and frequently occurring component of a person's 'behaviour patterns'. If non-violent behaviours for coping with stress or conflict have not been modelled in a person's learning history, and violent responses to such situations have, then non-violent responses are not options within the person's 'behavioural repertoire' and violent behaviour in such situations, especially if reinforced previously, is the more likely outcome (Bandura, 1973, 1977).

Ganley (1989) has observed that men who respond to stress with violence experience an immediate reduction in bodily tension which 'reinforces' the tendency to use violence in the future as a tension-reduction mechanism. Once used, violence typically becomes a re-occurring event in a couple's relationship (Follingstad, Hause, Rutledge and Polek, 1992; Overholser and Mole, 1990; Saltzman, Mercy, Rosenbaum and Esea, 1990) as is described in Lenore Walker's (1979) **Cycle of Violence** model of wife abuse. From interviews with 120 battered women, Walker (1979) deduced that battering typically occurs as part of a patterned sequence and that

a violent relationship is typically characterised by three repeating stages; (1) a tension building phase, (2) an acute battering incident and (3) a respiteful, relaxing and loving period. As the cycle is repeated in a relationship, phase three tends to become either truncated or entirely absent whilst the intensity and frequency of the violence tends to escalate (Browne, 1987; Gelles and Straus, 1988; Walker, 1979). The man's repeated violence may be being 'reinforced' through 'tension reduction' but, from a social learning perspective, this is not the only source of 'reinforcement' which explains how the cycle of violence by which many men become batterers develops.

Bandura (1973) claims that aggression can be motivated by either an 'aversive instigator' (to remove a perceived aversive stimulus such as tension) or an 'inducement instigator' (to gain an anticipated payoff for an aggressive action such as gaining control). Thus a man may beat his wife during an emotionally charged situation to release tension, as described in the 'expressive tension' discourse, or he may batter to gain compliance from his wife, as in the feminist informed 'social systemic' - 'instrumental power' co-articulated account (Dutton, 1988; Ganley, 1989; Saunders, 1989). Social learning theory is thus very compatible with other discursive positions but is not reducible to them.

What constitutes particular 'aversive' instigators and rewarding 'inducements' for the man is shaped by his individual learning history and is ultimately a subjective 'appraisal' (Bandura, 1973). Concepts from **cognitive-behavioural psychology** such as appraisals, expectations and attributions, and the tools used within cognitive-behaviourism to work with these, are thus readily encapsulated within the social learning framework (Bandura, 1973; Carden, 1994) and it's specific application to the understanding and prevention of wife abuse (Dutton, 1988; Ganley, 1989). Both the mode of appraisal by which the situation is defined and the mode of action by which the person responds to this appraisal are seen as pre-dispositions which have been 'acquired' through individual 'learning histories'.

Social learning and cognitive-behavioural theories suggest that, since violence is a socially learned behaviour as is the way in which one appraises the world, batterers can stop their abusive behaviour as a result of learning new behaviours and new thinking patterns (Adams, 1988a; Bandura, 1986; Edleson and Tolman, 1992; Gondolf and Russel, 1986; Stordeur and Stille, 1989). The model thus provides a specific method for understanding men's violence to

their wives and for inducing behavioural change in violent men, which can be utilised by each of the discursive positions identified in this overview.

For example, Interventions informed by a combination of the 'expressive tension' and 'learning' discourses tend to focus on the imparting of new skills and working on skill deficits which are designed to provide the person with a greater repertoire of alternative non-violent responses to stress and tension and to the specific circumstances which may induce anger in them. Several strategies have been used to this end within this framework and these typically involve what has now come to be known as 'anger management' strategies. Anger management typically focuses on the 'imparting' of three main 'skill' areas: (1) relaxation and stress reduction, (2) accurate identification of emotions and cognitive restructuring, and (3) interpersonal skills development (Stordeur and Stille, 1989). As has been discussed anger management strategies, through the concept of 'management', further imply Liberal humanist concerns, such as 'awareness' and 'choice'.

Similarly socialisation theories of violence, as can be seen in the 'normative social system' discourse, can benefit from a learning analysis of how people may be 'socialised' and also of how to 're-socialise' violent men with specific learning strategies (Dutton, 1988; Ganley, 1989). Both discourses see the subject as a product of external forces, over which he or she has little control. By challenging, modelling and altering attitudes, expectations and beliefs and through providing alternative non-violence promoting behavioural repertoires to the men, new personal behaviour patterns and 'cultural norms' can be developed. Conflict resolution and assertiveness training can also be imparted through these strategies, to the Liberal humanist 'intentional' agent. From the Liberal humanist perspective a violent man's 'awareness' of his 'faulty beliefs' and 'inappropriate expectations' can also be 'developed' (Beck, 1976; Ellis, 1985). Furthermore learning models can be employed to 'train' police officers to actively intervene and arrest assailants. The account can also be employed to 'change' community attitudes which may see such violence as 'just a domestic'. Additionally the account can be applied to re-socialise women to resist becoming victims.

Learning strategies are also commonly used in therapeutic practices as men are taught alternative ways of thinking about and responding to problematic or new situations through a variety of methods. The modelling and imparting of healthier relationship skills to children

and adults who have grown up in violent homes, in an attempt to break the 'intergenerational transmission of abuse' is an example of these discourses at work in contemporary social practices.

Other discourses thus benefit from the pragmatic elements of a **learned behaviour** discourse, which appears to be flexible and useful for a variety of ends. Because it is explanatory at a number of levels, emphasises that change is possible, is practical in its application and is not tied to or constrained by any particular discourse of violence, other than through suggesting that specific attitudes and behaviours can be changed, it appears to transcend and be incorporated into the intervention practices implicated by each of the other discourses. Anger management, negotiation skills, re-socialisation, changing community attitudes, training police to intervene, and therapy all benefit from and share in common the use of applied concepts from learning theories. Everyday statements such as "Like father like son", "He didn't know any better", "We can't let him get away with this or he'll just do it again" and "Show me what I can do" all employ a 'learning' discourse.

Integrated multi-discursive perspectives.

The five discourses outlined in this overview have discrete concepts and implications which are used in various ways by different action groups, all of which are orientated towards the same goal; stopping men's violence to women in the community. In recent years many social scientists and community professionals alike have come to recognize that no single discourse on men's violence to their partners provides a sufficient account of this prevalent and destructive social problem. Although the differing models offer a multiplicity of useful constructs for explaining the problem, no theory on its own has been able to adequately explain or list the necessary and sufficient conditions for wife abuse to occur (Bograd, 1992; Breines and Gordon, 1983; Carden, 1994; Dutton, 1985; Edleson and Tolman, 1992; Gelles and Loeske, 1993; Goldner, Penn, Sheinberg and Walker, 1990; Stevens, 1994; Jacobson, 1994; Kaufman, 1992; Meth, 1992).

Rather than dogmatically working within a single discursive position many practitioners and theorists have recommended, for all practical purposes, taking a "both/and" position when working with and explaining men's violence to their partners. Goldner et al., (1990), for example, advocates holding simultaneously contradictory models of wife abuse and, whilst

tolerating their contradictions and oppositions, focusing attention on how these different positions can enrich each other to more fully explain a particular instance of violence. Such a position is consistent with a realist view of science which accepts the possibility that there may be a number of underlying causes to any observable event (Bhaskar, 1978, 1989; McLennan, 1989).

This way of looking at the problem suggests that it may prove most useful for those interested in putting a stop to the violence to talk about the intersections of various discursive constructs when seeking to explain any particular event. From this position it is hypothesised that features of one's personal history (e.g. role models, being abused, insecure attachments, etc) when combined with certain situational factors (e.g. frustrations, stress, provocation) and particular social norms (e.g. violence, male domination, female degradation) may produce violence towards wives in a more dynamic and intelligible way, providing a diverse array of options for interventions. Consequently an eclectic approach consisting of political, peer group, familial and individual interventions may ultimately provide the best solution to the problem.

At present there are two theories which systematically integrate different constructs and discourses together into a coherent and multi-levelled model of pre-disposing conditions from which violence may occur. These models are the ecological psychological perspective (e.g. Dutton, 1985; Carlson, 1984; Edleson and Tolman, 1992; Carden, 1994) and the multi-level systems analyses (e.g. Breunlin, Schwartz and Mac Kune-Karrer, 1992; Hansen and Harway, 1993; Jenkins, 1990; Piercy and Sprenkle, 1990). Although coming from different backgrounds and using different terminologies, these models are very similar in their multicausal approach to the problem and in their use of eclectic and integrated explanations (Sprenkle, 1994).

Carden (1994), Carlson (1984), Dutton (1985) and Edleson and Tolman (1992) have all proposed and claim to have successfully applied an **ecological** model of human development and social problems (Bronfenbrenner, 1977, 1979) to the specific problem of wife abuse. From this perspective a series of personal, social and structural 'networks' are thought to 'interact' with each other within a web of relationships that affect the development and maintenance of violent behaviour.

Dutton's (1985) ecologically nested theory, for example, postulates four layers of inter-relating

and interweaving networks from which a man's behaviour is produced. In the scenario of wife abuse relevant interconnected networks are (1) the ontogenic core (consisting of intrapsychic, personal and interpersonal characteristics); (2) a microsystemic layer (primarily the family, where abuse and/or abandonment may have occurred and in which general lifestyles and attitudes are learned but also social networks such as peer support and neighbourhood attitudes and norms are important); (3) the exosystemic layer (one's occupational group - stress and satisfaction, also the legal context and police intervention for abuse); and (4) the macrosystemic layer (consisting of cultural scripts for gender roles and the acceptability of violence as a conflict solving strategy). All four levels are thought to inter-relate and influence a man's likelihood of making a particular response.

Multi-level system thinkers look at ways in which violent men are constrained from making more peaceable choices in their behaviour. Here "Micro", "mid-level" and "macro" "systems" are analyzed for their collective effect upon an individual man and men in general and this mapping is used to understand and intervene in such violent behaviour (Breunlin et al., 1992; Hansen and Harway, 1993; Imber-Black, 1988; Jacobson, 1994; Piercy and Sprenkle, 1990). Human systems are seen as multilevel entities with biological, psychological and social constraints, all of which, on their own or in combinations, may limit a man's non-violent options. Such constraints may be due to the polarization of parts to his personality, rigid sex role expectations, a limited repertoire of responses to marital stress or to personal attacks, a need for approval by macho peers, biological drives, abuse in childhood, jealousy, as a means to hold power and so forth. If constraints against making non-violent responses exist at only one level, the problem is less intractable than if many levels are involved "because constraints are interlocked. Just as a spider derives great strength from its complex weaves of many silk threads, so does a web of constraints powerfully limit what people can do" (Breunlin et al., 1992, p37).

From a post-structuralist perspective however, an eclectic integrated position, whilst having the advantage of being flexible and pragmatic, is not an easy position to take up as many of the concepts/constructs and implications which arise out of the different discourses are incommensurable (Kuhn, 1962) with constructs and implications from other discourses, making the construction of an integrated intervention programme difficult, fragmentary and potentially contradictory. Because decisions must be made about how the problem is to be

formulated and how and what interventions will take place, in any 'integrated approach' to the problem of wife abuse there will most likely be some discourses which feature more dominantly than others and this choice will depend upon the orientation, background and resources available to the interest group concerned.

Summary and Conclusions:

There are many forms of explanation to men's violence to their partners. There is a great deal of diversity and creativity of thought existing in the field, as this discursive overview has demonstrated. This diversity in conceptualising the etiology of wife abuse demonstrates the complexity of addressing this problem and the multiplicity of strategic points from which this issue can be and is approached. It is a very controversial area because approaching the problem through any particular discourse also means committing oneself to a definition of the problem and an intervention approach which from another discursive position may ultimately be more harmful than useful. The different discourses are frequently incommensurable in that concepts and implications from one discourse do not fit with others from another. 'Pathological' discourses encourage us to blame the individual or those around him and not to address the social structure. 'Expressive tension' discourses hail us to teach men to control their anger which from an 'instrumental' position provides the strategic beings with a culturally legitimated excuse for beating their wives. 'Catharsis' in the media or in sport, as a strategy for releasing innate 'inner tension', is incompatible with the 'learning' and socialising 'social system' discourses of human aggression, which suggest that such phenomena teaches and encourages the use of violence.

In part the incompatibility of many of the discursive constructions and implications reflect the incommensurability of the different accounts of human agency and subjectivity constructed through each discourse. In one discourse violent men are independent rational intentional beings who are responsible for their free-willed choices of behaviour (Liberal humanist - 'instrumental' account), in another they are at the mercy of inner passions and drives which are difficult to control (Romantic 'expressive tension' model). This is a contradiction in our construction of the person or agent. Still other discourses position violent men as relatively passive agents caught up in the logic of their cultural heritage (Structuralist - 'social system') and as products of their own individual learning experiences (Learning discourse) which places responsibility for their violence outside of the individual. In opposition to this the Medical

'pathological' discourse tells us that men's violence is the outcome of sick individuals whose minds are functioning at an abnormal level of personal well-being.

The incommensurability of these discourses raise several important questions for any theoretical account or intervention approach, including the choices made in any 'integrated' approach. For instance, to reduce instances of wife abuse do we, as the social science community, advocate the transformation of 'male dominated' society into a non-hierarchical system or should we engage violent men in 'therapy'? If therapy - should they engage in insight therapy, marital-systems therapy, consciousness raising or anger management? Should we worry about the implications of 'abnormality' for the public which are implied through therapy? Or should we approach the 'social system' and individuals at the same time and define offenders as 'products of a sick society?'. If a sick society can we hold individuals to be legally accountable for their actions? Which elements of a society might be sick? The larger social structure which locates undue 'stress' in lower income groups, the mechanisms in society which pre-dispose women to be targets, or the cultural heritage of violence and masculinity? Should we opt for stricter legal consequences for assault as a 'rational' 'deterrent' to the use of violence? At an individual level should we encourage people to 'let off steam' through catharsis through violent media or should we 'censor' all aggressive activity in our culture and foster other behaviours? Should we do all these things, as in the integrated approaches, and use each construct, within the bounds of respecting the implications of other discourses? For example, cathartically releasing aggressive tension through non-violent behaviours like chopping wood.

The field of wife abuse is thus very controversial and alive with meaning and debate about which approach or which combination of approaches is most appropriate for stopping men's violence to their partners. Debates within the field are frequent, persistent and heated as different groups with different agendas derived from different discursive positions seek to obtain scarce funding and public support for their solutions and strategies. As a consequence debates within the field itself frequently verge on "violence" (Bograd, 1992). For post-structuralist theorists such debates are primarily concerned with 'power' (Foucault, 1980; Weedon, 1987). Power in the sense of each discourse seeking to establish dominance in constraining, enabling and shaping the way in which we construe of the problem, the subjectivity of the agents concerned and the appropriate intervention strategy for stopping it.

Because different discourses compete with one another for dominance in meaning they are competing for this 'power' of definition and implication. These implications have effects in the community which range from the 'radical' to the more 'conservative' solutions. Some discourses seek to subvert the status quo whilst others seek to retain traditional power dynamics existing in society.

This outline of the different discourses is intended to provide the reader with a more informed overview of the discursive field of wife abuse as it stands today: diverse, innovative and competitive. In the next section to this research exercise one grass roots organisation's approach to stopping men's violence to their partners will be explored and analyzed discursively. Let's have a look to see how these people construct and approach the problem.

STUDY TWO

A PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION OF THE MMAV STOPPING VIOLENCE PROGRAMME

CHAPTER FIVE

INTRODUCTORY SESSIONS

Over the course of the next three chapters, a selective account of the MMAV 'stopping violence' programme, as has been observed and recorded by this researcher through a 'participant observation' exercise, is presented. A fourth chapter completes this second study with a discussion of the discursive dynamics operating within the course. The present chapter deals with the first day of the course - introductory sessions one and two in which the men are introduced to each other, to the facilitators and to various components of the course. To facilitate comprehension of the programme a preview summary, from MMAV's perspective, is provided at the beginning of each session. This overview is quoted directly from the 'MMAV facilitator's manual'.

Session 1: Introductions

The first part of the morning session is devoted to introducing the programme and the organisation to the participants and also the participants to each other. Brief backgrounds and introductions of MMAV and the facilitators are given followed by some action methods (name games and continuum games) which introduce the participants and facilitators to each other. This is a facilitated group building process with the focus on gently inviting each person to speak and to meet others. The remainder of the morning is about creating safety and focus, by brainstorming ground rules and men's purpose for being in the group. Facilitation focus is to encourage the men to take responsibility for themselves by using "I" statements. A further goal is to establish a Non-Violence Contract as part of the programme.

Saturday Morning: 8:45am¹

I took a deep breath and started climbing the two flights of stairs that would take me to the MMAV office and to the room in which the Stopping Violence programme would take place. I was feeling excited about learning about the MMAV course but was also anxious about the men and the potential emotional claustrophobia of the group. Arriving in the room, a quarter of an hour before the scheduled beginning time, I found the two co-facilitators sitting down and going over their plans for the day. They welcome me and I greet them. I put down my

¹ The reader is reminded of at this point of three different subject positions/voices represented in this account, as discussed in the methodology section. These voices are those of an observer (descriptive tone in the present tense), a reflective participant (I language in the past tense) and, footnoted to the text as this note is, a discourse analyst (scientific and post-structuralist analytical language). Refer to chapter three for an elaboration on research practice.

bag in a corner of the room and take a seat among a circle of chairs laid out. I take another deep breath and look around.

The room is a large one, about 7x12 metres. There are 15 chairs in all and these are circled in front of a white board on the longer side of the room. The facilitators sit in the two chairs in front of this board, with the remainder of the circle of chairs facing them, indicating to me that the whiteboard would act as the 'front' of the room, much like a classroom². It turned out that this was indeed the case. Much of our time together over the next couple of months would be spent in these chairs, in front of this board, discussing a whole host of ideas. Because the facilitator's chairs were in the very front, as indicated by their notes on either side of their chairs, this gave them the freedom to use the whiteboard at will and also to be part of the circle³.

On each side of the rather large white board (4x2 metres) are two prominent charts. On the

² Group interventions for men who batter typically employ either an educational or a therapeutic approach to stopping men's violence (Russell, 1988; Stordeur and Stille, 1989; Tolman and Bennet, 1990). The physical organisation of the MMAV room, along with the terms "course" and "programme" which are frequently employed by the facilitators during the group time, imply a distinct educational focus for the group, an intervention practice which is informed by a 'learning' account of men's violence, as distinct from a 'pathological' therapeutic discourse. This framing of events and the classroom like structure to the room has distinct implications for the men, implying that they are not 'sick' and in need of 'therapy', but rather that they are here to learn new skills and new ways of being in the world. These practices serve to position the men as learners and the facilitators as teachers.

³ Being physically a part of the circle/group is a strategic practice which demonstrates MMAV's commitment to egalitarian social relationships. Within the 'social system' discourse on men's violence to women, feminist theory holds that our culture is a hierarchical and patriarchal one in which inequalities of power and status are institutionalised as normal. Violence is, from a feminist perspective, an 'instrumental' strategy of control, which maintains this hierarchical tradition. MMAV, through social practices such as this one, seeks to reject traditional power dichotomies in human relationships, which are frequently used to justify violence, and through employing a 'learning' discourse, role-model non-hierarchical relationships to the group. By engaging in such practices as being seated in the group circle, by being honest and open, by including the group in decision making processes, by negotiating processes with each other in front of the group and by unwinding and socialising with the men in between breaks, the facilitators aim to reduce traditional power imbalances 'normally' associated with a teacher/learner relationship. In this way they indicate their commitment to a Liberal humanist world view, a view which emerges more strongly as the course develops, where every person is deserving of respect and has equal rights.

left hand side is the 'Power and Control' chart (see figure 5.1) and on the right an 'Equality' chart (see figure 5.2). The Power and Control chart describes the various forms of abusive behaviour that violent men exhibit towards their partners, such as economic violence, sexual violence, threats and intimidation, verbal abuse and physical violence. The Equality chart describes positive and non abusive behaviours which characterise qualities of a 'responsible', 'non-violent' and 'egalitarian' relationship. This 'power and control' definition of violence and the concomitant equality ideal on the other side of the board would be presented clearly and consistently throughout the course, becoming a theme and an explicit group focus during the weeks ahead⁴.

At about 8.50am the first man arrives. He tentatively enters the room and is greeted by the facilitators and myself. Other men start to arrive, are similarly welcomed and each takes a seat of his own choosing. People informally introduce each other. All the newcomers are slow and cautious as they enter the room. They appear uncertain and reluctant to be there. At the end of the course many of these men would admit to feeling shameful and scared at this point. Shameful of why they were there and scared of being in a room with "monsters" as their peers and with facilitators who would judge them. In actuality neither of these fears were justified and this soon became apparent to everyone, helping to put the men, including myself, at ease. We sit in a comfortable silence with the occasional conversation opening and closing.

At 9:00am one of the facilitators announce that we will begin in about ten minutes, to give a little bit more time for the late drifters to arrive. They do eventually, and by 9.15am there are 15 of us. The atmosphere is relaxed, friendly and reflective. The men seem quite a diverse group, coming from a variety of different socio-economic, cultural and age groups and feature a variety of body shape/sizes. The average age is about 30 with the youngest man being 18 and the oldest being about 50. Most are of European descent with a couple being Maori and

⁴ These charts represent the feminist perspective of men's violence to women (Pence and Paymar, 1993). The various forms of abuse identified in the wheel are unified through the common feature of 'control' over the woman which occurs as a consequence of and ultimately defines the violence. Violence is thus defined by MMAV for the group from within a Liberal humanist - 'instrumental' discursive position as an intentional and purposeful behaviour - with the specific intention being to gain power and control of the situation. This feminist definition and surrounding chart is informed also from the Structuralist 'social systemic' model of socialisation of men to be in control of their partners.



Figure 5.1 Power and Control Wheel
(Source: Pence and Paymar, 1993).

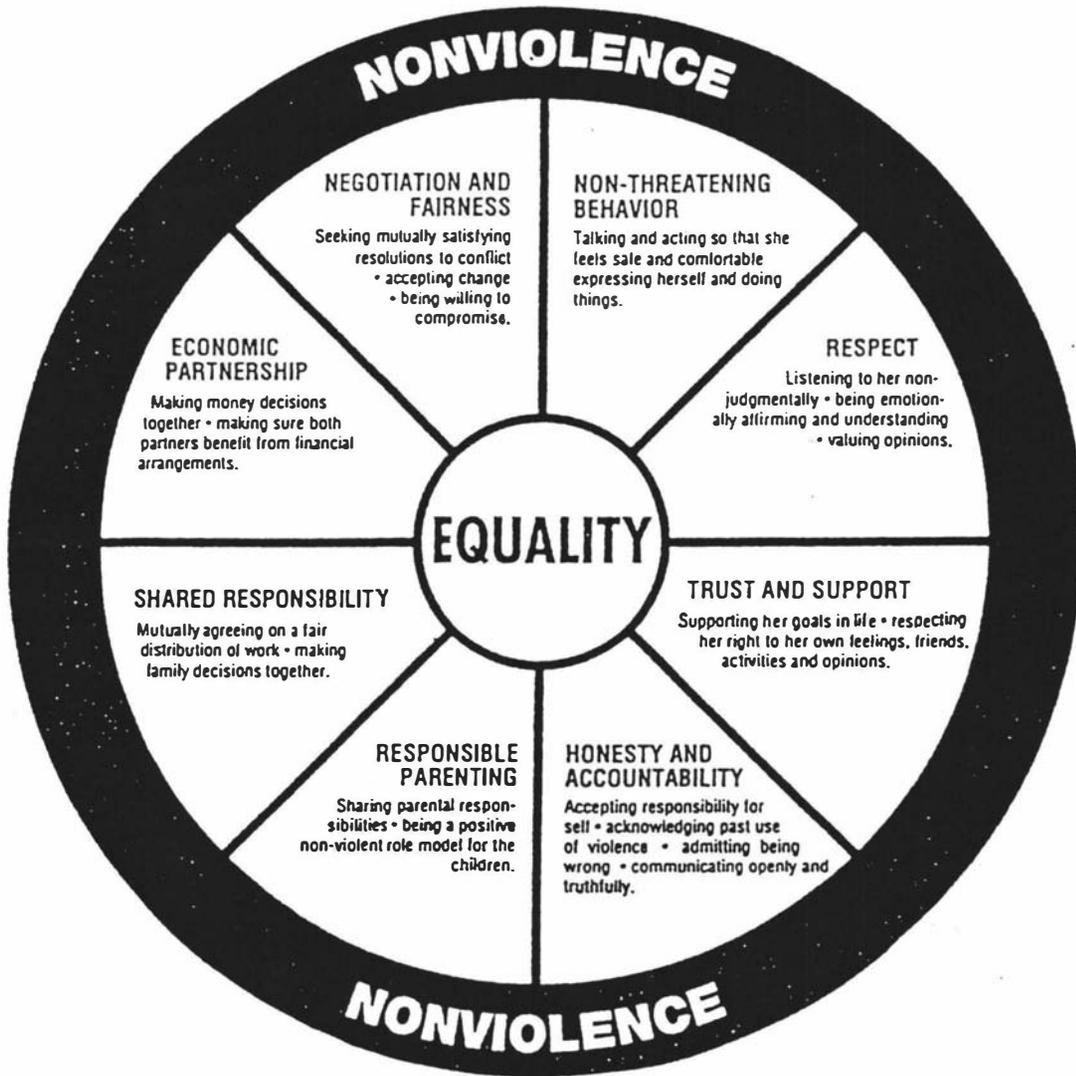


Figure 5.2 Equality Wheel
(Source: Pence and Paymar, 1993).

another couple part Maori. The majority of the men appear to be skilled labourers of one sort or another although a handful indicate, through their talk as the course unfolds, that they are from middle class occupational backgrounds. There are a few large muscly men who I find physically intimidating, but the majority are not. The men in this group appear on the whole to be very ordinary. They seem easygoing and pleasant upon meeting them and appear very similar to other men I have grown up with and have met during my life. I was surprised at this and realised at this point that I had come along with some distinct expectations of what the men would be like. For one, I shared a common stereotype of batterers as being large monsters, not 'ordinary' men.

Recognising that I had brought along some specific expectations concerning the men in the group prompted me to reflect upon where I was coming from in relation to the men. I expected the men, on first appearance, to be large, rough looking and to be physically intimidating in their behaviour. These men were not large, rough or intimidating at all. They came into the room and sat down and it could have been anywhere. This was a shock. Rather than fulfilling these expectations, the men reminded me of other men in general⁵. I also expected the men to hold sexist attitudes towards women and to hold masculine ideals for their own behaviour. I expected them to be emotionally tough and to devalue their lovers and partners. I came to the course with a 'pro-feminist' understanding of the men's violence. Their violence was a power-control strategy inflicted by men socialised to be sexist. These were men who expected and demanded dominance, domestic subservience and control over their partners⁶. I was hoping that the course would do something to address these learnt attitudes.

⁵ The research literature, supporting a normative 'social systemic' discursive position, indicates that wife batterers are typically average men, rather than distinctly large 'monsters', as constructed through a 'pathological' discourse. Domestically assaultive men are typically reasonable, pleasant and 'ordinary' in most social situations, thus fitting in and functioning well in the public world (e.g. Dobash and Dobash, 1992; Geller, 1992; McKendy, 1992; Purdy and Nickle, 1981). This 'pathological' large monster construction was unbewittingly brought by me to the research and consistent with the empirical literature proved to be an inaccurate stereotype.

⁶ Clearly I begin this participant observation exercise from a pro-feminist standpoint. The subject position from which I construct the men and their violence co-articulates 'instrumental' and 'social systemic' discursive resources, holding the men to be sexist, intentionally violent and as feeling justified through their use of force to maintain control. At this point this expectation is not challenged, nor do I anticipate it to be.

At 9:15am the facilitators begin by welcoming everybody once more. I shall call these facilitators Mike and Jeff. Mike acknowledges how hard it is for everyone to come today and says that he respects us all for coming along and doing something about our violence. He recognises and 'honours' the 'parts' to us that do not want to be here today. He points to a quote on the noticeboard which reads; "The longest journey begins with the first step". He tells us that we've all made a great step by coming along today and 'invites each man'⁷ to take a moment to consider what we have left behind in order to be here today. Men offer their stories spontaneously and these include the beach, fixing the car and going to the rugby. Each man is asked to "acknowledge" whatever it is that they would be doing and then to "put this aside".

The facilitators then introduce themselves and share their own personal histories with the group. They discuss how it is that they have come to be involved in MMAV and share their own experiences with violence. Both have had problems with violence in the past and had come to MMAV for help in stopping their violence. They now considered themselves to be living a non-violent lifestyle, but add that at times this is not easy. The men in the group listen intently to the facilitator's stories. A few comment how this gives them hope and affirms to them that it is possible to change. Some have assumed that it is not. Recognizing that the facilitators had once had problems with violence seemed to lift the shame from the men. It seemed to place everyone together somehow through a common bond. The men seem much more relaxed now. People smile and a few jokes are shared. An optimistic feeling suddenly permeates the air⁸.

⁷ The "invitation" to participate in group activities is a reoccurring practice, employed by the facilitators and directed towards the group, which occurs throughout the programme. This way of approaching the group is an effective, respectful and non-directive 'engagement' strategy through which the men are induced to participate in the various activities proposed by the facilitators. It respects each person whilst giving them the option to participate in an activity. The men are thereby encouraged to take up this option of doing something which they ordinarily would not without being forced to. It seems very effective to this end. The practice reflects a Liberal humanist construction of the person and is encouraged by practitioners such as Alan Jenkins (1991) as a strategy for 'engaging' violent men in activities which will lead to new learning and ultimately greater "personal responsibility".

⁸ Yalom's (1985) *Theory and Practice of Group Psychotherapy* lists the 'instillation of hope' and 'group cohesiveness' as important ingredients in group work which enable and facilitate individual member's willingness and ability to change. By drawing attention to the changes that they have made the facilitators are, in practice, providing hope for the men, that

Mike points out that accepting 'responsibility' for our violence is essential for stopping violence. He stands up and after talking about making a commitment to being non violent acts out the 'taking of a step' down a non-violent path. "It's a choice", he says. "It's up to you to take this step, to make this commitment". The visual analogy of taking a step was powerful and the men watched in silence. He goes on "I can either stand here and do nothing to change myself" (stands still in place he was before the step analogy) "or I can make this step into a new place" (he does so again). In this time we have together we'll be able to share some insights and skills with you that might help you if you choose to use them, but you have to do the work in these sessions. It's up to you to take this step"⁹. Some of the men seem familiar with this idea of taking personal responsibility whilst others seem bemused by it. Many vocally express a desire to learn these skills. The men seem to be onside with the facilitators. They want to learn. A couple however sit in silence, seemingly disinterested.

Mike moves on to provide a brief history of MMAV and also some basic 'housekeeping information' such as tea-break times and where the toilet is. He then addresses the purpose of the group. Defining this involves a brainstorming activity in which everyone participates. The circle breaks and a much more distinct crescent shape is formed around the whiteboard. The group is asked why they are here and what they want to get out of their time here. The

they too can become non-violent through the help of MMAV, whilst also completing a circle of unity and providing a sense of 'oneness'. The practice of sharing the reformed men's stories seems to have highly beneficial effects for the development of the group as a mechanism of change. It can thus be considered an applied intervention practice, realising a 'group development' enabling discourse.

Whilst this practice appears to be a positive intervention in this respect, as a post-structuralist I do have one small reservation about this 'instillation of hope'; namely the implicit construction of an attainable goal, of which the men are positioned as being capable of reaching, if only they try hard enough, as the facilitators have done. If these men do not measure up to this goal, if their 'hope' is not realised, they are implicitly positioned as failures.

⁹ The taking of 'personal responsibility' for one's violent behaviour is seen as an essential step for changing an individual's behaviour and this is a dominant theme voiced throughout the course. This message is consistent with many other group interventions for violent men such as Geller's (1992) group format in which "The goals or objectives of the batterer's group programme are to help men accept responsibility for the violence and eliminate violence" (Geller, 1992, p69). This position reflects a Liberal humanist discourse which sees humans as being rational, autonomous and self determining agents who are very much in control of their behaviour. Within this world view all agents have moral rights and responsibilities.

words 'Group Purpose' are written up at the top of the board. Jeff is sitting anonymously at one edge of the crescent. The men continue to look to Mike for guidance. He 'invites', once more, the group to state their purposes for being here. Men slowly offer suggestions and these are immediately written up on the board and vocally elaborated and commented upon by the others. The group comes up with the following purposes: "to understand violence", "to understand our anger"¹⁰, "to create a new beginning in our lives", "to learn about other ways of dealing with anger", "to learn new ways of relating to others", "to develop communication skills", "to understand our emotions", and "to learn to let go of things without winning".

Someone says something about "being challenged" as being one purpose, which the group reacts to quite strongly. While some agree, others strongly disagree. A discussion takes place over the appropriateness of challenging and it comes to light that people have different interpretations of the meaning of the word. Mike questions the man who had suggested it as to why he thought it was valuable. He replied that he would like to be able to look at things in different ways sometimes. Mike asks one of the men who didn't like the word as to why they didn't like it and the man replied that he found it too threatening. Another man says it has connotations of competition. A Maori man says that in his culture it means something more confronting and aggressive than in pakeha culture. Mike offers a definition of the word from the "course philosophy"; "encouraging you to look at another way of looking at something, not necessarily a better view, but just a different one"¹¹. The men find this definition to be reasonable and useful. Discussions like this, debated in the group and

¹⁰ The men most frequently employ the Romantic 'expressive tension' discourse when accounting for their violence and seeking to stop it. They refer to 'anger' or 'rage' - passionate overwhelming forces from within over which they have little control. In trying to stop their violence the men frequently indicate that they want more control over these forces and this seems like common sense from this Romantic discursive position.

¹¹ Challenges and confrontations are identified in the intervention literature as essential tools for enabling violent men to identify their abusive behaviour as violence and to take responsibility for it. The practice works from a Liberal humanist discursive position with challenges and confrontations being employed to develop men's 'awareness' of their behaviour and the consequences of their behaviour, as defined in the model on the wall, so that they can take greater 'responsibility' for their actions. Challenges and confrontations can be used, for example, to stop a batterer's denial or minimalisation of his violence or, in the case of working from a 'social system' discursive position, to alter sexist expectations which may be underlying his violence to his partner (Edleson and Tolman, 1992; Lloyd-Pask and McMaster, 1991).

facilitated to some degree by the facilitators who offer their perspective as well, were common micro moments in the group process throughout the programme.

The brainstorming activity goes on for about twenty minutes. It is productive in terms of output and it generates a great deal of discussion among the group as to why we are here. Mike writes up whatever any man suggests and then modifies this, by dusting off and/or adding pieces, in light of the group discussion. One man suggests for example "to stop the shame" and this is revised, after being challenged by Jeff, to "to stop the violence". The rest of the men agreed that this was a more appropriate purpose after Mike had gently challenged the man that stopping the shame was not necessarily an appropriate goal of the group as it implied that beyond the neighbours' disapproval the violence was OK. After a while Mike starts calling upon the people who haven't yet contributed what they would like to get out of the course; "I would like to invite those who have not contributed yet to offer their ideas". Soon after this he calls upon specific individuals; "Garry (a pseudonym), what about you?. What would you like to see up here?". Consequently everyone was 'invited' to contribute. A couple of men were reluctant however and offered minimal answers. One man sat hunched over and leaning forward and did not make eye contact with the facilitators at all, unlike the others, even when singled out. When asked, he responded; "It's already up there". Mike enquires as to what in particular on the board and he points out which ones he likes. In this way a response was attained from everyone. This strategy for group involvement was used throughout the course.

After a while the list was considered to be comprehensive by the group, and Jeff stands up, as Mike sits down, and gives the MMAV perspective on the purpose of the group. He points at the board and says he is pleased to see so many constructive goals put forward by the group and that "we'll learn a lot about all these things in this group, and we'll be flexible enough to explore some of these as the issues arise throughout the course. The focus for us as facilitators however will be on stopping violence in intimate relationships specifically, which is something that hasn't been mentioned on the board. Often we're the most violent with those whom we are most close and love the most. It's a great contradiction really. What we offer here are tools you can use to achieve non-violence in your intimate relationships. It's not

about being a wimp. It's about creating a space in between being a wimp and a murderer¹². We will provide some helpful strategies to achieve this but you must do the work. You can use these tools in other situations, like down at the pub, but the focus here is on **stopping violence in intimate relationships**". This is said deliberately and emphatically. The goal is thus clearly articulated. MMAV wants, first and foremost, to stop the violence¹³. This focus is apparent throughout the entirety of the programme as the facilitators often, in situations which did not seem to be going anywhere and are on a tangent, gently bring the group into focus by saying; "Getting back to the purpose of the group..."

Mike opens this up to the group for comment and discussion. "What do you think of that? How does this sound?". One man says "It sounds like just what I need. The end of it. Or the beginning should I say". "The end of what?" asked Mike. "The end of this shit" he replies bitterly. Another man adds to this, sounding and looking emotionally distressed; "Yeah I know what you mean. I've tried on my own to end it, I tried and made a fuckin mess of it. I need this, I need help to stop the mess my life is.". There are lots of nods of agreement around the

¹² Hegemonic masculinity discourses in our culture portray men as 'tough' and 'in control'. Consequently when men do not meet this cultural ideal they are considered 'wimps'. Building on such critical critiques of hegemonic masculinity and working from within the 'social system' socialisation discourse of men's violence, MMAV promote a way of being in the world which transcends this traditional dichotomy. A mid-point, between violence and passivity is promoted as a healthy alternative which is, from this discursive position, thought to reduce the likelihood of violence through affording options for the men which transcend this cultural norm (e.g. Deschner, McNeil and Moore, 1986; Edleson, 1984; Ganley, 1981a; Geller, 1992; Stordeur and Stille, 1989).

¹³ Ganley (1981b) notes that a clear and consistent primary goal of "ending the violence" is an essential feature of successful group programmes for stopping men's violence. Emerging from a Liberal humanist discourse, which positions agents as intentional beings who are in control of themselves, this position does not accept 'excuses', or linguistic resources from other discursive positions, for the men's violence, such as 'anger', 'stress' or 'lack of communication skills', which can be and frequently are used by violent men to 'excuse' their behaviour (Edleson and Tolman, 1992; Stordeur and Stille, 1989). These issues, from a Liberal humanist standpoint, are re-defined as side issues, useful but not essential for stopping the violence. In alluding to "providing tools" however, for "dealing with difficult situations along the way" to this primary goal, MMAV are giving some support to their validity as having some impact upon the men's behaviour. They couch these "tools" and "helpful strategies" however, which are yet to be revealed, within the Liberal humanistic framework involving "a choice to use them (instead of) violence or other psychologically abusive behaviours" (Edleson and Tolman, 1992, p17).

room. The agenda is set and everyone seems in agreement with it. Many seem relieved that there is actually some hope, some way out of "this mess" that their lives and relationships are in. The men seem to feel positive about the course.

At about 10:30, after some fun name games¹⁴ we decided it was time for a cup of tea. The facilitators, having discussed this possibility with each other, negotiating whether or not now was a good time to have a break or to go on as planned and have some continuum exercises first, decide it would be a good time to have a break and they put this to the group¹⁵. The group was keen. I was keen too. I wanted to go and write down the observations I had been making and listing in my head. First however I asked for permission to discuss something with the group. They turned to me and I put forward the possibility of doing my research with them. They knew and accepted at this point that I was a MMAV trainee but they were not aware of the 'participant observation'. We engaged in a group discussion about it. I passed around copies of my research proposal and pointed out how this exercise would be used in conjunction with the interviews, which would be used to explore the impact MMAV were having on the men. The facilitators shared their support for this saying that as an organisation they need to be aware of what they are doing and how they are impacting upon the men who come to them for help. They said they were grateful for me coming along and asked the men to consider this. The men shared their fears and concerns. They would feel spied upon and scared of being exposed to others. They did not feel comfortable with this at all. It was up to them however and after a few questions and discussions the group decided that yes, it would

¹⁴ This process enables everyone to meet each other in a fun light-hearted way. More seriously it is a team-building exercise useful for the 'group development' - of trust and safety which are important ingredients for the enablement and facilitation of honest disclosure and ownership of feeling and action within the group (Dutton, 1988; Hunter, Bailey and Taylor, 1992). It consequently reflects a 'group development' enabling discourse (e.g. Yalom (1985)).

¹⁵ This practice of discussing and negotiating plans with each other in front of the group involves the practice, as has been discussed in footnote (3), of modelling negotiation and communication skills in equal relationships to the group. This strategy realises the philosophy of the programme, that knowledge is best imparted consistently - by the facilitators practising and modelling what they preach - equality, respect and negotiation in relationships. This they did well. They achieved this in the group, by respecting each other's space, by listening to each other and frequently by asking if they could "slip in" and add something to the dynamic of the situation at hand, if the other was the main facilitator at that point. In group they would consult each other often and would thank each other. These practices work through constructions from Liberal humanist, 'social systemic' and 'learning' discourses of violence and human behaviour.

be OK on the grounds that it was good for MMAV and that they would remain anonymous. We broke for a cup of tea.

TEA

Each session has a tea break in it and this takes 10-20 minutes. During this time the men stand or sit around in groups in the corridor, where they can smoke, or on their own in the room. After I'd written down my observation notes, I went and made a cup of tea and stood in the corridor chatting with some of the men, explaining more about why I was there. Some were interested while others preferred to talk of other things. I felt like an outsider at this point. I tried to join and meet some of the men but it was not easy. I suspected that everyone was probably feeling uncomfortable at this point although the men seemed to be relaxed and to joke with each other. About half of the men were smokers but nearly everybody was in the corridor. People drank tea and coffee, smoked cigarettes and made casual small-talk for about a quarter of an hour. It was good to have a break. The facilitators were there too. They mingled and talked with the men, in casual conversations about non-course matters. After our tea they encouraged us to come back into the room and Jeff asked us to move the chairs to the side for a different exercise; a 'continuum exercise'. This was presented as a fun and interesting way for us to "meet each other and to explore our similarities and differences"¹⁶.

Our similarities and differences in our families and ancestral background were explored in this way. Men took up positions across the room which indicated their situation and Jeff asked a few of the men each time for elaborations on these positions. The men enthusiastically shared their stories of their brothers, sisters, parents and genealogies. It was a light hearted and interesting exercise in which everyone was eventually called upon to volunteer their story at least once. Once our similarities and differences had been explored, after twenty minutes or so, Jeff encouraged everyone to come down to one end of the continuum and to huddle together a bit closer. Everyone stands close around him and he affirms to us that "although we may come from different ancestries and cultural backgrounds, we are all men, struggling to be human and non-violent...We're all men here..". This imparts a sense of affirmation that we are all 'men' on a journey 'together'. This a strong sense of belonging and purpose. I

¹⁶ This is another 'group development' exercise in which the men learn more about each other's personal lives and learn to be active in front of the group.

notice now that the facilitators frequently refer to us as "men"¹⁷.

"That's it for the continuums for a while" declares Jeff as he invites everyone to take a seat again. "Times pressing on and we should really start to look at some of the ground rules which we want to use in this group". The men gather their chairs and cluster them in a crescent shape around the white board. A couple of the men prefer to sit back on a cushion and this is fine with the facilitators although no-one says anything about it. This demonstrates, I think, the warm and relaxed feeling that is present in the group. I notice too that the men retain their seating positions from earlier in the morning. "So, what sorts of rules do we want to have for ourselves over the next couple of months we have together? What would you like to see here?". Jeff indicates to the board which is blank except for an underlined heading at the top called 'Group Rules'. The group are looking to him and the brainstorming begins once more.

The group offers and discusses rules such as 'confidentiality', 'no drugs or alcohol', 'being punctual', 'honesty', 'respect for each other' and 'no swearing or abusive behaviour'. This leads on to the idea of 'no violence or fighting in the group'. Jeff adds to this by saying that if anyone gets to the point where they're feeling like they might be abusive, the best thing is

¹⁷ By referring to the group as being composed first and foremost of "men", MMAV are drawing out one unifying feature of the group and affirming this as a primary source of group identity. This has at least two effects. Firstly, this is a group development strategy, further integrating the group, giving it greater 'cohesion' through its shared sense of identity. Yalom (1985) identifies 'group cohesiveness' as being an important resource for enabling change in the group's members. Although this group of men have only just met each other, there is already a sense of unification in the group at this point, having been facilitated by earlier group exercises. Everyone has agreed that they are here for the same purpose, the games have been fun, the men have met and laughed with each other, the facilitators have shared their stories and they have let the group know they are not there to judge or to attack them. People have begun warming to each other and there is a distinct sense of acceptance and unification within the group. This 'identity' practice builds on this groundwork and further enables productive 'group development'.

The practice can also be seen to be a socio-political strategy operating from a 'social system' discursive position with the strategy being to build the men's awareness of the social and gendered nature of wife abuse. Feminist theory suggests that men need to become aware and conscious of their gender as part of their 'resocialisation' to becoming non-violent to women. The men in the group are referred to as "men" or "each man here" throughout the programme and so this identity is reaffirmed throughout. By the time 'gender issues' are explored, later in the programme, this identity is accepted by the men and works well in this context; e.g. "I challenge each man here to be a non-stereotypical role model for boys and other men in their lives".

to leave for ten minutes or so, to have a break, preferably with informing the group of this intention first. Mike, the other facilitator who has obscurely been sitting on the edge of the crescent in his chair, wonders about the acceptability of violence outside the group as well. "What does the group think of that?". One man responds that there should be no violence outside the group either. This is agreed upon by all and written up also. In this way an informal non-violence contract is attained.

Mike further suggests the use of "I statements", so that we are more likely to "own our thoughts, feelings and behaviours and thereby be responsible for them, rather than blaming them on someone else". A discussion ensues about this. It seems that the concept is new to most of the group but familiar to a few who vocally endorse it. Jeff and Mike clarify what 'I statements' are and give a positive interpretation of their value. The group accepts this and so "Use I statements; I think, I feel, I would like.." is included among the list of rules¹⁸.

Jeff has been the main facilitator of the rules and the continuum exercises while Mike had been the main coordinator and facilitator during the earlier part of the morning. This was a pattern that would repeat itself over and over during the course. During structured exercises one would facilitate while the other would play a support role and also be a participant. They would have turns and share the workload with one asking permission to "slip in" and help the other if he needed it or if the support person picked up on something the chief facilitator didn't. He would do this by asking if he "could just slip in here and add to that?...". Otherwise one would facilitate and the other would sit back and be a participant among the group.

LUNCH

For lunch everyone made their own cup of tea and slowly made their way up onto the roof of the building. There was lots of talking and joking. Up on the roof a barbecue had been set up. Most of the men had brought a plate of some sort, as requested, and so a nice lunch was to be had. I'd brought some baked potatoes, others had brought some orange drink and coke,

¹⁸ By using "I" at the beginning of each sentence, the men are encouraged to be aware of and to own their behaviour, feelings and perceptions. Awareness and ownership facilitates the development of an attitude of being an active agent in the world thereby fostering 'responsibility' for one's actions. The use of "I" language is an awareness raising practice grounded within an individualistic Liberal humanist discursive world view.

there was a couple of salads and some bread. On the barbecue were some sausages. It was a casual self-service affair. The roof was concrete with a wall surrounding it so it was quite safe and obviously designed for such a purpose. The view was excellent; clear blue sky and a perspective of Palmerston I'd never seen before.

Lunch was good and it was nice to have a break in the sunshine. I felt like I was beginning to become an accepted part of the group. I talked to a few of the men at different times, preferring however to sit on my own and to reflect upon the first session. A couple of the men spent most of the lunch hour on their own. The facilitators mingled. Men tended to be clustered in twos and threes around the rooftop. An ex-MMAV facilitator was running the barbecue and he was friendly with everyone. He had his six year old daughter with him. During the break the men reverted to their normal social behaviour in which less intimate and male stereotypical things, such as rugby and cars, were discussed. This was a pattern which occurred in all breaks¹⁹.

Session 2: The Sharing of Biographical Stories Pertaining to Violence

The afternoon session is used for further group building by inviting each man to share his story about his violence and his personal history. The process here is about setting the group culture. Invite, allow and encourage the disclosure of the extent of their violence, their personal experience, and feelings. Challenge and support where appropriate. Facilitation is focused on hearing his story, showing acceptance of him as a person, reflecting behaviour and feelings, and giving feedback about responsibility.

Saturday afternoon: 1:10pm

After lunch and a chance to relax we wandered down to the room again. A handful of spontaneous volunteers helped clean up. In the room, once everyone was assembled back in the circle of chairs, Mike informed us that for most of the afternoon we would be sharing our stories with each other. "Each man is invited to tell their story of how you came to be here. What brought you here? and what is it that you need from the course. It is an expectation of the course that you will all share your history of violence with the group. This is important for facing up to what we've done to our loved ones, thinking about how we came to be like

¹⁹ Clear boundaries seemed to exist for the men in terms of what was acceptable social behaviour in and outside of the room. At times this unspoken boundary exerted drastic contrasts in the way in which the men related to one another. It separated two discursive worlds. During breaks violence or emotions were never mentioned. A more mainstream masculine social ethic would rapidly emerge and the men seemed to look forward to this.

this and what we want to do about it. It's an important part of the work we'll be doing here as a group...There's a lot we can learn from each other by sharing our stories. This might seem a bit daunting and terrifying for some of you but keep in mind how much we share in common and feel the support that's present in the group today...This is an important first step as a group as we embark on a journey to non-violence. Jeff and I will go first if you like". No-one disagreed, although some of the men looked uncomfortable with this idea of sharing their private lives with the group²⁰.

Everyone listens in silence as Mike and Jeff describe the violence in their families of origin and the violence in their own lives. This they do slowly and explicitly, describing in detail some of the acts of violence they had endured, seen and inflicted during both their upbringing and as adults. They talk about what they were feeling and thinking at the time of their violence, which includes anger, blaming and, later, remorse. In retrospect, they owned their behaviour, using 'I language' explicitly. They talked about their violence as being purposeful and saw it as a means of controlling those around them - to get what they wanted. They identified their own expectations, such as 'the man's home is his castle', which fed into their presumed 'right' to take charge. Everyone listened in silence. They were deeply sorry for the pain they had caused their loved ones through their violence. Occasionally a man might ask a question for clarification. This usually reflected the man's concerns such as asking "What did you do then?" or "What was that like?". Lots of nodding went on. People were looking at the floor, listening and seemingly recognising themselves and identifying with the confessional stories. Jeff and Mike talked of their initial denial of responsibility, their turning

²⁰ The group sharing session is considered to be an integral part of the 'group development' of men's programmes for stopping violence. Through the men's stories being shared, their similarities with others are recognised, helping to merge the individuals into a cohesive entity which is important for change (Stordeur and Stille, 1989). This process also sets a precedent for the 'check-in' sharing rounds which occur throughout the course. These sharing events provide a forum which additionally afford distinct learning opportunities for the men, who can learn from each other as each man analyses his mistakes, receives feedback and confrontation, learns to use others for support, learns to be accountable for his violence and explores how the skills learnt in the group can be used in everyday situations (Edleson, 1984; Stordeur and Stille, 1989). This practice realises (a) a 'group development' discourse, especially in the beginning phase of the programme, (b) a 'learning' discourse, as the forum affords an opportunity for feedback and a means to publicly exploring the various ideas which emerge from the programme and (c) the Liberal humanist discourse of awareness and ownership of behaviour.

to MMAV and their determination to be non-violent and 'responsible' now and in the future²¹.

Occasionally a light comment would be made and everyone would laugh and joke momentarily. An example of this was when Mike pointed to the charts by the whiteboard and said how "it was ironic that what I wanted in my home was this (pointing to the positive features of the Equality and Non-Violence chart) but I was using these strategies to attain that (pointing to the Power and Control chart). Needless to say it didn't work". These moments of laughter and light-heartedness seemed to be a release of some sort amidst the heavy and serious content of the sharing. I found these moments to be a pleasant relief when they spontaneously arose. The room would then quickly return to its sombre, slow and deliberated state. This punctuation of humour was interspersed throughout the afternoon.

Once the facilitators had finished sharing their stories, which took about 25 minutes, an 'open ring' was announced. They had set the format for each man to follow and it was now an open sharing time with the 'invitation' being for others to tell their stories too. There was an estimated two and a half hours till four o'clock, our agreed upon finishing time, which "gives roughly ten to fifteen minutes for each man to tell their story. Is anybody ready to share their story?". A few men indicated they were ready. One was dying to. He seemed upset and looked like he was ready to cry. He went first, crying sporadically, and expressed much pain, confusion and frustration over his separation from his wife.

For the majority of the men I got the impression that this was the first time they had had a chance to discuss such details of their lives with other men in such a supportive environment. Many commented on how it was good to be here with other men like themselves. "I don't feel so alone" one said. Some of the men seemed excited by this and were ready and keen to share

²¹By going first Mike and Jeff set a clear precedent of what is expected from each man. In doing so they are able to 'model' terms of reference for understanding and talking about violence, which is essentially an 'instrumental' liberal humanist discourse on violence. They identified their motives according to the power and control model, they discussed their initial resistance to taking responsibility or to admitting that it was they who had a problem and they referred to their 'decision' to become non-violent and to take responsibility for their actions. This modelling of appropriate frames of reference reflects a 'learning' discourse on violence and the implication that alternative behaviours and ways of thinking can be learnt too. They also employ and impart a 'social system' discourse in which some of their thinking is identified as 'sexist'.

their stories. Others were very reluctant to share with the group however and so while volunteering was fluid and spontaneous between the men at the beginning of the session, towards the end those that hadn't shared were prodded a little. Ultimately everyone, including myself, shared their tale. The process was a deep, relaxed, sharing experience. It was intimate, timeless and, for most of the session it seemed, honest. There was lots of room for each person to speak and everyone listened in silence, respecting each person's speaking time.

The facilitators would listen, reflect back and validate some of the content and feeling in the men's stories. They commonly said such things as "I hear a deep commitment to change...", "I feel sad at your story" and "I'm glad to hear that you...". In this way the men were accepted and affirmed as they told their stories. They were respected as persons with rich and deep emotional lives²². From this context many of the men seemed willing and able to share their stories with great openness and honesty, sharing much hurt, frustration with others and anger at themselves. Their violent behaviour was, unlike their feelings, not accepted as valid. This would be reframed as intentional and the underlying purpose would be extracted from the man through the use of leading questions, such as "and what did you get out of it?"²³.

In the process of recounting their stories many of the men expressed strong regrets that they had not done something about their violence sooner to which the facilitators responded; "The important thing is that you are doing something now". Most of the men reported being verbally abusive early on in their relationships, within the first year of going out together. They recounted their histories of put-downs, yelling and name-calling which included, after prompts from the facilitators; "You bitch", "It's all your fault you stupid cow" and "Nobody could love you, you're too fat". These were defined by the facilitators as being elements of

²² Throughout the afternoon and also throughout the course the facilitators would listen empathically and supportively to the men's stories and would validate their emotional experiences of pain, distress, frustration, hopelessness and anger by reflecting these back to the men, through supportive statements such as "that must have been hard" or "I believe you", or by simply nodding and accepting their feelings. These empathic and emotionally supportive practices, which help to create the warm, accepting and validating climate present in the group this afternoon, are informed by a 'group development' and the Liberal humanist discourses, which suggests that personal reflections and change is enabled optimally in an environment in which the person is respected and his feelings accepted (Rogers, 1951).

²³ The men's violent behaviour was consistently defined as an 'instrumental' power-control strategy.

violence, as shown on the power and control chart, and were referred to as being controlling tactics. The physical violence came later, most typically within the first 18 months of the relationship. For some of the men this had only happened once, whilst a couple denied ever being physically violent to their partners. The violence the men described involved "yelling", "shoving", "slapping", "throwing things" (e.g. a chair), "punching", "kicking", "threatening her with a knife", "choking", "laying into her" and "beating her up". A few of the men reported "broken bones", "drawing blood" and other serious injuries which arose as a consequence of their actions. Many expressed complete dismay at the fact that they had taken out their "frustrations" and "anger" on the ones they loved the most, their partners. They verbally expressed that this was incredibly sad and awful. "It was the worst thing I could have done and that's what I did. I still can't believe it".

A few of the men had nearly killed their partners. Their violence had escalated to the point of near murder. One had had his wife held up against the wall with a pen-knife held to her throat. He said he was that close, "Just a veil away from doing her in". Another said how he "threw her across the room and I went in for the kill. Then I saw that terrified look in her eye - just like my mum's when Dad was violent. I suddenly realized I was just like that son of a bitch I swore I would never be like". It appeared to take extreme levels of violence for these men to recognise themselves as having a problem and needing help. My reaction to these descriptions was one of sadness. I felt sorry for both the women and the men. The men seemed dismayed about it and deeply regretful. It brought it all home and made it very personally real to hear the men talk of these acts. I was not shocked as I was expecting such stories. I think we were all incredibly sorry about it. I felt confused as to why the men had become violent at this point. It seemed to me that none of them wanted to be that way with their partners. I began to question my prior assumption about the men being sexist patriarchs who were intentionally violent to maintain control. It seemed to me that this explanation was not necessarily entirely correct or complete. The men themselves seemed distressed and at a loss about their violence²⁴.

²⁴ It is at this point that I first notice that I am engaged in a personal transformation of some sort. The way in which I am constructing the men I am studying is changing. My pro-feminist orientation towards the problem (see footnote 6) is expanding to consider constructs not afforded through this 'social systemic' - 'instrumentalist' subject position. Hearing the men's stories forces me to rethink my position. Until now I had assumed the men wanted to be violent. This fundamental construct/assumption was suddenly being rocked. The men's accounting practices, as presented in the following pages, begin to effect my position and thus

Most of the men reported witnessing violence to their mothers and/or experiencing first hand violence to themselves in their families of origin. I was shocked at how many of the men spoke of being physically abused. Such violence was typically inflicted by either their fathers or their step fathers and occurred over extended periods of time, most typically in conjunction with the mother being abused. They hated their father figures for this. They claimed that their fathers would appear to be nice guys in the public world who would carry much respect. People outside the family never knew of their "darker side". The men themselves talked about this split in their own lives. Like their fathers, they were perceived as being a "great guy" in the public world. They talked about how they would come home from work and this "Darth Vader" or "black side to me" would just come out and they would be abusive to their partners and/or to their children. Some referred to themselves as being like "Jeckyl and Hyde". They reported having little control over this dark abusive part to them and they detested this part. "I hate that side to me".

Mike and Jeff would keep each person focused on why they were here and their history of violence as some of the men would go off on tangents and avoid the emotive or violence talk. They would subtly bring them back on focus, usually by pointing out that they were being sidetracked or by asking questions such as "how did you feel about that?" and "What exactly did you do?". When stories seemed to be going on for too long without being any more productive, the facilitators would say something like "I'm aware that time is running out and so I'd like to move on. Is that OK to leave that there?". They often alluded to parts of the course which would address certain needs brought up by the men.

The group supported each person through his story and often the men would express empathy and knowing of their experience through reference to a similar situation. About half of the group contributed in support of each other at different times in this way. They would say things like; "I hear your pain man and believe me, I know what you're going through. You've just got to hang in there. One day it'll be better". Sometimes they would point out positive things if it was appropriate; e.g. "You are lucky that your wife is still with you". The group also challenged each other on occasion. For example when one man said he feels inadequate because his wife earns more money than he does, another man said that this was a "sexist

my positioning of them.

attitude" to which the facilitators and other men agreed²⁵.

A few of the men made allusions to their stressful worklife and offered these ideas as explanations for their violence. They claimed that there was so much pressure on them to provide for their families and that their work was so hard that they were stressed out totally and every now and then would just "explode" in a violent angry rage²⁶. The facilitators, whilst acknowledging the men's stressful predicament, were quick to point out that there are many ways of dealing with stress, that violence is only one way of dealing with it and that violence is always a "choice". One man was asked to try on the sentence; "I feel stressed out a lot and I choose not to do anything about it. I choose to be violent towards my wife when I am feeling angry". He did so and said he accepted it to a degree, although it felt strange. Throughout the afternoon any reasons given by the men which reduced a man's responsibility for his violence would be pointed out as "excuses" and rendered irrelevant to the man's "decision" to behave violently²⁷.

Stress related or not, most of the men talked about a "sudden explosion" of rage and violence toward their partners. They would suddenly lose control of themselves. "I'd go black" and "I'd just snap and go off the deep end" were typical comments made when these men tried to make sense of their violence. One thing the men wanted from the course by implication, was a way of stopping this - the sudden loss of control to overwhelming feelings of rage - from ever

²⁵ The facilitators challenged and supported challenges and references to 'sexism'. Employing the feminist informed 'social systemic' discourse, they challenged the men's 'sexist' thinking, which from this perspective underlay their violence.

²⁶ This stress-violence construction articulates the Romantic 'expressive tension' discourse, an account employed extremely frequently by the men. There is some scientific research which supports the theory that violence is more likely to occur in men who are suffering from pro-longed stress (e.g. Ganley and Harris, 1978; Stordeur and Stille, 1988; Straus, 1980b) however this is not a consistent finding (Barling and Rosenbaum, 1986; MacEwen and Barling, 1988). The 'expressive tension' discourse was however the men's dominant discourse for understanding and explaining their violence.

²⁷ The facilitators respond by way of a direct challenge to the man's 'stress' causal attribution for his violence and go to great lengths to ensure that he **thinks** about this alternatively as the incommensurable 'decision' to be violent. Here we find that the 'expressive tension' discourse is explicitly rejected as an explanation for violence in favour of an 'intentional' Liberal humanist standpoint.

happening again. After a few of these comments had been made by the group, which the facilitators had challenged by re-defining them as "excuses", Mike picked up on this as a theme and explicated it to the group. He drew a diagram on the board which he thought might help to give the men greater understanding of this phenomena (figure 5.3).

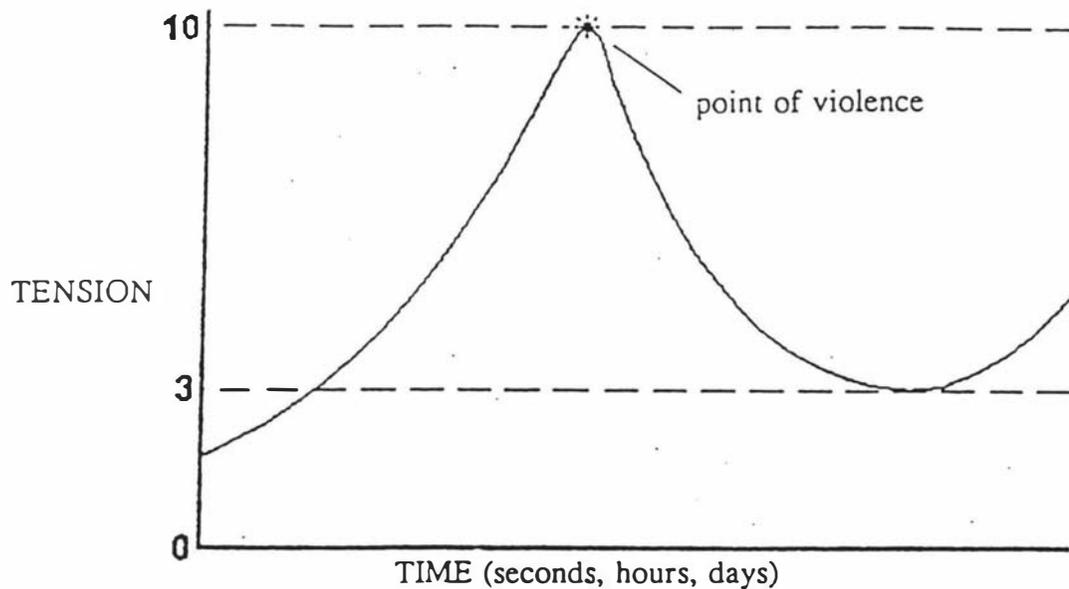


Figure 5.3 Tension graph

He suggests to the group that "stress and tension" may also have something to do with this²⁸. According to this graph analogy, he explains, we are more likely to be violent after an emotionally difficult or stressful day than we would otherwise. He further provides a "fuse analogy" to violence. "When we get stressed to the point of being 'strung out' or 'wired' we're like a fuse waiting to go off. This will most likely go off at home because culturally,

²⁸ This graph explicitly reflects an 'expressive tension' discourse on violence which holds that tension builds up in the organism to the point where it must be released - most readily through aggression. It represents the Romantic build up of tension described in both frustration-aggression theory (Dollard et al., 1939) and Lenore Walker's (1979) cycle of violence. It is interesting to see this 'expressive tension' discourse being employed by the facilitators when for the bulk of the day they have referred to such ideas as 'excuses'. As the discussion unfolds however this is couched within a Liberal humanist 'responsibility' and 'choice' framework. This theory and analogy emerges often, at times explicitly and at others implicitly, during the weeks ahead. It provides an account of violence but is always subsumed within a personal responsibility discourse.

at least until recently, this has been an acceptable place for this to happen²⁹. What I'm suggesting is that most men sit on a level of tension at about 7 or 8. In this course, we'll learn new ways of being which will bring this line down. You've got to make sure you're not wired all the time. You can do this by learning assertiveness skills, communication skills, getting in touch with your feelings and by monitoring your tension levels and doing something about your feelings early on. The men seemed to relate to and enjoy this analogy.

The facilitators would also often ask the men how they felt about some of the things they spoke of. "Fucked off", "I hated her for that", "I feel like shit about it" and "Guilty as hell", were typical responses in such instances. The facilitators would also frequently ask the men how they felt "now" and would support and affirm these emotions. e.g. "You've a right to feel sad about that" and "I feel for you, I really do". If anger was given as a feeling this would be explored further and a more 'primary' feeling would be articulated, such as sadness or fear. Asking the men about their feelings occurred throughout the afternoon, with some men needing more cues and prods than others. The men could articulate their emotions and talk about their violence in varying degrees. Some could easily. Others had to be prodded to give an emotive response. One of the men responded "fine" when he obviously did not feel very good about his wife's lack of respect for him. Jeff challenged him, saying that to him "FINE" stood for "Fuckin Inarticulate Numb Expression" and 'invited' the man to describe how he was feeling more sensitively. The man did so; "Sad" he said tentatively³⁰.

²⁹ The 'social system' discourse, employed in conjunction with the 'expressive tension' discourse is being referred to here. Mike alludes to our society's past 'Structural' arrangements, such as the law and community attitudes, which have traditionally made the home a more likely site of violence and a safer place for 'the release of tension'. The allusion to this discourse is no accident. Although only alluded to here, it becomes a more specific focus for the group later on in the course.

³⁰ This practice of encouraging emotional awareness and articulation whilst validating the emotions expressed occurs throughout the course and in particular during sharing and checking-in sessions. Aside from their value for providing a safe trusting group climate, the facilitator's validating supportive statements, their modelling of emotional expression and the deliberate accessing of feelings through their direct questions, would appear to be practices informed by an intersection of 'social system' and 'expressive tension' discourses of men's violence. Traditional definitions of masculinity in our cultural norms do not allow for the expression of sensitive and vulnerable feelings and this has been hypothesised as one reason why men in particular will suddenly 'explode' into a violent rage (e.g. Dutton, 1988; Ferraro, 1984; Gondolf, 1985b). As has been discussed in the preceding study, one account of men's violence proposes that because men's 'primary emotions' are typically not articulated by the men, these emotional needs are not met before they become 'secondary anger'. By teaching

Most of the men wanted to change their ways, acknowledging that they had a problem. One man cried out "I want fucken help". Some were desperately committed to change and would try anything to "end this shit". Others were a bit more complacent about it however, admitting that they might have a problem but seemed to have reservations about how much blame to be taking. These men would describe events and circumstances in ways which seemed to justify their violence. "I only pushed her", "It was just a little tap", "I'd told her to stop going on at me" and "She hit me first" were examples of such occurrences. Some of the men would go to great lengths to point out inadequacies in their partners or girlfriends and thereby implicitly blame them for their violence. Whenever this happened the facilitator's would gently interrupt and remind the man that "the focus here is on you. They may well do all those things you say they do but that is not the issue for us here. The issue is looking at your violence and how you respond to whatever situation you may be in. The focus is on you. You can't change the way they are. That's up to them. One of the things we're learning on this course is not to control each other. What we're saying here is that it is up to you to decide whether you will be violent, not the situation you're in. The situation is never an excuse³¹". The facilitators would also challenge the person by asking him to describe the specific behaviours he did when he was violent and to use "I" language in doing so. He was also asked what the purpose of this behaviour was and also what effects the violence would have on his partner or kids. Resistant men were sometimes asked to complete sentences such as "I did...because....and this had the effect of...".³²

A couple of the men denied having a problem at all. They blamed the biased police and their truth distorting partners when it came to be their turn to share their story. They protested to be innocent of any violence and that it was they, if anybody, who was the victim. The facilitators gently challenged these men. "Since you are here on this course I am wondering if there is something you have left out?...No? Have you ever been violent to Mary? No? Ever

the men to become more sensitive to their feelings earlier, the violence which is engendered through the negative feelings, from the 'expressive tension' discursive position, may be eliminated.

³¹ Here the individualism inherent in the Liberal humanist standpoint appears in it's most extreme form. The situation is defined as irrelevant to the person's decision to act.

³² In this way the Liberal humanist account of 'intentional' behaviour was pushed to those who resisted it most strongly. The men were encouraged to experiment with it's language and to take on it's value system of 'choice', 'responsibility' and 'purpose'.

threatened her or verbally abused her? No? well I hope you can get something out of this course all the same". The facilitators informed me later that these challenges were 'mild' and 'gentle' because it was the first day and providing a safe culture where each person felt accepted was considered to be equally important. "Each man will open up and will take responsibility for their violence in their own time. Some may take forever. It is enough for us to gently challenge these men at this stage and to invite them to try on a few different perceptions. We can't make any believe what we want them to. It's a bit like taking a horse to water. We can only put the invitation out to them". Of the two 'innocent' ones, one never came back to the course. The other, however, would gradually acknowledge and confront his violence as the course went on.

There was also much talk from the group about the emotional and psychological pain which the violence had brought for them. They spoke of the hate for themselves and the grief they felt for what they had inflicted upon their loved ones. Additionally they hated seeing their kids and their partners losing respect or being scared of them. When they wanted to spend time with their kids it hurt them incredibly to see that their kids were too scared of them to really play. They hated seeing their partners deferring to them with no passion. They expressed much pain and sadness at this.

Sometimes people referred to the charts on the wall in the same way the facilitator had and had been using power and control strategies to achieve respect and equality. Obviously this strategy did not work for them either. Again people found this paradox amusing. Most of these men indicated that they wanted to have healthy and respectful relationships. They were disappointed, not only with themselves but life also. Mike boldly informed the group that this course would help them, if they were willing to make that step, to have more equal respectful relationships.

A few of the men expressed frustration and resentment at having done all the things they considered a "good man" should do for their families and still they were abandoned by or felt unappreciated by their partners. These men equated being a good man with being a good provider. They had worked hard and had given everything, some working two jobs. A couple conceded, after closer questioning by the facilitators, that they had neglected their homelife in the process. The facilitators dealt with this issue by reflecting back to the men that they

believed them that they had worked hard..."Unfortunately this way of being is seldom satisfactory for the woman whose stuck at home all day with the kids. We grow up and we learn these roles of what we should do in our families but they don't seem to be working anymore. I can appreciate where you're coming from but I think it's important that you realise that your partner and family probably wants some emotional contact and family support from you beyond your providing for them financially. This is a trap I think that men in this country get into. We get obsessed with work to the detriment of our families"³³.

After the last man finishes his story, at ten past four, Mike informs the group that "it is time to draw the day to a conclusion. I invite each of you as you go home and over the next few days to reflect upon today and to consider what you have learnt. I encourage you to think about what you personally have taken from today and of what you'd like to find out about in the weeks to come. We've achieved a lot today. We've all met each other and have heard each other's stories. That puts us in a good position to move on as a group to explore the various issues surrounding our violence. Next week we'll start to explore 'violence' and 'anger', and by looking at them closely, like under a microscope, we'll find that they are quite different things. We'll see you here on Thursday at seven o'clock". In this way Mike concludes the day, summarising it in a positive way and provides a bridge for the next session's work.

Everyone looks around at each other and people start to get up and leave. Some people rush off while others chat for a few moments. The atmosphere is lighter, after the heaviness of the group sharing session. People were starting to show signs of tiredness before. Now awake, everyone seems glad to be going. I'm glad it's over too. It's been a long tiring day. I left feeling confused about the men. They were not what I expected. They were ordinary men who had a lot of pain in their lives. They seemed to need help to cope with their distress and

³³ Reflecting the 'social systemic' cultural norm discourse of men's violence, and more specifically the role of traditional definitions of masculinity in the etiology of violence, the MMAV facilitators impart to the group a distinct standpoint - one which challenges traditional gender constructions and encourages new behaviours for men. Masculinity is traditionally equated with the public world of work and the role of providing but as gender roles and expectations change men are left confused about their role and value in the world (e.g. Glasser, 1986; Kimmel, 1987). The facilitators impart that traditional masculinities are not appropriate for men today. Men must be caring and emotional with their families and not just the breadwinner. Our cultural norms surrounding gender are changing and we must change too, to stop 'men's violence'.

tension. They were not the obsessive overtly sexist power mongers I expected. Many felt badly about their violence and wanted to change. I became aware that I felt sorry for the men now that I had heard their stories. I hoped that they would find what they were looking for in the course³⁴.

³⁴ At this point I am aware that I am beginning to construct the men differently. 'Feeling sorry' for them is very different from feeling angry at them and, although I still feel angry at these men for what they have done, this shift in my experience is informed by a new subject positioning of them. After meeting the men and hearing their stories I am overwhelmed by the pain and suffering which is apparent in their lives. Inner tension seems to be a problem for these men. Without wanting to abandon my pro-feminist position, I am expanding my accounting repertoire, to include constructions emerging from a Romantic 'expressive-tension' world view. This is surprising and it is at this point that I realise that I am, through my experience with the men, involved in a transformation of some sort.

CHAPTER SIX

THE MIDDLE PHASE

The middle phase of the MMAV Stopping Violence programme consists of four Thursday evening sessions in which the men are taught a distinction between violence and anger and amongst other things are imparted a strategy for managing their anger non-violently.

Session 3: Defining Violence and Anger

Open evening with a checking in. The focus is on the men's awareness of their tension and feelings during the week. Recap on the Saturday. e.g. responsibility. purpose. The focus for this session is to increase the mens' awareness and understanding of "their violence" and of "their anger" and to be able to distinguish these from each other. Brainstorm "What is Violence?" from the group; identifying the types of violence; and come up with a definition. Brainstorm "What is Anger?", i.e. what happens to them physically, emotionally, what thoughts arise and what actions occur. Facilitate discussion around the separation of Anger (feeling) and violence (behaviour). Brainstorm a definition of "anger". Close with a sharing and introduce the home-work on awareness of their anger.

Thursday: 7:00pm

At the beginning of this first Thursday session, after a few minutes waiting for late comers, the focus for the evening's "work" is introduced by Mike. "We'll be looking closely at violence and anger today and we will be coming up with a definition of each during our time together this evening. We will be learning that these two are quite different things". There are eleven people in the room at this point and a few more arrive soon after. Two people from the Saturday do not arrive and are never seen again. One has sent his apologies, having moved to another city. The other has not given any notice. The atmosphere is relaxed and friendly. The facilitator asks the group if anyone thinks that violence and anger are the same thing. No-one responds however, suspecting, I thought, that this might be a trick question leaving them open to a 'challenge'.

We begin the evening with a "check-in", on what the week has been like for everyone with regards to their violence, what the group thought of the Saturday and how they are feeling "right now". We do this in turn by going around in a circle, with one facilitator sharing first and another sharing last. This checking-in ritual is repeated at the beginning of each session and a more complete account of one of these rituals is provided in the next session (session

4). Each person takes about five minutes on average to surmise where they are at and where and how they have been. Most of the men indicate that they had left the session on Saturday with lots of ideas on their minds "to sift through". Most indicate that they are glad to be on the course and to be doing something constructive about their violence, expressing a greater degree of 'ownership' for their violence. No-one reports being violent during the week although a couple allude to how they might have been if the situation had occurred in the past. I contributed to these 'checking in' sessions too, usually by thinking of the most stressful or frustrating event I had had during the week and sharing my feelings about it. The facilitators would ask me questions about my feelings and expectations and ask how I would have liked to have handled that situation in hindsight. In this way I was able to share with the group as they did with me. This gave the group an opportunity to get to know me a little better and helped for me to feel part of the group. They also challenged me to think about my expectations of other people and in particular how I can't know what's going on in someone's head. I had felt offended by someone's actions but could only guess as to whether it was intentional or not. I concluded in front of the group that it was probably best to check my assumptions out by asking the person concerned.

At about eight o'clock, Jeff stood at the whiteboard. "What we are going to do now is to brainstorm the different ways in which we are violent. The idea of brainstorming, which is what we did a lot of on Saturday, is that we come up with as many ideas as possible and we'll put them up on the board. So what are the different ways in which you've been violent? We've got some basic ways like kicking, hitting and punching. What else is there? Jeff is standing in front of the group once more and the group are sitting in a crescent shape around the board. The men offer suggestions and he writes them up on the board, spending most of the time with his back to the group in the process of writing. The men seem to stimulate each other and ideas flow quickly and enthusiastically; "threatening her..smashing her things...hiding the keys...calling her names...telling her she can't see her friends...". Sometimes the facilitator stops for clarification or asks for a specific word or phrase to capture the essence of what people have said. Otherwise he is more or less in a constant state of writing. During lapses in momentum both he and the other facilitator stimulate new ideas by asking open ended questions focused on areas not yet mentioned. For example "What about sexual violence? Has anyone here ever coerced their partners into having sex?..or wearing something kinky they didn't want to wear?".

After twenty minutes the board is full of words describing abusive behaviours. Jeff has skilfully and subtly placed the words into clusters and columns which reflect the categories of violence as described in the 'power and control' model. All the categories are represented although this is not explicit at this point. Once completed the group seemed overtly shocked at this long and varied list of violent acts. They readily recognise these acts as being 'violent' and acknowledge that they have personally done many of these things. Some of the men point out that their partners do many of these things too and that they are just as violent as them. The facilitators respond by pointing out that that may well be the case and reminding the group that the focus here is on us and on our behaviour. The group accepts this.

Mike points out that all of these items listed are "behaviours". The group takes a few moments for this to sink in. "They are all behaviours...They are not personality traits, but behaviours...anybody can use these if they want to"¹. He then asks "What is the point of these behaviours?" and "What do these behaviours have in common as their purpose?". The men respond that these are all strategies and "ways to get what you want". Building on this Jeff then writes up the labels for the different clusters and relates these once more to the 'power and control' model on the wall. Each category of the model is represented with several behaviours listed beneath it, with each cluster of behaviours sharing themes and similarities. Each category was then explicitly related back to the 'power and control' model. "That's why we like this model, it describes all forms of violence, not just hitting"².

Mike asked, as he did several times during the programme, "What is it that we want from our partners and families?". "Love" is the universal response from the group. "Are we going to

¹ A Liberal humanist discourse on the agent and his or her free willed use of actions is apparent in this distinction between the person and their behaviour. The agent chooses behaviours to act in a situation but he or she is not reducible to those behaviours. Rather they are employed by the agent's free conscious mind as tools to achieve his or her goals. Employing this discourse hails the men to take a step back from and re-define their behaviour as a choice and as something of which they have control over.

² MMAV here define violence explicitly as an 'instrumental strategy of power and control'. This is distinct from the more traditional definitions of violence which define violence through physical assault (e.g. Straus, Gelles and Steinmetz, 1980). All these 'strategies' are subsumed within a Liberal humanist discourse on the subject, in which the 'intentional' agent imposes upon or 'violates' the 'rights' of others. The men's physical violence is contextualised and thereby defined in this way. The model's connection to the 'social systemic' discourse of patriarchal control is not made explicit at this point.

get this by doing these things?". "No", replied the group in unison. Pointing at the equality chart, he asked; "What about if we stand in a different place and do these things?". Someone said; "Yep, you'll be more respected and your partner will probably be happier". This brief interaction was a significant one I think. The men seemed to be really attentive to the idea that the questions were addressing. People pondered. I, along with others I suspect, was quite amazed by the whole experience of the board being filled with violent behaviours, which were then defined as behavioural strategies for control. The contrast of this with what we wanted from our relationships was powerful. I could feel the richness of experience in the room and the "clicking" of minds. The men seemed excited by the connections they were making. It seemed to me that the men were starting to see that their 'controlling behaviours' were not good for their relationships in the long run.

We were then asked to break into small groups of three or four and to come up with a definition of violence. There were four groups and my group spent a few minutes with each person sharing what they thought it was. Ideas that came up included "selfishness", "hurting", "imposing upon others" and "getting what you want". The facilitators wandered around listening, occasionally asking for elaborations or asking leading questions focused on the instrumental side of violence. Each sub-group was asked to appoint a spokesperson to report back their definition to the group. Key phrases written up on the clean board by Jeff included "selfishness", "abuse of one's power", "purposely harming" and "ways to control others". Jeff summarised these and synthesised them into a definition which everyone agreed upon. He wrote in large letters across the board:

"To control another person against their will to get what I want".

He added verbally that violence was a form of control not an expression of feeling.³

³ Here the Liberal humanist 'instrumental' discourse on men's violence is explicitly contrasted with and positioned against the Romantic 'expressive tension' discursive position, which is the more common sense position assumed by the group, as indicated in the biographies of the Saturday. The Liberal humanist conception of the subject as a free autonomous agent with intentional purposeful behaviour is explicated here and remains the dominant discursive position throughout the course. Whilst the 'inner tension' discourse is also used by the facilitators, it is always couched within and subsumed beneath the official 'instrumental' Liberal humanist position. This statement consequently reflects the discursive dynamics of the course as whole.

One man asked whether it wasn't the case that much violence was biologically determined. There was a drawn out discussion of this at this point, with many contributing and many different opinions being expressed. The facilitators accepted that many of our feelings might be biologically determined, as in the "fight or flight response" which had come up in the discussion, but they were adamant that; "no matter what, we choose the behaviours to express our thoughts and feelings. We can choose to be controlling or we can choose to be respectful to the other person."⁴.

Mike then told a story in which he had made that 'decision'. He talked us through a situation in which he had been tempted to use violence. He stopped himself however and elected rather to use less violent means of resolving the situation. He took us through his thoughts and feelings, what he wanted and what was happening, his point of making a decision to be non-violent and the steps he took to ensure this would happen - leave and talk about it later⁵. "It wasn't easy but it was worth it" was the moral of the tale. The group discussed this and the value of assertiveness before the tea break.

⁴ The 'expressive tension' discourse on violence is emphatically rejected by the facilitators once more in favour of it being a 'chosen' strategy of a Liberal humanist free mind. Whenever the 'expressive tension' discourse is employed in the programme it is always subsumed within this 'official' position. This message is imparted consistently and overtly to the group. Consequently the biologically determinist models described by Freud (1915) and Lorenz (1966) are not employed in MMAV's work.

⁵ In telling this story Mike role models positive thinking and the alternative process of choosing non-controlling behaviours in a potentially, and usually, violent situation. In this way the group is provided with an opportunity to learn new thinking skills and frames of reference and also to bear witness to the potential rewards of these alternatives. This skill imparting practice - the modelling of new and more appropriate behaviours and thinking strategies - reflects a 'learning' discourse of male violence. Learning theorists such as Beck and Rush (1989) and Bandura (1986) emphasise the importance of modelling new forms of both thinking and behaviour in bringing about behavioural change in problematic men. In this way the facilitators would frequently, at relevant calculated moments, share personal experiences with the group. They would describe the situation they were in, how they might have behaved if they were not 'aware' and responsible, and how, in great detail, they did deal with it both cognitively (e.g. remind themselves that the other person has the right to say no) and behaviourally (go for a walk). They would also report the rewards of the non-violent behaviour (how they could talk about the problem with the person, resolve it through negotiation and maintain respect for each other in the process).

TEA

After the tea break we moved on to looking at anger⁶. "The focus of this part of tonight is to increase our awareness of what anger is. We've looked at what 'violence' is this evening; behaviours which violate other's control over themselves, and now we will explore what 'anger' is. This is important because many people think that violence and anger are the same thing, which they are not. We've broken anger down into three components to make it easier to understand. These are physical, emotional and mental".

"OK so let's brainstorm. What happens to you physically when you get angry? What bodily sensations occur?". Mike wrote the ideas up on the board once more, beneath a heading 'physical signs'. These included; feeling tense in the head and in the neck, hands clenched, staring eyes, hyper alert, stomach tight, pacing, standing. Once the list was long and exhaustive and everyone had contributed something, we moved onto thoughts.

"OK so these are the physical signs of anger. What about thoughts? What happens to our thinking when we get angry?". Mike designates a separate part of the board for this and writes the heading 'thinking'. Responses include ideas such as: A depersonalisation of the woman, "like they teach in the army". She becomes an it, a slut, a bitch, and/or an obstacle (e.g. "You bitch"); Thinking processes speeding up; Thinking "I'm right and you're wrong"; also, thinking "It's my right to be right..(because? asks the facilitator)...I'm the breadwinner...I'm the man...It's my house" various men respond. The men seemed to be aware of the sexism in their expectations and this was acknowledged non-verbally with nods from the facilitators. Mike then points out how "How dare you!?!". thoughts tend to follow such thinking. The men acknowledge this as true.

"What about emotions? What are we feeling emotionally when we're thinking these things? When we're angry?" The men respond quickly by reporting feelings such as being frustrated, scared, powerless, rejected and insecure. They fired these feelings up in quick succession.

⁶ Anger is the dominant explanation given by the men for their violence, reflecting the prevalence of the 'expressive tension' discourse in our society today. Anger is explored in this group which gives some legitimacy and support to this discourse on violence. It is emphasised that anger does not cause violence per se however. It's a different phenomena, from the MMAV Liberal humanist perspective, one which is about to be explored and distinguished to the group more fully.

Once listed on the board, there seems to be a state of shock and recognition by the group as they gaze in wonderment at the list which describes their feelings so briefly yet so powerfully. I was amazed and moved to see these feelings placed up on the board, so naked and truthful. They emerged so suddenly, seemingly out of nowhere. Everyone seemed to take a deep breath⁷.

After this pause and silence, Mike circled these feelings slowly and says that he believes these feelings are what most commonly underlies anger in everyday life. He goes on; "I want everyone to know that we encourage these emotions to be expressed plainly and honestly here in this room. We want you to talk about them when you feel them and to experience and acknowledge them to yourself. Men don't often talk about our vulnerability and feelings such as these, but we encourage it here. We think that if we can acknowledge our feelings more easily we can express them more appropriately than through anger. We can cry, ask for help or be assertive⁸. For example You, Robert, talked last week about how you forbade your wife to see certain people because you were "scared" she would be lead astray by them and might have an affair, which she did. If you were able to tell her honestly and plainly about how you feel, "scared", your partner can take that message on board and make decisions in light of your feelings. She might decide to keep seeing her friend, but she'll probably respect your feelings, if you've talked about them in a non-threatening way, more so than your commands of control". The men seemed to agree with this philosophy, nodding in a thoughtful agreement.

⁷ The quick reporting of underlying feelings surrounding anger suggests that the men do have an awareness of emotions which occur prior to or alongside the development of 'anger'. Gondolf's (1985) emotional funnel theory suggests that anger is derived as a 'secondary' emotional response to these 'primary' emotions. In this schema of events men, through their sex-role socialisation become angry because they lack the awareness to articulate these emotions and the sensitivity to deal with these at this 'primary' level, before they build into 'anger'. The men demonstrate here however that they are aware of at least some 'primary emotions' behind their anger. From a Romantic 'expressive-tension' perspective, this awareness opens up the possibility of attending to these emotions before they increase inner tension and are experienced as anger.

⁸ Here the men are explicitly encouraged to acknowledge and attend to their 'primary' feelings. Informed by the 'emotional funnel' account (Gondolf, 1985), co-articulating 'social systemic' and 'expressive tension' discourses, this practice aims to teach men to prevent "overwhelming feelings of anger from arising within him" by facilitating the development of self nurturing and emotive care giving skills within the men, skills which are traditionally outside the bounds of 'normal' masculine behaviour.

"OK so these are the signs of anger. Can we come up with a definition? Who is willing to try?". A few of the men offer ideas and important pieces of each are written on the board. From these pieces 'anger' is then defined. Mike summarises it as; "A feeling and an emotional experience which involves a high state of arousal and tension". He affirms that feeling anger is OK. It is different from violence he says, which is one way to express such feelings, and is not OK. He checks with the group that everyone can see the difference between anger and violence. We might 'choose' to be violent but that's only one way, a most destructive way, to deal with these 'feelings'⁹.

It's ten o'clock and time for people to leave. It's been a constructive and stimulating night. Two homework sheets are handed out to people as they leave. The sheets are designed to explore our beliefs about violence and our awareness of our anger, the group is informed. The questions require us to think about situations in which we become angry and/or violent and to generate alternative ways of dealing with these situations. We are to bring our responses with us next week so that we can share them with the group. Everyone leaves and the men seem to feel good about what they have learnt tonight. I was impressed with the way in which a distinction between violence and anger was imparted so clearly to the men. They seemed to accept this distinction readily and felt hopeful about the possibilities and this philosophy would afford

Session 4: Checking-in and identifying violence

Start evening with a check-in. Facilitate group discussion around new awareness during the week and homework questions. Recap anger and the different forms of violence. The focus for this session is on awareness of the impact of their violence on others (partners/children/friends). Use video to open second half of the evening. Process their observations of Control and Violence and where responsibility boundaries lie. Shift focus of discussion to personal experience, facilitate deepening of feeling and ownership of behaviour.

⁹ Reflecting the 'expressive tension' discourse, anger is defined as a feeling and is acknowledged as having the potential to cause violence. This definition is, however, couched within the Liberal humanist position which holds that we have control and choice over our behaviour and over how we might express these 'underlying feelings'. By acknowledging that anger may play a role in violence, whilst holding to and couching this within the dominant ideas of intentional control and choice, MMAV is able to maintain its commitment to the view that "there are no excuses for violence" while at the same time offering the men some useful alternatives for "dealing with your anger".

Thursday: 7:10pm

At ten past seven, with ten people present and a few more to arrive soon, the evening began. Everyone was welcomed and it was put to the group that we would begin with a "check-in" that would involve a chance to discuss the homework exercise (what we learnt from it and what stood out for us) and an expectation to share any "significant events" which were related to violence that had occurred over the last week¹⁰. Firstly however a man who was absent last week was filled in by the group on what had happened in his absence and what the men had learnt. The facilitators ensured that the men in the group included definitions of 'violence' and 'anger' in their description and that they were able to distinguish between the two. The different forms of violence were shared with the man by the enthusiastic group.

The facilitators didn't lead the check-in this time, as they had last week, and left it up to the group as to who would begin. A well spoken man readily volunteered to go first. He spoke positively about an experience he had had during the week, of how he had felt very angry during an argument he was having with his wife but that he had felt "in control" throughout it, and felt sure he was not "going to blow his stack". "In control of what?" asked a facilitator. "My behaviour and my anger. I could recognize it and stand back from it. See it for what it was". The facilitator's nodded and reflected back; "So there's been a change for you?". The man affirmed this and elaborated. "Yeah, I'm more aware of myself now and I know what I don't want to be". Everyone nodded in acknowledgement.

Another man talked about how he had "lost my cool" during a phonecall to his wife while he was away working in Auckland. He had hung up on her after saying "Fuck it, I'm coming home right now". He soon after received a speeding ticket in Hamilton, which gave him "a chance to cool down and think a bit" about what he was doing. The facilitator asked him how he felt about that now? "Silly" he said. "How would you have liked to have handled it?". "It was a pointless argument, about money. It shouldn't have happened. I wish that I'd not gotten

¹⁰ These "checking in" sessions provide, from an educational 'learning' discursive position, unique learning opportunities for the men (Edleson, 1984; Pence and Shepard, 1988; Stordeur and Stille, 1989). Through group sharing rounds the men are exposed to the facilitators' feedback to a variety of issues and also to the modelling of other men who are trying to change. Violent behaviours are confronted. Mistakes acknowledged. The men explore and encounter new ways of talking, communicating and thinking about their lives.

into it there and then. I should have waited to a better time and talked it over then". "Hmmm" the group empathised and nodded.

Another man said that he had learnt a lot from last week's discussion on violating someone else's rights. He recognized that he had been invading his wife's physical space throughout their marriage and that this must have been intimidating and frustrating for her. He had now resolved to respect his partner's space and not to intrude upon it anymore when he was not getting his way. He had written up a contract to himself and to his estranged wife stating that he would no longer intrude upon her boundaries.

Unfortunately a couple of days later he couldn't keep to his side of the bargain and had found himself up to his "old tricks" again. He had been ringing up people to find out what she was up to and had ended up going around to her house in a confrontative and hostile way. He went on to say that by doing that he thought he had all but destroyed his last chance of getting the marriage back together. His wife had informed him a couple of days later that that had been the last straw for her. He was crying at this point. The facilitator asked him how he was feeling "right now?" and he replied that he was feeling very sad and lonely. "I'm alone all day at work and I go home to being alone. I'm sick of it. I'm sick of being alone. Away from my wife who I realise I love so much now, and my kids who I only get to see once in a while". The man seemed at an endpoint of desperation and had reached rock bottom. The facilitator responded to this by saying; "I believe you. I believe you feel this bad...I know this is no consolation though, but can you see a silver lining here?". The man slowly responded; "I'm learning to respect other people. I really want to learn how to really listen. I hear people, but I don't know how to listen". A few of the men reflected back to him their experiences of separation and of how horrible it was. They were supportive of him. One man said while pointing to his chest; "I've a lot of aroha in here for you bro". The man was asked what he needed right now to which he responded "I need to cry", which he did. The group sat with him as he cried. Everyone seemed concerned and supportive. After a few moments Mike asked if it was OK to move on.

No-one else reported having been physically or verbally abusive during the week. The talk about the homework seemed to focus upon the question exploring the costs and losses involved in being violent. One man spoke of how he had lost some good friends and his

family because of his "problem". It was also said that it cost a lot to replace or fix things he had broken. Someone said losing respect from his wife and her family was the biggest cost by far. Another added that kids end up fearing you. All in all the social/emotional costs were acknowledged with great retrospective regret.

One man talked about having a good week but a letter from the lawyer that day had annoyed him. He was laughing at himself for trying to obscure his superannuation from his partner's lawyer. One man asked him if it was a female lawyer and when he said it was, the man told him he was as "good as dead". A few quick negative jokes and comments were made by the group about female lawyers being ruthless and "screwing" the men for everything they've got. Men in the group laughed. Mike asked the group what was going on at the moment. He was looking very stern.

Everyone was suddenly and silently looking to Mike, not sure of how to take him or of what he was going to say. It was obvious that he was not buying into this line of thinking. One person answered that there was some sexism about female lawyers going on. The group shuffled, everyone suddenly appearing a bit nervous. Mike agreed and in a slightly frustrated and paternal manner replied that such people are only doing their job, just like the male ones. They are no worse than male lawyers so why put them down for being women? The group sat in silence. Jeff came in and said he'd had some bad experiences with lawyers too but for him it was really an issue of hating that person prying into his personal life. Being a man or a woman had nothing to do with that. One man said it was easier to dislike the woman lawyer because she would take his partner's side in their court battles. Mike pointed out that lawyers are there to try to enforce a fair settlement as defined by the law and are there to represent the other person to this end. Sex has nothing to do with this. A good lawyer, man or woman, will do their best to get a good settlement. The men agreed with this more gender-neutral analysis and acknowledged that all lawyers could bring them problems if they tried to hide their finances. Momentarily they stood challenged and accepted this challenge. One acknowledged that his remark had been sexist and apologised to the group¹¹.

¹¹ The facilitator confronts the 'sexism' apparent in the men's talk, pointing out it's inappropriateness and discouraging it's use. This practice emerges from a feminist informed 'social system' discourse which posits men's sexist attitudes as directing their violence towards women. Challenging sexist attitudes and practices, from this standpoint, reduces the likelihood of women being abused by these men in the future. Although sexist comments

One man, a silent tense person, said that he had had a good week but that he was confused. He said he couldn't understand why sometimes he was appreciative and kind but at other times this nasty part would just come out of him. "Like tonight. My wife asked me if I wanted dinner and I said I wouldn't eat it anyway. I don't know why I said that". The facilitator responded; "You wanted to say that". "I didn't" replied the man. "Part of you did". The man acknowledged that this might be true and nodded slowly. I wasn't convinced that he believed this however.

All the men contributed to the check-in. A few spoke proudly of the changes they were attempting to make. e.g. power sharing, helping out more with the kids and the house. Without praising such shifts in thinking, the facilitators often made reflections such as; "I can hear some changes going on here, what are they?". This would get the men to articulate what they were doing and trying to do. When men spoke of pain, anger and/or frustration the facilitators would often affirm their experience by saying "I believe you". They sometimes would ask the men to generate fresh alternatives by asking questions such as; "What can you do about that?". They continually asked the men how they were feeling "right now".

The facilitators continued to challenge any denial of responsibility or projection of blame that the men alluded to in their talk. For instance when one man was questioning the MMAV line on taking personal responsibility by claiming he had no control over his violence in that he would "just snap and go off the deep end", the facilitator said in reply; "I think you are in control of your violence. You decide where you will be violent and to what extent. On the Saturday I remember you saying you held a pen knife to your wife's throat, at home, but you didn't kill her. You took your violence to a degree and you stopped at a certain point. You made decisions about how far you would take it. How is it that you've got sufficient control to punch her and threaten her life but you don't stab her?". The man conceded that there was some truth in this and I think this was a significant moment of learning for him. Another example of a challenge that occurred was when Mike called a man "Mr Expectation" when he thought that his wife "shouldn't be working anyway". This was pointed out by another man as being a "sexist" expectation at that. The rest of the group agreed with this, leaving the man who said it to slowly, albeit reluctantly, think about this.

were few and far between in the programme, when they emerged they were confronted immediately.

Once everyone had checked-in where we were at for the week, the facilitators acknowledge that it has been a long heavy session in which we have shared a lot. It is 8:20pm and Mike suggests it might be time to do something lighter and more active, to which everyone agrees. We engage in an action game where everyone has a turn stamping and yelling out at the top of their voices "YES!" and "NO!" at another person. The purpose of the exercise, as we found out in the discussion to follow, was to get in touch with our anger in a safe way. Some people enjoyed it and participated fully. Others didn't get into it at all but played along half heartedly.

In the discussion that follows we talk about the value of assertion and being able to say "no" or to argue "yes" as a means of looking after ourselves and to keeping our tension levels down. Jeff and Mike briefly distinguish between and role play the 'wimp' (rights get walked over), the 'assertive' person (communicates needs without violating other's space) and the 'aggressive' person (who violates, intimidates and demands). They impart a clear message that by being assertive communicators, and thereby keeping our tension down, our anger will be less. Consequently we will be much less likely to burst into a rage and to become violent. The metaphor of an overflowing cup which can take only so much frustration/tension was drawn on the board. The men nodded and indicated their appreciation of this analogy. Some talk about how sometimes they feel as if they are on the verge of overflowing all day. Mike says he believes them but reminds us all that it is up to us to keep this cup from overflowing. Assertion is one way we can do this. We must look after ourselves and learn to say no to things which are bad or too demanding for us¹². We soon break for a cup of tea.

TEA

After a friendly tea break we sit down to a video, which consists of four sequences of five minute interactions between different men and women partners. We are asked to identify the forms of men's violence and the controlling tactics being used in each one. There are several

¹² Awareness of an assertive communication option for the men is briefly imparted here. It is defined as a behaviour which was non-violent (i.e. didn't violate the rights of others) yet was not wimpish (i.e. protected one's own rights from get walked over). This assertive behaviour, transcending the constraining effects of traditional masculine dichotomies (social system discourse), was couched within an 'expressive tension' discourse, in that the practice could help reduce the build-up of tension. This build-up of tension was further couched within a Liberal humanist personal responsibility discourse. The message being that you are responsible for managing your tension levels and for how you express this tension. One way you can manage your stress levels is through assertion.

forms of violence within each story and these become progressively more subtle with each story. All forms of violence identified in the 'power and control' model are represented at least a few times, with the exception of physical violence which occurs only once. The T.V. is small and we huddle around it. Some of us sit on the floor while others sit on their chairs on the periphery. The men watch closely and appear keen to spot the different forms present. At the end of each sequence the facilitator asks what forms of violence are present, what the purpose or function of the violence was, what sorts of effects this would have on the woman and also to relate any personal experiences that the video reminds us of. The men respond enthusiastically and quickly at the end of each video as they identify the various forms present. They relate them to their own lives. "That was me there - a few months ago". "He just thinks it's his house and he wants her to do what he says". The facilitators ensure that each man contributes. It is after ten by the time the video session ends. We drift off.

Session 5: Rating Scales

Ensure everyone knows how to rate their body tension/anger. Unpackage a violent episode. Emphasise point of "violent decision". Introduce IRTO rating scale and non-violent alternative to the group. Close with a brief sharing and homework questions; i.e. personal history: parents' behaviour, how they reacted/felt.

Thursday 7:05pm

At five past seven most of the group are present and Mike begins the evening. Two men arrive soon after and two different men would not make it along tonight at all. "Tonight we're going to do two things. Firstly we're going to develop our ability to be aware of our feelings and anger through a rating scale. This is pivotal for stopping our violence. After our tea break we'll look at alternatives to what we can do once we're aware of our tension. We'll look at a strategy for dealing with it. We're not going to start with a round today. We'll finish with one instead".

"What I'd like to do now is for everyone to try to rate themselves on a scale of one to ten of how much energy or tension you have tonight. If one is nil and ten is hyper energy or tension I'd be about a four as I'm quite tired". We go around in a circle with each person in quick succession rating their energy/tension levels. Some of the men indicate they are anxious to learn the tools for non-violence, and gave themselves a high rating. Many were feeling lethargic, being tired generally or through just having had dinner. Mike picks up that there is a sense of tiredness in the room, judging from the ratings. He suggests we do a relaxing

ise which is also invigorating. The men agree to it and for the next twenty minutes we
 ge in a Tai Chi exercise. This is defined by Mike as a way of invigorating ourselves when
 e tired and also as a way of shedding off excess tension when we're stressed¹³.

ing back to our chairs and the whiteboard Jeff "invites" us all to remember back to the
 ime in which we were physically violent. We are asked to silently recall what time of the
 it was, where it was, who it was with, how it started and what it built up to be. Once the
 p had recalled these events Jeff drew a graph on the board with Anger and Time
 nsions to it (figure 6.1):

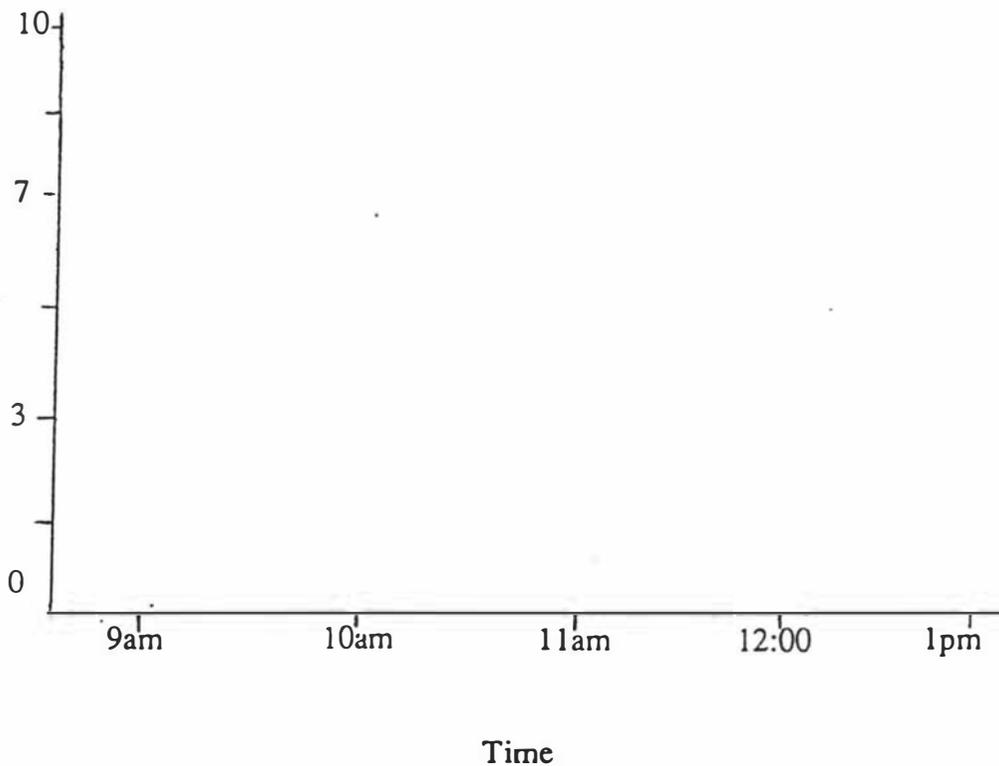


Figure 6.1 An anger-time graph for unpacking violence

¹³ In this way a relaxation exercise skill is imparted to the group. Relaxation techniques considered to be good strategies for reducing body tension and anger in violent men and the men a further option in dealing with their anger (Bagarozzi and Giddings, 1983; Tolman, 1992; Novaco, 1975; Stordeur and Stille, 1989). This exercise was used to on several occasions during the course. Relaxation exercises are strategies employed within 'expressive tension' accounts of violence which seek to reduce the build up of tension.

"Is everyone thinking about the last time you were violent?". The men indicate "yes". A withdrawn man, who rarely volunteers to contribute, is asked if he would be willing to volunteer a bit of information for the benefit of the group. He is asked to share only what he is comfortable with. He reluctantly agrees and moves to the front of the room with Jeff. Jeff encourages everyone to keep thinking of their own violent episode throughout this exercise. Jeff explains that we are about to "unpack" the man's violence. His moods, thinking and behaviours will be placed on the anger-time graph so that the development of his violence can be seen from within a linear context.

"OK, so what time were you violent?" he asks the man. "1:00pm". This is marked in at a ten on the anger scale at 1:00pm. "What time did you get up?". "6:00am". "And how were you feeling?". "Wired. Tense". "How tense on the scale of one to ten?". "About a six". These are marked on the board also. "What did you do during this time period, from 6am to 1pm?". "I had breakfast and then went and worked outside cause I wanted to be by myself". "Did you interact with anybody during that time?". "Yep, Sheryl (man's partner). She came along at about ten and we had an argument". "OK so an argument with Sheryl at ten (writing this on the board) and how's your tension levels now?". "About 8 at this point". "What happened after this?". "I went up to the house at about 12:30. Then I got more angry, escalating. My thinking sped up and my mind went black. Tunnel vision. It was like a dark tunnel closing in on me". Many of the men in the group indicated that they related to the blackening and 'tunnel' analogy¹⁴.

Jeff drew up on the board a line from 12:30pm to 1:00pm which represented an escalation of anger from a level of 8 to a 10, the violent episode. The violent episode was not gone into. Jeff asked; "What was happening just before you went into the tunnel?". "I decided I was right. 'I am right. You're a bitch' type thinking. It sped up and became uncontrollable". These

¹⁴ The men lay claim to feeling overwhelmed by a narrowing tunnel effect which propels their actions in an uncontrollable manner when they become angry. In discussing this phenomenon the men use a Romantic discourse, of powerful forces from within, which overwhelm the man and displace him from the drivers seat in controlling his behaviour. Once this tunnel appears the men report feeling powerless about stopping their violence. The nature of this dark narrowing tunnel is ambiguous. It is talked about by the men as a biological propelling mechanism occurring during times of heightened stress and threat, and is made sense out of through the Romantic model of an instinctual violent response.

were written on the graph also.

Jeff brought to everyone's attention that there were a lot of men nodding and relating to the tunnel idea. He went on to say that "just before the tunnel is a pivotal moment of conscious decision making. What I'm saying is that you can be aware of the onset of this tunnel and you can do something about it". Pointing to the 12:30 point he stated forcefully; "This is the crucial moment where you decide to stop this violent process. As you get more skilled in this strategy you'll be able to move this pivotal point back further by recognizing the symptoms earlier. We've already looked at the thinking and bodily signs which tell you you're at this point. We're all conscious aware beings and we all make choices. Here's a crucial one".¹⁵

There is a moment of silence. Then one man responds to both Jeff and Mike. "Sometimes the blackness is overpowering. I can't do anything once it comes". Mike asks him to try out a new sentence, like a new language shoe; "I'm aware when I'm going into this tunnel and I choose to surrender to it". He does so. "How does it feel?". He replies that "it pisses me off". "Why?". "Cause it's different". Other men try the sentence on too. They all find it a bit different and strange. The shoe analogy is continued; "The more you try it, the more comfortable you will feel with it".

Mike writes up on the board a favourite word of his: "Response-ability", and defines it as the ability to respond to what I am aware of responsibly. Awareness is thus the key to behaving responsibly. He goes on: "If I am aware I'm getting angry and I've started to speed up, that I'm thinking abusively and getting wired and whatever other signs I have, I can either accept this and go along with it to the point of being abusive or I can step out of it (he takes a step to a new spot and stands there) and respond to my awareness in a different way. A way in which I choose to do. It's not easy to get the hang of this at first, but the more attention you pay to your body and thinking and to your own individual patterns the more you'll be able to stop the process".

¹⁵ The Liberal humanist discourse of conscious decision making is once again emphasised as a most significant tool in the path to non-violence. 'Awareness' of oneself and one's options and 'conscious choice' are considered necessary for the implementation of responsible and non-violent behaviour (e.g. Bandura, 1986; Edleson and Tolman, 1992; Stordeur and Stille, 1989). The dark tunnel metaphor is re-defined as a conscious decision in which the man has choice over whether or not to go along for the ride.

"At the 'violent decision' pivotal moment (pointing at the onset of tunnel thinking on the board) one has the power of 'choice'. You can walk away, in a systematic fashion called the 'time out strategy', which we'll look at more closely later on, and in this way you will be able to avoid being violent. First we're going to learn a strategy to enhance our self awareness so that we can use the time out strategy in it's most effective way". Many of the men comment that they are glad to be at last getting on to some "real tools" for stopping their violence. Most of the men seem to feel good, relieved and hopeful about what is being imparted. They are excited about what is to come¹⁶.

An acronym "for everyone to stop this process" is written up on the board - "IRTO"¹⁷. Everyone is asked to repeat it aloud over and over for a while. We laugh while doing this. According to Mike; "This is so we get familiar with it. Think of it as an Eskimo friend". It sounds funny.

Underneath the I, running vertically, the word "IDENTIFY" is written in. This is emphasised as the first step in the process of a nonviolent alternative; "Identify your early signs of anger. Be aware of your body tension so you can choose to do something positive instead of damaging any trust you have with anyone. Identify situations in which you choose to be violent and identify your feelings".

"Learn to RATE your anger, or whatever feeling you identify, on a scale of 1-10" is the second step given in the process. "0" being totally relaxed and "10" being you have reached your limit and have chosen to become violent. Being able to rate your tension/anger means

¹⁶ Reflecting the dominance of the 'expressive tension' account in the men's talk surrounding their violence, the "real tools" appreciated by the men are those which enable them to control their 'inner tension', otherwise known as anger management.

¹⁷ "IRTO" reflects the procedure outlined in Sonkin and Durphy's (1982) "Learning to Live Without Violence" anger management manual. The strategy is informed by the 'expressive tension' frustration-aggression theory of violence (Dollard et al., 1939) in which frustration and tension are thought to build up to the point of being released via aggression. IRTO is a specific strategy which enables the user to recognise the symptoms of the cycle and do something about it before the "darkened tunnel" encapsulates the man and his tension 'explodes' into violence. The 'management' concept in anger management strategies such as the IRTO procedure draws also upon Liberal humanist constructions of the person, in which the 'aware' agent is constructed as being capable of making 'intentional' 'choices' in their behaviour.

you will know when it is time to do the next step before you even unconsciously scare your partner. Practice rating your feelings whenever you get the chance".

The final phase of IRTO is to take a "TIME OUT"¹⁸. "A time out involves communicating to your partner that you are taking a "time out" and leaving the situation for an agreed upon period of time. Say something like 'I am beginning to feel angry and I need to take a time out' to your partner before you leave. This is a statement about you and your feelings and you are not crossing any personal boundaries. You would have made a contract with your partner concerning this, so she would understand what you were doing, where you were going and how long you would be gone for. An hour is usually enough time to cool off. If you arranged to come back in an hour previously, come back then so you can maintain trust. We'll sort out the details for your personal safety plan next week, but for now you just need to be aware of the basics of IRTO". The men clarify what the time-out is. It makes sense and they like it. After a few questions clarifying it's use we take a tea break.

TEA

After the nine o'clock tea break, which once again was friendly and easy going, we came back together to discuss this further and to share any pressing issues that may have come up over the week. The men were sitting around in a relaxed way throughout this, taking it in with everyone contributing at some point. Some are on cushions on the floor. A discussion develops about the value of being aware of your anger levels and this awareness being a good cue for the implementation of a non-violent strategy. Some men seem familiar with this idea while for others it is completely new. Most seem overtly pleased with it as a potentially helpful tool. The group appears to be very relaxed with each other now. Men offer comments at will and most men participate in the discussion.

¹⁸ The time-out strategy is a "guaranteed method for stopping violence from now on" (Sonkin and Durphy, 1982, p27). Sonkin and Durphy's (1982) 'time out procedure' has emerged from the development of Novaco's (1975) 'stress inoculation procedure' which involves immediate relaxation and cognitive restructuring strategies for men on the brink of violence. The time-out strategy is a practice informed by the 'expressive tension', Liberal humanist and 'learning' discourse on violence and is used standardly in anger management programmes as a non-violent alternative behaviour sequence.

During the discussion one person voices a fear that he would feel like a wimp if he walked away, even if it was to take a time-out. A few others too shared this concern. Mike asked him; "What do you think is most appropriate - to resolve a situation when you are calm and respectful and you can think about the options clearly or when you are racing and stamping?...It doesn't matter what your partner thinks in this instance. You are responsible for you, you know you must take a 'time out'". The men nod as if recognizing wisdom in this.

At ten o'clock we disbanded for the evening. Mike told us that for homework this week we were to "keep on identifying and rating your emotions, particularly tension and anger, as much as possible. I want everyone to do this throughout the course and beyond it so you can learn to do it automatically. OK?". "Yep. See ya later".

Session 6: Time Out and Safety Plans

Introduce "Time Out" and "Time Out Contract" with partners. Introduce the idea of a safety plan and personal responsibility. Role play an argument from a participant's sharing. Use the group and a role training process to role model when a time-out could be taken. Walk the participant through his decision. Have each participant practice the role play, and receive feedback from the facilitators. Close with a brief sharing.

Thursday: 7:00pm

This evening began informally, as people trickled in late, with a spontaneous round of greeting each other and sharing of where we are at "right now". At around 7:30 we began the first exercise of the evening. This involved pairing up with another man, with the intention being that we would go off on our own for 15-20 minutes and share things with each other which we wouldn't normally do. Jeff said; "Usually when men get together we might have a beer or watch the rigger, we might ask how it's going, or what the missus is up to, but we don't take it to seriously and we're typically not too honest about how we feel. Today, I invite you to share deeply your thoughts and feelings with another man. Some of you might find this difficult, some might find it easy. Just give it a try. Preferably about something to do with the course or with your intimate lives. We'll see you back here around 7:45"¹⁹. We all went of

¹⁹ One clinical observation of men who batter is that they tend to have superficial relationships to people outside their intimate relationship (Ganley, 1981b) and thus become excessively dependent emotionally upon their partners (Bernard and Bernard, 1984; Maiuro, Cahn, Vitaliano, Wagner and Zegree, 1988; Sonkin, Martin and Walker, 1985). This emotional isolation and dependency upon their partners is considered to be a basic motivation for men to control their partners (Gondolf, 1985b; Maiuro et al, 1988; Saunders, 1982). One

into separate parts of the building and I enjoyed meeting and bonding with a man talking about our love lives. We acknowledged how hard they can be, how much he loved his partner and I talked about my crush on someone. We laughed at each other about what we find hard and how we deal with this. We supported each other and through this encounter we shared a bond which lasted throughout the course. It enhanced my sense of belonging in the group ten-fold and I would often sit next to and share jokes with this man. The exercise appeared to have been a beneficial experience for the other men also. They came back 'chummy' with their partners also.

When we returned to the group Jeff encouraged us to talk more honestly and openly with men friends in the future. "It's not part of our culture but I think you'll find that many men are more willing to be open and sharing with each other than you think. We're just to scared to take that risk. I challenge you all to take this risk with a man friend over the next week or so".²⁰ IRTO was then written up on the board and we recapped in detail the philosophy of the strategy and what each stage involves.

The Time Out phase is deliberated upon further and we explore the "Hows, Whens and Whys" of the 'time out' strategy via a brainstorming activity on the board. We list responses to the subheadings; "purpose" - a chance to cool down, to clarify thoughts, to prevent violence, to maintain trust; "times" - when at violent decision point or earlier once recognise signs, keep rating yourselves; and "do's and don'ts" - do positive self talk, go to a quiet place, expend energy through activities such as walking, relax as much as possible, stick to your contract

reason for this phenomena, reflecting the 'social system' discourse, is that men's sex role socialisation teaches men to fear intimacy and support from other men, through homophobia and male competitiveness (Stordeur and Stille, 1989; Swain, 1985). This exercise encourages the men to be more open and honest with each other, thereby challenging conventional cultural constraints of masculinity, which tend to isolate men from each other (Corey and Corey, 1990; Ganley, 1989; Sonkin, Martin and Walker, 1985). In this way the men are encouraged to experiment with and to employ new ways of relating to others which may help them meet their emotional needs, without having to depend excessively on their partners.

²⁰ The facilitators encourage everyone to continue to challenge the conventional norms for men of being emotionally independent and tough. Reflecting the 'social system' discourse, the men are encouraged to step out from the norms surrounding their masculinity, norms which may be constraining their behaviour and facilitating their violence. Such a practice has implications for other men also, through their exposure to, and possible sharing of, the men's emotionality and also through observing their different behaviours, thereby redefining masculinity and thus subverting elements of the normative 'social system' at large.

with your partner and if you need to re-negotiate it, if you need more time than an hour, ring up. Don't drive, drink or make yourself worse by negative self talk. The process of communicating that you are taking a time out was discussed - "Make an 'I' feeling statement and own it. Say I need to take a time out. Come back at the agreed upon time and check-in with your partner". This process is role-played by the facilitators. Positive and negative self talk are also discussed and demonstrated and this is discussed by the group²¹.

Jeff and Mike make sure everyone understands how the time out works and encourage everyone to think about their ideal safety plan. "Everyone's will be different. You must do whatever will work for you best to achieve these purposes". The facilitators share their time-out strategies. Jeff goes to a favourite scenic spot in a park around the corner from his home. Some of the men offer their ideas and these are discussed in the group. One man says he would like to go to the pub because this was a place where he could relax. Mike discourages this idea however on the grounds that, even if he didn't drink, the pub was a place where some sexist male bonding frequently goes on and this might have the reverse effect of the time-out. "It might make you angry and blaming without you realising it". They encouraged the men to spend some 'constructive' time on their own or to ring a supportive, but constructive and impartial, friend.

Another man says he likes to hit his punching bag when he's angry. Mike asks if his partner can hear him and if she might not find this fearful? The man is not sure and will ask her. Mike responds that aggressive activities can feed into anger and he suggests that if you have excessive energy you want to be rid of, a less aggressive time-out, like the tai-chi exercise or running, is more appropriate to calming and winding down. Some of the men speak out in

²¹ Discussing the significance of self talk and its implications for arousal and feelings gives the men an insight into the build-up of their 'anger' and thereby offers the men a further strategy, from the 'tension-expressive' discursive position, for reducing their arousal and subsequent anger (Beck, 1976; Novaco, 1975). By demonstrating negative self talk and contrasting this with more positive self talk, more adaptive internal dialogues promoting non-violence can be learnt and used by the men (Adams, 1989; Meichenbaum, 1977; Tolman and Edleson, 1989) and this reflects too the 'learned behaviour' discourse on men's violence which suggests that maladaptive behaviours, such as inappropriate thinking, are learnt and can be modified through re-learning. Self talk is a cognitive-behavioural intervention strategy used to modify inappropriate thinking and behaviour patterns. Employed within a 'tension' 'management' system, a co-articulation of Liberal humanist, 'expressive tension' and 'learning' discourses are apparent.

agreement with this. More men share their plans and their fears and these are discussed by the group and given constructive feedback by the facilitators. One common fear is still being angry and "on edge" in an hour. Mike encourages the men to relax as much as possible in this hour. If they are still 'wired' by the agreed returning time is up - to ring up and ask for more time. "Negotiate this possibility with your partner before hand".

The importance of discussing and negotiating the time out plans with the men's partners is emphasised. A contract should be drawn up, negotiated and agreed to before the plan is needed and should be stuck to when it is implemented. In this way the partner will know what is going on. "The issue can be discussed later when you are more relaxed and able to discuss it rationally. Be flexible, adapt the plan to your circumstances and renegotiate it if you need to make any changes".

At 9:00, we were discussing one man's situation in which he thought he could not have taken a 'time out'. This was a concern for other men also. The man was at a social function with his wife who did not know anyone there, and he was "big wig" speaker for the occasion. He didn't think he could have left, due to his obligations there. In the situation he had become verbally abusive and threatening. Mike asked the man if he would be willing to do some practical work on this. The man agrees and Mike suggests we all take a break and relax for a spell. We can come back to this after the break and do some more practical work where we go over how we might take a time out in a difficult real life situation. Everyone thinks this is a great idea. I am tired and I'm not the only one. Its a good time for a cup of tea and a chance to relax.

TEA

At 9:15pm, after a pleasant break, we're back. The floor is cleared and a role play begins²². The first part of the role play is an exercise in which Bruce, the man who has volunteered to share the incident in which he had become violent, re-enacts his experience. He plays the role

²² The use of role plays is a practice informed by a 'learning' discourse on human behaviour. Role plays provide an unique opportunity for the men to recognise behaviour patterns, to see their mistakes and to experiment with breaking behaviour chains. They provide an opportunity to experiment with, receive feedback about and to practice new behaviours at critical points in a sequence. Additionally they offer the advantage of modelling the new behaviours to the group.

of both himself and that of his wife at different stages in a social evening out together. He will also watch this drama being played by other actors. He walks around the room claiming the space for himself and visualising the situation he was in "when he needed to take a time out". Mike leads him through the exercise, acting as both a director and as a facilitator. The rest of the men either help play roles of the people involved in the situation or sit back at the edges of the room looking on. Props are created out of the cushions and chairs. First up Bruce is asked to describe the situation.

Mike gets a volunteer to play the role of Bruce's wife, Betty. The whole sequence is played through, from the time they arrive at a public situation, through the point of a critical incident in which he notices his wife not wearing her wedding ring, to how he deals with this. The sequence is stopped by Mike before he reaches the point of being violent. The man slowly and deliberately goes through the stages of events, as he sees them, as they lead up to the "violent decision" point, acting out and verbalising his thinking and feeling at each stage. The facilitator "freezes" him at crucial points and points out or asks what is happening to the group. An example of this is at the crucial moment in which the man first became angry. "OK, so you noticed that she wasn't wearing her wedding ring. What are feeling now?". "Pissed off". "What about?". "I'm pissed off that she's not wearing her ring and she knows I think she should be wearing it in public. She should be proud to wear it". "Expectations. Mr expectation has arrived". Everyone nods in acknowledgement²³.

Mike then asks Bruce to express these feelings to his wife. She is sitting and he is standing. He expresses his anger and frustration calmly and strongly and gives his reasons. "Role Reversal" cries Mike and the two men switch roles. The wife, playing Bruce, expresses Bruce's feelings and expectations to him. He is asked what this feels like and what he thinks of it. He replies "I feel like saying what's his problem? How dare he tell me what I should

²³ The man's anger is related to his expectations. This practice supports an 'expressive tension' discourse on violence, which sees the violence as a consequence of thwarted expectations and rising frustration. Using the Liberal humanist discourse the men are encouraged to be aware of their expectations and to take responsibility for them - by owning them as their own and not pushing them onto the other person and also by not letting them stress you out when they are not met, to use positive self talk to let them go.

wear". The man empathises with the experience of the woman in this way²⁴. He expresses surprise at what this is like saying it feels "claustrophobic" and that "it stinks". He replies back to 'himself' "What's your problem?".

"Reverse roles. What did you do next?". "I went over to the bar to get away from her". He does this. "What are you thinking?" asks Mike. "Fuck you, bitch. Slut. Uncaring fuckin bitch. Think you're so smart. Fuckin bitch...". "You're starting to build up now. Winding yourself up. Where's this leading to on the anger scale?". "10" replies the group. "OK, can someone come out and role play this?". A man does and loudly verbalises these thoughts over and over at the scene of an imaginary bar.

Bruce is then asked to stand up at the back and watch this sequence being acted out. He watches for a few silent moments the 'expectations' and 'pissed off and winding up' role plays being acted out in front of him. He stands there frowning at this scene. He is then asked to come and stand next to his first role player. He is asked how he feels about this person and if there is anything he would like to tell him. He reports feeling ashamed of this person and says to the role; "Hey man, its your expectations. It's your problem, not hers. You can't demand anything of her. She's her own person...". Mike nods; "That's good, you tell him". Next he goes over to the second role, the ruminating man by the bar, and says; "Hey man, you're just winding yourself up. It's stupid. You know you can't do that. It's not fair. She's a person. She can make her own decisions...". Everyone is watching this in silence. It has taken about twenty five minutes. It is powerful seeing these different roles played out and the other men seem to relate to each part represented.

²⁴ There is large body of literature which emerges out of the 'social system' discourse on men's violence which suggests that violent men, along with their male peers, through their gender socialisation, often lack the ability to empathise with their partners. This is considered to be a significant pre-cursor to abuse by many in the field today (e.g. Adams, 1989; McMaster and Lloyd-Scott, 1991; NZ Justice Dpt, 1989). By employing practices throughout the course such as reverse role plays, asking the men about their partner's feelings and video discussions, greater empathy with the victims of abuse is developed. The experience of "switching roles" entails seeing oneself from another's perspective and feeling what it feels like to be on the receiving end of one's own behaviour. Such awareness is likely to be conducive to more responsible behaviour, given that many batterers lack awareness of the impact of their behaviour on their partners (Adams, 1989; Edleson and Tolman, 1992; Stordeur and Stille, 1989). This fits in well with the Liberal humanist personal responsibility standpoint because empathy promotes greater 'awareness' of the consequences of one's actions.

The next stage of the role play involves the man exploring an alternative way of dealing with the situation and running through and practising using a time out strategy²⁵. He is asked; "How would you have liked to have handled this situation, if you could redo it, what would you do knowing what you know now? With the benefit of knowing what we've talked about today, what would you do? You've still got that anger, that's OK. There's no denying that. But what do you want to do with it?". He responds "Take a time out". "Do it" replies Mike. The facilitators support and encourage him as he works through his preferred response, asking questions such as "How are you feeling?", "What do you think you should do now?" and "What are you thinking?".

In the new behaviour he checks his thinking and reminds himself not to "get stressed" and acknowledges that "it is OK for her to wear whatever she wants. It doesn't mean she doesn't want to be with me. I'm just winding myself up". Talking to his wife, in the first role play position Bruce says to his wife; "Remember how we have talked about time outs? I need to take one right now". "Because?" interjects Mike. "I'm feeling angry". "What are you going to do?". "I'm going to go outside for some fresh air and will be back in an hour...so I'll give you the keys to the car so you can leave if you like". Mike says that that sounds really good and encourages him to role play it again. This time there are no prompts from him and the performance of him informing his partner he is taking a time-out is smooth and seems effective. "Role Reversal" cries Mike and the actors switch roles. Bruce thus experiences the difference of being on the receiving end of a 'time out' compared to "the evils". "What was that like for you as Betty?" "Good. I knew he was scary cause of the way he was walking and I'm glad to hear him taking a time out"²⁶.

²⁵ This practice of leading the man through an alternative behavioural sequence to a personally provocative situation and then rewarding his behaviour with encouragement and congratulations, can be seen as an intervention strategy informed by a 'learned behaviour' discourse on violence. The discourse suggests that, because violence is learnt, non-violent behaviours too can be learnt and implemented by the men in response to the same situation. This sequence is modelled in front of the group and eventually each man will act it out, ingraining the behaviour chain as part of the group's behavioural repertoire. Consequently this non-violent chain can, and is more likely to, be 'intentionally' implemented by members of the group when they are faced with a similarly provocative scenario which can also be generalised to other provocative situations (Bandura, 1973; Cooper, Heron and Heward, 1987). The strategy thus employs 'learning' and Liberal humanist constructs.

²⁶ The strategies used to implement the 'learning discourse', to bring about the desired non-violent behaviour, are strategies used standardly in behaviour modification programmes.

Mike praises and encourages Bruce's new way of dealing with the situation. He asks what he will do now? Bruce says he is going to take a walk for an hour and to give himself "a good talking to". He points out to the group the good points of the way Bruce went about this strategy. "It was assertive communication about your needs. It was responsible, you were looking after yourself. You said the time in which you would be back and you told her what you were doing. You said how you were feeling and you indicated ownership of that feeling".

Next up everyone in the room is to "take a time out" in the same role-play situation and are given feedback from along the same lines as this criteria. Some men have to act out taking the time out a few times in order to get it right in this sense. The group as a whole are asked to give feedback to each man in turn and the facilitators subtly ensure that each person does in fact do all the right things associated with the strategy. In this way everyone observes a man taking a time out in a critical situation several times and practices this process themselves with feedback. Each person's idiosyncratic way of taking a time out and feeling comfortable with this practice is encouraged. By ten o'clock everyone has successfully completed a practice run. The men seem very pleased with the new strategy. They express gratitude and hope and confidence for the future. There is lots of laughing in this final round and the men seemed to be holding their heads higher than they had in the past. There is strong sense of goodwill and aroha in the group.

At ten o'clock, just before we all leave, we are all given a "helpful handbook" to keep which has numerous bits and pieces from the course in it "that you might find helpful and useful". The book appears to recap much of the course. It has definitions of 'anger' and 'violence', philosophies of 'non-control' and 'personal responsibility' and details of strategies such as 'IRTO', successful 'time outs' and effective 'communication'. We are all recommended to read bits and pieces of it often over the next few years. For homework we are to sit down with our partners, if we have one, or a friend if we don't, and to negotiate a time out contract. This requires both parties filling in a 'Time Out Contract' form and signing it (see figure 6.2).

A target behaviour is set and demonstrated, the facilitator provides visual and verbal prompts to aid the client in his application of the new sequence, he gives supportive and constructive feedback about each attempt and once the target behaviour is reached he praises the person and gets them to practice it so that it is ingrained into their behavioural repertoire (Cooper, Heron and Heward, 1987). The 'learning' discourse works well in conjunction with the 'liberal humanist' standpoint, providing the men with a behavioural resource from which a non-violent alternative response can be chosen and implemented from in the future.

THIS IS A CONTRACT BETWEEN

_____ and _____

PURPOSE OF TIME OUT - COOL DOWN PERIOD: For me to be responsible for my feelings and not to become violent or abusive.

I agree to use this contract for the purpose it was intended and not as an escape.

I agree that when I feel angry I will take a time out - cool down period.

Listed below is what I have agreed to do and say in negotiation with the above person when I am feeling angry.

STATEMENT: I am feeling angry and I want a time out. Whoever asks for time out leaves.

Time out will last: _____ (Negotiate with person concerned we suggest one hour) no longer no shorter.

Places I will go are:

Things I will do are:

Things I won't do: Alcohol / Drugs / Driving

When I return I will ask if it is OK to discuss the situation now:- if it is not OK for either party we will agree on a time to discuss it later. If unresolved we may use a neutral 3rd party to arbitrate.

Signed: _____

Signed: _____

Figure 6.2 A time-out contract

Mike reminds us to "think through what strategies will work for you and to negotiate these with your partner so that you have a mutually satisfying safety plan".

One man asked if it was OK to finish with a prayer. The facilitator put it to the group and everyone agrees. We stand in a circle in the centre of the room for it and we carry on standing there for a few more minutes after it is over. People comment how nice it is to be here in this group. Some say how much they look forward to coming and how they like the people here; "everyone is so real here!". I liked being in the circle too. It was a touching gentle moment in which we all looked at each other and said our goodbyes. The group was well established at this point and we were all valuable members contributing in our own way to the group. I felt completely safe in this environment and felt lovingly towards a few of the men. Mike reminds us that we have only a few sessions left with each other and that he is really pleased with the progress of the group so far. We acknowledge the group is nearing the end of our time together. Some of the men are sad about this. We say goodbye and slowly drift off.

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE ENDING PHASE

The ending phase is marked by a move away from 'anger management' training to exploring the social context of the men's violence and the limitations of their sex role socialisation. Communication skills are imparted. The group approaches and deals with its imminent ending.

Session 7: Resistance to Responsibility

Open the group with a sharing of their week. Facilitation moves more to highlight and gently challenge the men's avoidance and shifting of responsibility; i.e. blaming, minimalising, denial etc. Invite them to see/perceive/adopt responsibility for their violence. Brainstorm each resistance and how the participants use this. Explore what is a real man/woman. Look at male role development and socialisation. Explore intergenerational behaviour patterns and the Power and Control pyramid. Role play the cycle of violence; Mr uptight, Mr expectation, Mr authority, Mr violent decision, Mr verbal abuse, Mr batterer, Mr guilt remorse, Mr loving respite.

Thursday: 7:10pm

This evening began late with the facilitators expressing frustration and annoyance at the fact that only half the group had turned up. The group was noticeably smaller with only 9 of us. Mike was disappointed, mainly because today we were going to be exploring and role playing the "cycle of violence" and he considered this to be a most important learning experience for the group. Others were disappointed too. Jeff added that he was "pissed off about it". One man had rung in to say he could not make it but no-one else had. Mike said that it wasn't that surprising, given the intensity of last week. Having acknowledged and expressed these feelings we moved on to fill in a man who had been absent last week on what had happened and on what we had learnt.

At 7:30, when still no others had arrived, Mike suggested that we postpone the cycle of violence role play until next week and suggested a plan for the evening to which everyone agreed; "We'll start with an extended round of what people are thinking of the course, what you're getting out of it and what issues are occurring for you at present. Later we'll move on to look at issues of male sex roles and socialisation of men and women. We'll also look at

the social context of our violence and how both this context and our socialisation can influence our behaviour if we are not aware of it".

In the check-in round different men bring up different issues and Mike and Jeff spend time exploring each of these. They are supportive and quick to pick up on any minimalizations or denials of responsibility, challenging these openly, but sensitively. We talk about the reasons why we might want to engage in such "rationalisations" or denials - it's in our interests to do so. This check-in round seems constructive and challenging for the men involved. It gives them a chance to talk about and explore their lives. The men challenge and support each other during this. All in all the men report finding the course mind opening and helpful. It's not easy to apply these ideas however.

At times the discussion is very rich and philosophical. One man spoke of becoming aware of having choices but was finding it hard to implement them. He felt like he had become aware that he had a lot of work to do and that what lay ahead for him was depressing and hard. He didn't know if he was up to it. Jeff stood up and to everyone's surprise in this heavy moment formally congratulated him for "having climbed your first big hill". Now that he was here he could see other hills he had to climb. He had come a long way. Jeff moved forward and shook his hand and everyone laughed.

The man was smiling with pleasure from this but went on to say that he didn't know if he was up to climbing these other hills. The future looks so hard he said. He looked depressed at this thought. Mike responded; "I know it looks hard but keep in mind that no matter what might be coming down the track, you only have to be in the now. The here and now is what you must focus on. Don't worry about the future because you never know what might happen in the future. If you can discipline yourself in the now you can be responsible with your behaviour forever". The word "discipline" struck a chord with the man and he asked more about this. The discussion moved into a philosophically deep existential sharing and pondering time, concerning the future, the now and humanity¹. Questions were raised and it was

¹ Yalom (1985) claims that the exploration of existential issues in the group, such as the recognition of one's aloneness in life and its inherent lack of meaning and sense beyond what we make of it, is conducive to the taking of ultimate responsibility for the way one lives one's life. In this way this exploration supported the individualism in the Liberal humanist discourse on life and violence.

acknowledged by all that there were no answers for some questions. Things seemed to go cloudy for that timeless instant, as if a mist had entered the room. I felt like I was in an ancient gathering, of men, from some hill-tribe, in an esoteric ritual in the mists of a sacred hill-top. It was an amazing and shocking experience². At about 8:30, when the mood and mist had passed, we decided it was time for a cup of tea.

TEA

When we returned from the break Jeff moved us on to exploring men and women's sex role "socialisation" via "a brainstorming exercise of what it means to be a real man or a real woman"³. The headings "A Real Man" and "A Real Woman" were drawn up on the

² As the course goes on the construct of 'male bonding' appears more frequently in my experience as a participant in the group. I agree with Lionel Tiger (1969) that "all-male groups (can) reflect...a positive valence, or attraction, between males" (Tiger, 1969, p.xiv) and that it is likely that men "find satisfactions in male interactions that they cannot derive from male-female interactions" (Greiner, 1991, p.49). I do not believe that all-male groups are inherently anti-female.

I use the term in league with that of the 'mythopoetic men's movement' and employ this discourse when constructing my experience. The mythopoetic men's movement assumes that it is possible for men to establish deep emotional connections with each other because they are all, at root, men. This assumption emerges from Jungian Psychology which holds that men possess the same set of masculine archetypes (Schwalbe, 1995). Men can "connect" with each other at a deep emotional level and when they do, through sharing revealing personal "belly truths", this is a very powerful "existential" experience, inducing strong "emotional responses", fostering deep "connections" and a sense of "community" (Schwalbe, 1995, p.511). This is how I construct the group's experience at this point. I see our sharing as a 'transformative experience that goes to the root of each person's being and (what they have found their is) something profoundly communal and shared" (Turner, 1969, p.139). This is what I call 'male bonding'.

³ From a 'social system' discursive position, an important part of the 'resocialisation' of assaultive males is to impart to them an understanding of their sex-role socialisation. Gender socialisation can push men towards violence in a number of ways; It can constrain the range of emotions men experience which can lead to emotional numbness with angry outbursts (Fasteau, 1974; Goldberg, 1976; Marriot, 1988); It creates unrealistic expectations about family roles which can fuel conflict (Dutton, 1988); It creates expectations for control over their partners (McMaster and Swain, 1989; Schecter, 1982); and it trains men to be violent (Marriot, 1988; McMaster and Swain, 1989). Awareness of how sex role socialisation impacts upon expectations and attributions is an important insight for violent men which can help reduce the pro-longed build up of frustration-anger-tension (Dutton, 1988), as in the

whiteboard and we were asked to call out the different 'physical', 'social', 'emotional' and 'sexual' characteristics which we associate with these respective sexes. Jeff stood at the board writing these down wanting both stereotypes and real life characteristics of men and women we know.

A great diversity of ideas and characteristics are fired up onto the board, including positive and negative attributes for each sex. Some of these were sex role stereotypes while others were more idealistic in nature, reflecting the ambiguity and double meaning of the word "real" (i.e. authentic and responsible vs cliché stereotypes). For the 'real man', which we explored first, these included among others; "flies kites", "makes a mess", "works", "punishes and disciplines kids", "is brave", "is demanding", "takes risks", "is in control", "takes responsibility", "is emotional", "helps with kids", "is loud", "is bossy", "has the last say", "gets the washing". For the 'real woman' the list included; "sexy", "stroppy", "wise", "a genie", "strong", "lover", "loyal", "assertive", "understanding", "caring", "good cook", "secretary", "manipulative" and "financial genius". When everyone had exhausted their understandings and notions surrounding "real men" and "real women" we all paused, stood back and gazed at the board. We are asked to "consider in silence what, up there, is valid for us today? And what is valid for our partners?". We ponder this for a few moments. There are a lot of characteristics/roles to consider. The men stand around staring at the board, taking this very seriously. There is a feeling of discovery and illumination in the air.

After a few moments Mike says; "I invite you now to rub the words off the board what you don't feel comfortable with or that you don't consider to be appropriate for yourselves or other men today. Rub off the words you find personally offensive and tick the one's you like and endorse". There is only one duster and Mike suggests that we all do this one at a time, verbalising why we are rubbing out or endorsing particular words so that others can see why. The men do this slowly and carefully, each making a few changes in turn. Their responses are well considered and thought out. Each person takes his time and the group tends to support

'expressive tension' discourse, and the perceived justification of spouse abuse (Dobash and Dobash, 1979, 1992), as in the 'social system' discourse. The practice of 'consciousness raising' included here in this programme seeks to raise awareness of the impact of gender socialisation in the men's lives to enable the men to challenge and resist these cultural expectations.

each man for the changes and reasons he gives, sometimes more enthusiastically than others. The facilitators stand back watching, along with the group.

For the 'real man' the "disciplining" and "controlling" characteristics are the first to go; "I hate this shit". One man ticks "flys kites" and talks about how it is time men started to have more fun in their lives and that we need to learn to love our lives. Another rubs out "work" to which everyone cheers, saying that it is a hassle and that he hates it. He acknowledges that it is a necessity however. Others agree. Another ticks "assertive", which was in the "real woman" category, saying that "being assertive's a lot better than being agro, bro". He then rubs out "brave" saying; "I'm sick of it". For the 'real woman' category the first man rubs out "genie" saying; "I'm sick of her covering my violence up for me". Another rubs out "sexy" saying that he considered it sexist to think of women that way. Assertiveness was ticked again as was "strong", "wise" and "emotional". Many are ticked several times.

Once everyone has finished making the changes they wish to make, and some have done so more than once, there are only positive and non-sexist characteristics left up on the board. I think it's great to see these features being valued by the group. It is a public affirmation of their value and of the respect that men and women who are this way deserve. I feel really excited about this. It is a special moment. The other men seem to feel excited about this also. Mike then builds on this by challenging the group to positively role model these male behaviours to other men and boys in the community. "If more people were like this the world would be a much nicer place and the more we can break down the stereotypes of what men are, the easier it is for other men and boys to be like this"⁴. He also challenges us to support women who are assertive, wise, strong etc. The men are supportive of this idea and vow that in the future they will be more like this in public and in their homes. They seem genuinely committed to the idea.

⁴ By challenging the men to engage in these non-stereotypical male behaviours in the public world Mike is directly addressing the issue of men's violence as being constituted, at least in part, through their gender socialisation. By encouraging the men to take pride in these alternative behaviours he is not only challenging them to be less 'masculine' and therefore, according to this line of reasoning, more peaceable, he is also advocating them redefining masculinity norms to other men and boys so as to help create a less masculine, and thus less violent, society. He thus extends the 'social system' informed consciousness raising strategy beyond the liberating effects in the personal lives of the men in this group to it's broader social implication; challenging and redefining social norms.

At about 9:30 Mike suggests we move on to look at some of the historical and societal factors which can influence men's violence to their partners and families. This, he says, will give us an insight into our violence, in particular the support for our violence from the rest of society and the history of this support. Everyone sits back down again and after a moment of rest Jeff draws a heading on the board "Power triangles"⁵. He then drew a little triangle in which stood an individual man and an individual woman "in a relationship". "These have become the sort of people they are through the process of socialisation, which we were just looking at. But there's more to their relationship than personalities and socialisation. There's also all the things that exist outside this triangle and which influence it in certain directions". He then draws a larger triangle around this and indicates that this is the family or extended family of the individuals. "Family members spend large amounts of time together and influence each other in the taking up of roles and expectations. From your family you may come to accept violence against others or dominance as being OK. You might receive support for this rather than being challenged by either of these two's larger families. Is everyone with me so far?".

He then drew a larger triangle which encapsulates both the family and the man and woman and called this one the public arena. "What happens in the public arenas of society, such as in law, schools, the media, the churches, the workplace, the police and the social services, has an impact on the private domain of the family. It is through these institutions that social values and attitudes are taught, maintained and controlled. The ironic thing is that most of these institutions are managed, staffed and controlled by men". Some of the men started to point out that there were plenty of women who ran these institutions too. e.g. lawyers and politicians. "How many women politicians are there?" Jeff asked and the men quickly came up with a few examples. "How many men?" Lots and lots was the consensus. What about

⁵ 'Power triangles' involves looking closely at the patriarchal and institutional context of men's violence to women. This radical feminist Structural model (McMaster and Swain, 1989) is frequently used in feminist informed stopping violence programmes, to impart an awareness of the links between the private domain and the public arena of social life. Peter Swain (1985) developed this model to increase awareness for violent men of the context in which the men are living which supports and encourages their violence. This model, reflecting a Structuralist 'social system' discourse demonstrates how various social structures, such as schools, the law, the media and the economy maintain men's historical power and control over women in the private sphere and thereby implicitly support their violence as a means of power and control. This builds upon and compliments the focus on 'social systemic' gender issues which have been an integral part of tonight's session.



judges? Ministers? Bosses? Police senior officers? Ian went on to say that many of these institutions, some more explicitly than others, consequently operate upon the biases and from the viewpoint of a male ideology. Men in positions of power might assume that men and women have different norms, needs and different rights and that the wider society is influenced by their position. Some of the men nod in agreement whilst others looked confused and threatened. A discussion about this takes place. While some men accept the idea others do not relate to it all. Mike draws a conclusion from the discussion that everyone can agree with; that not all men are sexist and that not all positions of power are taken up by men, but that there is a tendency for men to have positions of power and that these can reinforce each other. There is consensus over this. Religious scriptures were pointed out by one man as being used to justify violence to wives and Jeff affirms that this was a good example of how social structures can influence the behaviour of individuals in the privacy of the home.

Jeff then draws a further triangle entitled the historical context. In this triangle lay "traditions of men's violence to women" and "patriarchal traditions" "which permeate our culture today". "Did you know that up until a century ago it was legal for a man to beat his wife? Do you think that historically this has had the effect of encouraging or deterring violence? What about men being the only ones with property or voting rights? These are also recent developments. How many people here think that men should be the only one's to vote or to own property?" No-one put up their hands or indicates so. There seemed to be a consensual acceptance of a history of women's oppression and sexism in our culture.

Jeff encourages everyone to think about the ways that this history may be influencing them today. One man says that he likes to be the breadwinner. Another thought he shouldn't have to do too much housework but that he could see it was a sexist distinction for women to stay at home all day. One man points out that his workmates whistling at "the sheila's in the office" probably meant that she wasn't taken very seriously. Another wondered if it wasn't natural for women to stay at home with the children and that it wasn't men's fault that they had to go out to work. Jeff points out that "it is no individual's fault that our society endorses a distinction between the sexes and thus feels expectations and receives institutional support to work. But individuals who are aware of this can make choices which do not have to be sexist. For instance he could stay at home or they could share various chores. Remember that

you are responsible for your actions and your attitudes once you are aware of them. Hopefully this will help us all to think about our society a bit more. I remember when I first met this idea I was sceptical but after a few months of thinking about it I started to see it working around me. Take it home with you and see what you make of it. Give it a chance to digest"⁶.

It's a few minutes after ten by this stage and Jeff then informs us that it is time to go, as if we didn't know. Looking around the room, making eye contact with everyone, he says; "There's no homework this week..just keep on monitoring your feelings over the week OK?..Think about gender socialisation and institutional supports for sexism...see if you can see some examples of it around you during the week. Next week we'll be looking at new ways of expressing ourselves and communicating with other people. We'll do the cycle of violence we were going to do today as well...Tonight's been really good. I'm pleased to see everyone so committed to the material. It's great...Well, I'll see you all next week".

I thought it was good to look at the gender issues tonight. I was impressed with the men's readiness to accept many of the ideas imparted. They seemed to sense something exciting and liberating about the consciousness raising - gender socialisation exercise. I suspect a few of the men got lost during the last part to this exercise however. The presentation and discussion of the structural dynamics of society was rushed, leaving many of the men to grapple with these sociological constructs for the first time in their lives.

⁶ The facilitators here, using the 'social system' discourse, explicitly refer to social structures which provide a supportive context for men's violence which exist beyond any individual. They are careful to point out however that individuals are responsible for the effects these structures might have now that they are 'aware' of them. There is a conflict between the Structuralist and Liberal humanist accounts of the individual subject here. The 'social systemic' discourse sees the men as puppets within a structure with the social system's logic determining their actions. In contrast the Liberal humanist individual is 'rational' and 'independent'. MMAV resolve this tension in a similar way to the way in which they deal with the conflict existing between the Romantic 'expressive tension' discourse and the Liberal humanist account of the subject. Once again the different discourse is couched within the official Liberal humanist framework of the programme, through the concepts of 'choice', 'awareness' and 'responsibility'. The men are held to be one hundred percent responsible for their behaviour, constructed as it might be through the 'social system', because they are 'aware' of this 'social system' and the role which they play in maintaining this state of affairs.

Session 8: Communication and Expression

Many men describe difficulty in remaining non-abusive when expressing themselves or arguing with their partners. This evening "introduces" the notion of win/win conciliatory approaches to communication and listening.

Thursday: 7:05pm

The evening began with many of the men apologising for their absence from last week. Some of them have quite legitimate reasons for not making it and these are shared. The rest of the group are "brought up to speed" on the events and learning that they have missed out on. Last week's socialisation and cultural supports to violence and male control were recapped and briefly discussed. A few examples observed by the men from over the week emerged and these too were discussed and elaborated upon in terms of last weeks work. Also any "burning issues", related to the men's violence, were shared. The "burning issues" metaphor was used, I think, so that only the most urgent stories would be told, rather than engaging in a full round involving all the men. As Mike pointed out, "there is a lot to get through tonight".

At 7:30pm Mike moves on; "Last week we were going to do a role play and explore the 'cycle of violence'⁷. Because it's so important and there wasn't enough people we decided to wait until today for this". He gets up and draws a time graph on the board, headed 'Cycle of Violence' (figure 7.1).

"The cycle of violence is a process that's been studied a lot. It's a cycle because the process repeats itself. (Pointing to the stages on the graph) There's growing tension, getting pissed off, becoming violent and then being sorry. The more times the cycle is completed the less time it takes to complete. The longer the cycle goes uninterrupted the worse the violence gets. The longer the cycle goes uninterrupted, the shorter the loving respiteful period". These latter three

⁷ Lenore Walker's (1979) theory of the 'cycle of violence' combines 'learning' and expressive tension' discursive accounts of violence. This model of what happens before, during and after a violent incident is reportedly very useful in helping men to understand and recognise the pattern of their violent behaviour and provides them with useful cues for intervening and stopping the pattern from re-occurring (Edleson and Tolman, 1992; McMaster and Swain, 1989; Sonkin and Durphy, 1982). "The battering cycle appears to have three distinct phases, which vary in both time and intensity for the same couple and between different couples. These are: the tension building phase; the explosion or acute battering incident; and the calm, loving respite" (Walker, 1979, p55). The tension release of the violent act is thought to reinforce the cycle and sustain it's repetition.

facts" are written beneath the graph and are discussed and clarified for the group, so that the cycle is fully understood.

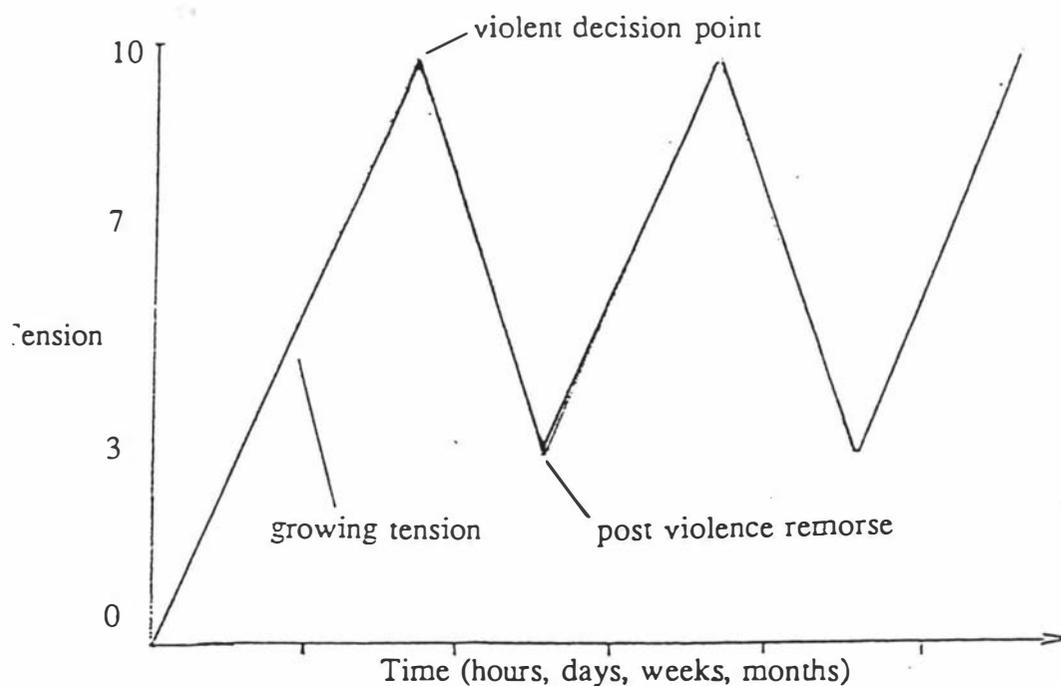


Figure 7.1 The cycle of violence graph

Mike then asks us to open our manuals to the page where the cycle of violence is represented in a circular graph (figure 7.2). We all either find it or, if we have forgotten to bring our book, we sit next to someone who has. This diagram breaks the three main stages of the cycle down into eight substages described through personifications. This is the first time I have seen the cycle represented in this way and am impressed with the way it is more personalised and explicit about components of each phase. Mike explains the diagram to the group.

For each phase in the cycle a list of the 'whats', 'whens' and 'warning signs' are given on the next page of the manual. For each one a different man is asked to volunteer to read these out and to expand on these by stating what rings true for him and by adding his own idiosyncratic thoughts, feelings and behaviours. Following his contribution the group as a whole is asked to contribute in the same manner. This process is repeated for each stage in the cycle, from Mr Upright through to Mr Loving Respite. Jeff would write each of the idiosyncrasies

mentioned up on the cleaned board and by the time the exercise was over the board was full once more.

For Mr Expectation, for example, 'What' included; "expecting something of yourself or your partner". "Thinking that things should be different. That this is obvious to you but not to others" and "Feeling let down and pissed off". 'When' included; "coming home and tea not being on the table". "Partner not interested in talking when you want to talk" and "Partner won't have sex". 'Signs' included; "getting louder", "finger raised" and "thinking 'you should'...". For Mr Violent Decision: 'What' involved; "the personal choice to be violent" and "the decision to impose your will on another". 'When'; "anytime you have chosen to be violent/abusive". 'Signs'; "thinking or speaking loudly That's it, No more, Fuck you and/or I don't need to take this shit". "Pulse racing" and "Standing in an intimidating way".

Once we were all familiar with the concept and the different stages of the cycle we were asked to volunteer for a role in the role play of the "eight piece pie". After picking our parts we cleared the room. Jeff played a house wife and Mr Uptight, a group member, came home from a long hard day to a messy house. He was not impressed. Mike facilitates the development of each man's part by asking him where he has come from, how he is feeling and what he is thinking. The man walks around and plays at being uptight; making grumpy statements and asking patronizing questions to a well intentioned and overworked wife. Mike then asks how he thinks she feels about him coming home and being like this. He pauses and responds that she would probably like it best if he hadn't come in.

"Switch roles" Mike exclaims. Exit Mr Uptight and Mr Expectation comes in grumbling, accusing and looking more intimidating. The role players have been instructed to enter the role play at the same level on the anger/tension scale as the person before them left on and to escalate this during their role. In this way tension would rise as the cycle progressed. When Mr Authority arrived he was looking very tense, raising his finger, telling his wife off and raising his voice to match. He pranced around the room as if he owned it and could do whatever he wanted. He too was asked how he was feeling, what he was thinking and how she might be feeling. Once the men get the hang of it, the role changes speed up. A couple of the men find it hard to get into initially but Mike draws out their parts skilfully.

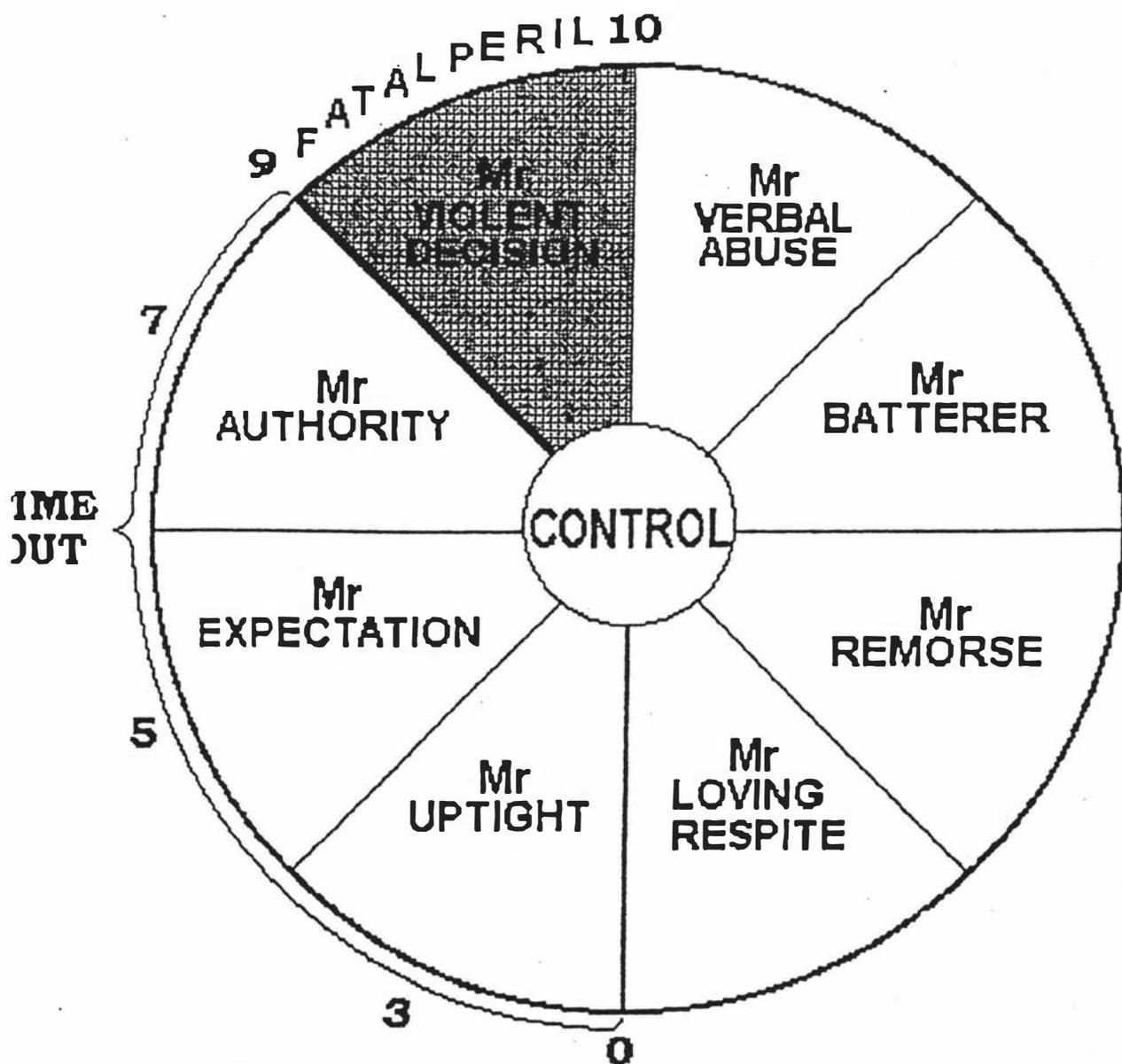


Figure 7.2 The personalised cycle of violence

The role play slows down abruptly once a violent incident has been acted out. Suddenly Mr Remorse is standing there, looking sorrowful and ashamed. Hypothetically it is a day after the violent incident. He stands still, in great contrast to the noisy and frantic nature of the preceding roles. It is gently acknowledged during this silence that this role and that of Mr Loving Respite can last for a long time, sometimes weeks. These roles are played out quietly and the actors are delicate, sensitive and somewhat seductive. They seem genuinely sorry, bring flowers and promise never to do it again. Mike asks the group how many of us had promised our partners we'd never hit them again. Several raise their hands. He asks; "And how many have hit them again?". Several raise their hands once more. It is a powerful moment, perfectly complimenting the cycle of violence theme to the session.

The role play is run through a second time, with new actors taking the roles of Mr Uptight, Mr Expectation and Mr Authority. After Mr Authority however, a 'time out' ensues. This "taking a time-out and taking responsibility" role is played by everyone in turn. Each man goes through the motions of verbalising his recognition of his warning signs (thoughts, sensations, feelings and behaviours) and his taking a time out, thus stopping the cycle of violence from repeating⁸.

Afterwards we spend time discussing the role play and the cycle of violence. Sitting around in a relaxed aftermath, the group is asked; "Can you see yourselves up there?" and "How would the different parts affect your wife or girlfriend?". The men indicate that they can see themselves in these roles. They also indicate that they appreciate the progressive cycle as being an insightful and personally relevant model. They think it must be "awful", "horrible" and "unfair" for the wife to be with the man as the cycle unfolded. As one man said "It's shit for her. I wouldn't like it". It was affirmed and understood by the group that the model offered a clear point at which one could recognise being an angry Mr Authority and thus make

⁸ The time-outs are incorporated into the violent cycle and the men's cues for when to take this strategy are developed beyond the numerical system of the IRTO rating scale. Now the men's cues include the thinking, feeling and behavioural characteristics associated with Mr Uptight, Mr Expectation and Mr Authority. Recognising these more distinct cues, as the tension builds and doing something about this before it reaches ten or becomes Mr Violent Decision, is the intervention strategy afforded by this circular model. Once again, the strategy is couched within a Liberal humanist discourse, emphasising personal responsibility, awareness and choice of action.

a decision to engage in an alternative behaviour. One could take responsibility by taking a time-out and thus "break free of the cycle".

TEA

After a cup of tea we moved on to the other structured activities planned for the session. These were exploring the different forms of communication open to us and practising an 'assertive' communication style.

At about 9:10pm then, we moved into exploring three different forms of communication - passive, aggressive and assertive⁹. This was introduced to the group by Jeff saying that there were three main ways of communicating in this world; "We can either be aggressive and walk over other people to get what we want and thereby ignore their needs. We can be passive and bend over backwards for others, letting them get what they want and thereby ignore our own wishes. Or we could be assertive and communicate with others in a way which makes it clear what we want whilst taking other people's needs into account". Each of these forms of communication were then role played by Jeff and Mike, through an example in which Jeff was wanting to be repaid \$100 from Mike, and the group was asked to generate the emotions and behaviours characterising each as they were completed. These were listed on the board under the three headings.

⁹ Clinical literature suggests that batterers are likely to behave either aggressively or passively in a conflict situation because they lack the communication skills to respond otherwise (Manthei, 1981; Rosenbaum and O'Leary, 1981b; Stordeur and Stille, 1989). This skill deficit can emerge as a violence problem in an intimate relationship and this is commonly understood through the 'expressive tension' and 'social system' discourses on violence. If men, due to their socialisation as males within the cultural 'social system', lack the communication and sensitivity skills required to engage in equal decision making and negotiation processes, they may resort to physical force to win an argument and thereby not be a 'wimp'. From an 'expressive tension' position, if they resist being violent and are passive and get 'walked over', their frustration-tension levels may increase to the point of an explosive violence.

This Passive Assertive Aggressive model of communication style was first developed by Lange and Jakubowski (1976) as a tool for teaching men a communication skill through which they can assert themselves and their needs with their partners whilst not imposing upon them or being a wimp (New Zealand Justice Dept, 1989; Pence and Paymar, 1993). It thus equips the men with a distinct skill set, transcending conventional masculinity constraints, for responding to conflict situations.

The group was then asked to identify which style they predominantly used. Most of the men reported that they tended to use a combination of aggressive and passive communication styles. Mike then pointed out the shortcomings of each of these as he saw them. "The aggressive stance imposes upon other people while the passive one can lead to resentment and suppressed anger which can lead to outbursts of violence". The existential question of the session was "Where do you want to be?". Everyone could see the value of the assertive response. He informed us that this was a "win win" stance. "Everyone can get their needs met if we can communicate assertively and responsibly. By responsibly I mean we can voice our own needs through this method, but also listen to the other person's concern and together try to work out a solution that meets both of your needs.

"What we're going to do now is to teach you a way of communicating your needs assertively. Lots of men aren't too good at being able to tell others what they want or need without being forceful or heavy about it and this exercise will help to develop some good skills in this area. What we are offering here is a way of communicating to someone an issue and describing where you stand on that issue. It's also a way of requesting changes in the other person surrounding that issue". DESC¹⁰ was then written up on the board as an acronym standing for Describe (the behaviour you want changed); Express (how you are feeling about it); Specify (the behaviour that you would like to have occur); and Consequences (list what will happen if this does not happen). The DESC strategy was put forward as an effective formula for clearly communicating an issue non-passively and non aggressively. It was described more fully in the handbook and we were asked to turn to that page. We read over some basic examples of the strategy before being broken into small groups to try them out ourselves.

In groups of three we had turns trying out the formula with one other while the third person gave feedback. Some men could do it easily, taking only a couple of attempts to get it right,

¹⁰ The DESC strategy is a renowned assertion technique initially developed by Lange and akubowski (1976) as a problem orientated communication strategy. It is a specific skill which can be relatively easily 'learnt' and used in every day life as an empowering strategy to communicate and negotiate needs, to avoid stress and consequently to avoid violence. Its adoption by the men can be incorporated into the Liberal humanist standpoint as a self protective and personally responsible communication strategy. It protects the man from the build up of 'expressive tension' and teaches him skills not normally taught to men from within our 'social system's' gender norms.

while others found it much harder. We had fun trying out the sentences and we gave each other feedback on our performances. The facilitators went around listening to each group and they too gave feedback, pointing out whenever one of the four components were missing. They encouraged each man to take it slowly until he could do it fully without any prompts. In this way everyone was able to make successful requests through using this formula. We were encouraged to practice this technique as often as possible and to apply it consciously whenever we could. It was emphasised that the receiver always has the right to choose not to act on the suggestion.

At ten o'clock we stopped practising the DESC technique of assertive communication and were asked to find a page in the handbook entitled "12 Signs of a Bad Listener". For homework we were to read over them and to list the four worst things we did from the twelve. Good listening skills were defined as being the opposite to these and we were to concentrate on and practise the identified four during the week. It was also acknowledged that next week would be the last week of the course.

Some of the men indicated that they felt it was too soon and that they did not feel ready to end the course yet. They wanted to extend the course for longer, even informally as a group. Mike responded to this saying; "I'm hearing the group saying that you're not quite yet ready to finish and I can understand that. We've done a lot together, we've come a long way and we've all got further to go yet. We made a contract of doing nine sessions together however, which has been a great step for all of us, and we're drawing to a close now. You have to accept that. All good things come to an end sooner or later. You've got to go out and face the world on your own two feet now and use the skills that you've learnt here. MMAV is pushed for resources as it is and we can't go on extending our courses when there's other people waiting to use the services. I think it would be a great idea if a few of you decided to keep on meeting each other for coffee every so often though. That's up to you. We'll be spending time next week looking at the options of where we can go from here and we can talk about this some more then. OK?".¹¹ The men agree. "We'll see you next week then. Bring

¹¹ In the development of a time limited group the immanent ending can pose a source of anxiety for its members. Mike acknowledges the group's concern here but is clear and realistic to the men that the group's time is coming. Stordeur and Stille (1989) suggest that acknowledging the men's sadness and anxiety about leaving the group is an important part of the group's development and a positive ending process. By indicating that the issue will

something nice to eat and drink if you remember. We'll have a little feast to mark the ending of our time together...We'll see you then".

Session 9: Last night

The focus of the evening is to summarise the course. Recap what has been shared and what have been valuable experiences for the group. Revisit "specific areas" with the group as decided by facilitators, reiterate responsibility to not be violent. Assertive respectful behaviour. Recap power and control. Look to the future through a time line process; a year ago...now...one year later... Where to from here?

Thursday 7:00pm

The evening is introduced as a time for us to consolidate on what we have learnt. Eight of the men clients have turned up and Mike acknowledges these men as "the hard core members of the group". There is a friendly informal feeling in the air. "It's the last night tonight. It's a time for us to reflect upon what we have learnt together and what this journey has been for each of us. It's also a chance for us to focus on what we need to work on in the future. We'll start off the evening with everyone filling out a self-evaluation form. "This will help us in our understanding of how the course went for you and it is a chance for you to focus on what you need from now on", says Jeff.

The question sheet dealt with the distinction between anger and violence. It explored the level of responsibility one takes for one's thoughts, feelings and behaviours. It asked about alternatives to violence and it explored the person's understanding about the values of equality in a relationship. Thus each of the main themes in the course seemed to be encapsulated in the questionnaire and these were discussed within small groups following the men filling out their responses. Coming back to the main group we discussed these further. We worked through the questions in the order given and listed above and people volunteered their needs and their challenges for the future in each department. The men seemed committed to the ideals and goals of the course, but they were having a few difficulties in getting there. Problems were clarified, challenges were made and/or affirmed and further goals for individuals were set and/or encouraged.

be addressed more fully next week, the men's concerns are acknowledged respectfully whilst the reality of the group ending is affirmed.

At about 8:15 we moved on into a continuum-awareness exercise exploring three issues which were written up on the whiteboard; Where was I when I came here? Where am I now? and Where to from here? A baseline of "0" indicated where the group was at when we first came to the course. A few of the men volunteered their thoughts and feelings from the time. They had been nervous and scared of what the other men would be like, expecting them to be 'skinheads' and big rough types of men. They reported being both hopeful and cynical of the course at this stage.

Everyone was asked to take a moment to consider what their hopes and goals for the course were at this point. "On a scale of 1-10, How have you achieved your goals? Most of the men cluster around "7" or "8". A few chosen 'volunteers' indicate that they feel like they have learnt a lot from the course, but that it is an ongoing challenge to apply what they know. One man was standing at "0". He had been verbally abusive and physically intimidating in the last week to his partner and was feeling awful and disappointed with himself now. His abuse was not explored, which was probably a first time for the group. It was followed through in terms of the continuum exercise however; "So you feel as though you're at 0. What would it take for you to reach ten?" Mike asked. The man was encouraged to take a step with every constructive idea he came up with. "Take a time-out, first and foremost (step). Let go of my expectations, that Julie shouldn't be working (step). Let go of my wish that Julie would initiate sex sometimes (step). I can't make her want me (step). Recognise my expectation that she should look after the children as my own (step)". Soon the man is standing among the others and they welcome him among them.

Mike moves up to the "10" point on the continuum. "Here's ten. A place where we are nonviolent and equal in our relationships. We're non-controlling and open and intimate with our partners. I challenge each man here to acknowledge what's keeping you from being here and to confront this as a goal for the future". After a brief silent pause he asks "What are the goals we have here among us?" Building upon the questionnaire exercise early the men respond with their personal ideas which include; "To practice time-outs"; "To talk to other men"; "To listen to my partner"; "To not push my expectations and to accept that I might not always get my way"; "To help out and take greater responsibility with the kids"; and "To express my feelings in clear non-threatening ways".

Having acknowledged our needs and goals for the future we break for a cup of tea. Throughout the exercise the men seemed very cooperative and honest and were making a lot of effort to get the most out of this last session. The evening was going very smoothly. We broke group for a cup of tea.

TEA

After the tea break, at about 9:00pm, we moved back to the semicircle of chairs surrounding the whiteboard and the plan for the rest of the evening was given. First Jeff and Mike would inform the group of the different options available to the men concerning further support and help available for their stopping violence. Then we would spend time giving any messages we would like to give each other, some feedback about our impressions of each other individually and some feedback to the facilitators about the course. This part would take up most of the evening and would be part of our saying farewell to each other. Finally we would finish off by having a drink and something to eat¹².

The different services available to the men were listed on the board and the men were encouraged to make use of these services. They were described in detail and their usefulness for the men was explained. Occasionally a particular man would be singled out by Jeff and Mike and encouraged to attend a particular group because they thought he would greatly benefit from it. The services offered included attending a Manline 'communication skills group', using the Manline 'phone service' whenever non-judgmental and understanding support was needed (e.g. during a time-out), attending an MMAV men's 'therapy group' and receiving individual counselling from a variety of sources. Additionally the men were encouraged to seek support from each other and a list of names and phone numbers was asked for by most of the group.

At about 9:20pm, as the sharing of further support options ended, one man said it was time for him to go. Mike encouraged him to stay; "I'd feel sad and incomplete if you were to leave

¹² The 'farewell party' (Shulman, 1979) is an excellent ritual for ending a group's developmental lifespan. Food is eaten, addresses can be exchanged, acknowledgements of the value of the group are given and farewell messages are shared. In this way important leaving issues are addressed and the group's time together is celebrated as a special event.

now. Could you stay for just a little longer and receive a round of feedback from the group?". The man rang up his babysitter and returned saying he could, for just a little longer.

Each person in the group was then invited to share their impressions and feelings to the man and to say goodbye to him. He listens in silence, occasionally laughing or commenting on what is being said. Most often he is nodding and listening. The feedback is typically positive and warm. The men tell him one at a time what they like about him and they wish him well for the future. Some offer advice while others affirm his strength and express confidence in his ability to be non-violent. There are warm feelings as he thanks the group and the facilitators, takes a handful of food, bids his final farewell and leaves.

Each member in the group is given feedback and bids his farewell in this manner and the process takes on average about fifteen minutes for each person. There is lots of praise for the facilitators and for the course by the men. They are grateful for the opportunity to participate in it and claim once more that many more men should know about this stuff. The metaphor of the journey which the course has set the men on is cited frequently. The men maintain that the journey is long and difficult, but that it is well worth it. Mike and Jeff in turn praise each individual for their progress and suggest further future challenges for them. There is lots of emotional talk as the men say how they feel about each other and about leaving. Most are sad to go, for the end to be here. Some are scared of how they will be without the support group. Mike affirms to such men that he has faith in them and that they now possess the necessary skills to be non-violent, they just have to practice and use them.

The facilitators are the last men to receive feedback and to give their goodbye messages. They acknowledge to each other how they have enjoyed working with each other and they verbally express love for each other and give each other a hug. They acknowledge to the men how they are glad to have met them and look forward to meeting them again one day, maybe at a reunion barbecue which one man says he will arrange soon. There is feeling of a common bond in the group. Some of the men hug each other. Some shake hands. It is late by the time we are all finished. We all slowly drift off, nibbling on our food as we bid our final farewells. No-one quite wants to go, to leave this sense of aroha. To finish the group. It's over.

I find myself feeling sad and relieved that the course is finally finished. I am relieved that the emotional intensity is over although I feel a sense of loss that the group will no longer be together again. I feel love for some of the men here and respect and care for the one's I don't know so well. I wish them the best for the future. I know they want to be non-violent and I know their lives are hard, that their relationships are frustrating and difficult. I feel sorry for them. I wish their lives could be easier. So long guys. May you find peace.

CHAPTER EIGHT

DISCUSSION OF THE MMAV PROGRAMME

Course Summary

The programme began with a number of group development issues being addressed, which had the cumulative effect of providing, for at least some of the men some of the time, a warm and safe environment in which to work. People met each other through fun name games and continuum exercises and a group focus and set of rules, including confidentiality, were developed collectively. The facilitators treated the men with respect, disclosed their own similar stories and supported and validated the men's emotional lives. Through their respectful and friendly approach the facilitators set a scene from which a supportive, cohesive and relatively relaxed group would emerge. The men were accepted but their violence was not. These facilitation features provided a safe context for the men which encouraged and enabled the 'disclosure' of the men's personal stories.

Active learning strategies such as continuums, role plays, brainstorming sessions, videos, practices and small and large group discussions, as well as more traditional didactic teaching methods, were employed to develop the men's awareness of issues raised by MMAV and to impart specific skills to the group. These active learning strategies are thought to be more effective in group work for imparting knowledge and awareness than traditional didactic teaching (Newstrom and Scannel, 1980; Swain, 1984). In this way everyone in the group was actively engaged in the learning process and with the distinct facilitation style, which 'invited' everyone individually to participate, everyone was involved in the 'processing' discussions (Hoskin, 1995; Johnson and Johnson, 1982) that followed.

The facilitation style was 'democratic' (Tyson, 1989) in that Jeff and Mike offered distinct directions for the group, in the form of 'invitations', whilst giving ample room for the men to make their own decisions. They achieved a balance between being 'task orientated', in that they were committed to achieving the goals of each session, whilst also being 'process orientated' in that they sensitively catered for the men's needs as they arose (Tyson, 1989).

An agenda was set and agreed upon early on in the group, and was continually referred back

to as the purpose of "why we are here"; "stopping violence to our intimate partners". It was emphasised that each person was ultimately 'responsible for their behaviour' and that because violence was defined as a 'conscious choice of behaviour', the key to successfully completing this journey lay in acknowledging and accepting this 'responsibility'.

Men shared their violent experiences throughout the course and throughout this time any denials of 'responsibility' and 'purpose' to their behaviour were challenged and confronted. At first many of the men seemed 'resistant' (Edleson and Tolman, 1992) to this discourse claiming that they had no control or little choice in their behaviour. As the weeks went by however, as they learnt more about their 'violence' and alternative ways of 'dealing with their anger' and other feelings, they more frequently 'owned' their violence, as was indicated in their use of the official 'I language' and in acknowledging the purposes of their behaviour. The men thus, in their own way, to various degrees and over different periods of time, tended to experiment with and to adopt the official 'personal responsibility' discourse of the programme, at least within the context of the programme.

Violence was defined as being an "instrumental strategy of power and control", of which physical assault was outlined as being one form of abuse among several, used by men to control and subjugate their partners. It was made emphatically clear that such behaviour was unacceptable under any circumstances as no-one has the right to impose their wishes upon another. 'Anger' was distinguished from violence in this sense and was defined as a feeling or an emotion, which in itself is OK. The message of the programme was that it's how you express that anger that is OK or not.

Whilst the power and control model of violence provided an overall framework by which the men's experiences were continuously being contextualised, much of the time was spent imparting practical skills to the men which were designed to enable the men to better deal with or manage their 'anger' or 'tension'. This was a focus for the 'middle period' of the course and included strategies such as learning to rate one's anger and tension on a scale, learning to identify the critical moment of decision in a violent episode and learning the procedure of taking a time-out (IRTO). These were placed within a context of the 'cycle of violence' (Walker, 1979). Additionally relaxation and assertiveness skills were imparted to the group as further means of "breaking out of this destructive cycle".

The men's talk during the course reflected this 'inner tension' view of violence. They frequently referred to biological and emotional forces deep within them that would overwhelm them occasionally, exploding in violence. Whilst the way the men talked about such 'forces' developed during the course, in that by the end of it they more readily recognized that they had some control over how they dealt with their feelings, the understanding itself remained intact. For instance "I lost my cool" or "I blew my stack", became "I kept a lid on my anger". If the men were unable to 'keep a lid on their anger' the men, by the end of the course, typically blamed themselves and took personal responsibility for not implementing their 'control' strategies. They had 'failed', in the face of their inner tension, to maintain a non-violent response and took up this position of a 'failure'. Here they felt guilty, responsible and disappointed and angry at themselves.

'Consciousness raising' of gender issues constituted a further integral part of the group's exploration and this was developed more specifically towards the end of the course. Men's sex role socialisation was explored in detail in the brainstorming exercise in session 7 and also formed a general focus in an ongoing sense through the challenging of sex-role expectations. The issue of the feminist informed analysis of the social and historical context of men's institutional dominance over women in the wider community was also addressed. In this way wider structural issues beyond the individual were illuminated as supports for violence and these 'social systemic' issues were discussed through personal experiences.

Throughout the course the men were encouraged to think about the long term and short term emotional impact of their behaviour on their partners and their children, thus fostering a sense of empathy with the victims of their abuse. This was typically contrasted with the men's ideals for their families, with the discrepancy between the two being pointed out. Developing the men's emotional awareness and their ability to express and communicate this was also the focus of much attention throughout the programme, with open-ended questions being used constantly to enquire about the men's primary feelings in recalled scenarios and in the now. Mike and Jeff role modelled the skill of emotional articulation well, as they did with other skills such as power sharing and respecting each other's personal space and difference. Non-threatening communication of feeling and listening skills were addressed towards the end of the course. The group ended with a recap and personal summary of issues to be faced. A celebration sharing and feasting ritual marked the end of the group.

Discourses Informing the MMAV Programme

Through participating in the MMAV Stopping Violence programme, I came to identify several discourses and related practices to be informing and constituting the programme. Overall these discourses are organised and co-articulated within a structure that supports each discourse and through the particular organisation presented the men are offered a very clear alternative to their current situation of violence through a variety of afforded practices. There are tensions between these discourses however although these are not obvious and do not seem to be questioned and picked up upon by the men. The most central discourse utilised throughout the programme is the Liberal humanist conception of the individual and the 'intentional' 'instrumental' violence that he inflicts.

1) The Liberal humanist discourse and the 'instrumental' use of violence.

'Personal responsibility' is a binding theme and a fundamental assumption of the programme. The men were repeatedly informed that they were 'responsible' for themselves, their feelings and their behaviour. Indeed the reason why we were there, we were reminded frequently, was to learn to take 'responsibility' for and to change 'our' violent behaviour. In this world view, not only is every individual autonomous and free to make choices about their behaviour, but everyone is equal and has basic moral rights, such as to not being controlled, 'abused' or violated by others. Consistent with this world-view MMAV treated the men with respect, consulted them in decisions and would 'invite' each to participate in activities, not demanding them to.

Practices informed by this discourse in the programme include the men being encouraged to 'consciously decide' and to commit themselves to undertaking a non-violent lifestyle. They were encouraged to use 'I language' so that they owned their feelings, thinking and behaviour and they were encouraged to perceive their violence as a 'choice'. The men were 'challenged' frequently to this end, first to own their behaviour and secondly to take responsibility for it. No excuses or externalizations of blame for the men's violence were allowed.

Violence is defined by MMAV as "a set of behaviours which exert control over another person against their will". It is this broad definition of violence, as distinct from more conventional accounts which define violence in terms of "harm" (e.g. Myers, 1993; Sonkin and Durphy, 1982), that is used consistently throughout the programme. The men's behaviours

are typically discussed within the context of this distinct discourse and more specifically the feminist 'power and control' model (Pence and Paymar, 1993).

The power and control model, borrowed from the Duluth feminist education programme for batterers (Pence and Paymar, 1993), represents the different forms of tactics and behaviours individual men "use to establish and maintain control in their relationships". Verbal abuse, physical abuse, sexual abuse, threats, intimidation, economic abuse, isolation and restrictions of freedom are all considered to be strategies for maintaining power and control and thus constitute 'violence'. The goal of the programme is to stop men's violence in all of these forms. Physical abuse is consequently defined as one 'strategy' among many that needs to be challenged and stopped. This model serves as a central reference tool for interpreting and challenging the men's behaviour throughout the programme. During the course the men's abusive behaviour is consistently questioned for motives and the men are challenged with the re-definition of their violence as a strategy for control.

Because violence is seen as purposeful, MMAV do not accept any other reason or 'justification' put forward by the men for their violence. These would be incompatible with the official Liberal humanist position of 'individualism', 'choice' and 'personal responsibility'.

2) The Romantic 'expressive-tension' discourse on violence.

The second discourse which forms an integral part of the MMAV programme is an 'inner tension' account of aggression. The specific model of tension employed is informed by the frustration-aggression hypothesis as proposed by Dollard, Doob, Miller, Mowrer and Sears (1939) and the cycle of violence theory as proposed by Walker (1979). These models suggest that the expression of aggression is a response to stress and the build up of tension and frustration with violence being one reinforcing tension releasing mechanism among many options. These models are distinct from the deterministic instinctual drive theories such as that of Freud or Lorenz in that they give room for alternative non-violent behaviour for releasing 'tension'. This 'expressive tension' discourse reflects a common sense understanding of violence which is brought to the group by both the men and the facilitators, as reflected in the men's talk (e.g. "I was so wild I just snapped and lost control") and a programme focus on imparting strategies for the men to more effectively and less violently deal with their 'anger' (e.g. time-out strategies).

This understanding of the men, as being subject to powerful 'forces from within' which rise up and overwhelm the men, reflects a broader discourse culturally and historically; the seventeenth century Romantic world view (Gergen, 1991; Stearns, 1986). MLAV practices informed by this discourse involve rating one's level of frustration and anger and acting on this in a constructive way when one's tension levels and thus one's potential for violence is high. Such strategies for reducing this inner tension and also maintaining this at a low level include relaxation, taking time-outs, positive self talk, improved emotional expression and communication skills, assertion training and cognitive restructuring of attitudes to women. All of these can be used to "stop the cup overflowing" and to "break the cycle of violence". IRTO is the basic skill imparted to this end with the others complimenting this safety plan in broader preventative ways.

Within this discourse 'inner tension' is defined as the etiological problem and practices which reduce the build up of tension and which prevent tension exploding into violence, such as IRTO, are appropriate intervention strategies for reducing the likelihood of violence. 'Overwhelming forces from within' must be reduced and/or contained if violence is to be stopped and the woman is to be safe. It is these strategies which traditionally inform 'anger management' programmes (e.g. Sonkin and Durphy, 1982). The concept of 'anger management' is also informed by Liberal humanism, because 'management' involves constructs such as 'consciousness', 'intent' and 'free will'. 'Anger management' thus co-articulates constructions from both Romantic and Liberal humanist discursive resources.

3) The Learning discourse of aggression and human behaviour.

From a 'learning' perspective violence is seen as learned behaviour with the implication that non-violent alternatives can also be learned. This perspective opens up several possibilities for intervention practice in treating and stopping men's violence and many of these implications are apparent in this programme. The most immediate appearance of this discourse is in the physical structure of the room, which resembled a classroom. The two facilitators sat at the front and used a whiteboard to impart knowledge that they had for the benefit of the group. They also used 'educational' metaphors like "course" and "programme" to describe the intervention strategy as a whole.

Violence is seen by learning theorists as a learned response which is 'reinforced' through a variety of discursive constructions including tension reduction (expressive tension), getting one's way (instrumental) and maintaining male dominance (social system discourse) (Dutton, 1988; Ganley, 1981a; Stordeur and Stille, 1989). In the cycle of violence described by Walker (1979), a model used throughout the course, the first phase is one of tension building. Violence dissipates this in the acute second stage and the relaxation which follows this reinforces the behaviour. An application of learning principles to this 'expressive tension' theory enables the men to break out of this behavioural 'cycle'. The men are 'taught' new skills and strategies which increase their behavioural repertoire for dealing with stressful situations. In this way the men can change their response for dealing with violence provoking scenarios. Using learning principles, the facilitators would model these alternative behaviours to the men and get the men to practice these behaviours, with feedback and reinforcing comments. The skills imparted in this manner include assertion, communication skills, positive self talk and IRTO.

The learning model is used in this course in conjunction with the 'expressive tension' and Liberal humanist discourses - to impart tension or anger management 'skills' to the men. It is also used in conjunction with the 'social system' discourse to foster an awareness to the men of their socialisation - challenging their 'learned' sexist attitudes and expectations - culturally inherited attitudes which are thought to underlie their violence. Learning theorists such as Bandura (1973) claim that one's personal and social history determine one's subjective appraisal of events and consequently one's behavioural response in a given situation. For example, a man who, through his sex role socialisation, expects to be 'king of his castle' is likely to feel justified in rebuking his wife when she challenges his 'legitimate authority'. If he has grown up in a social environment in which violence is frequently observed and reinforced then it likely that he will rebuke his wife through such means. Learning theory thus works well with a 'social system' discourse on men's violence. If the men have 'learned' inappropriate behaviours and 'dangerous' thinking patterns these can be unlearned and replaced by new, more appropriate and non-violent forms. Learning theory is thus co-articulated with and through each of the discourses identified to be operating in the MMAV 'stopping violence' text.

4) The Structuralist 'social systemic' discourse on violence.

A 'social systemic' account of the men's violence as being produced through social forces, such as ideological norms, existing beyond the individual man whilst constructing, enabling and directing his violence towards his partner, can also be seen to be operating in and informing the course. The 'educational - learning' structure to the course, both physically and descriptively, most immediately reflects MMAV's understanding of the issue as a social rather than a personal or 'pathological' problem. From this backdrop MMAV move on to engage in the related practice of 'resocialising' the men to a degree by challenging their attitudes and expectations towards masculinity, women, traditional gender roles and the acceptability of violence. By 'raising awareness' about these issues, by challenging the men to think about 'normative' forces critically and by teaching the men new ways of being in the world which exist outside the constraints of traditional norms and expectations, the men's likelihood of being violent is, from this discursive position, strongly reduced. The constraints of the wider 'social system' are expanded for these individuals thereby enabling new 'non-violent' responses.

In contrast to various norms in our society, such as violent men being tough and macho, violence was, reflecting the Liberal humanist 'intentional' account of the person, considered to be an 'unacceptable' violation of another person's rights to self autonomy. The men's violence to their partners was redefined as 'intentional control' over and a 'violation' of them as persons and this was defined as 'bad'. The men were told that no-one has the right to impose their will over any one else. The men's reasons for their violence were challenged in this light and 're-defined' as 'excuses' for their controlling tendencies. They were given the clear message that their violence to their partners is a serious issue and that neither the law, MMAV nor the changing community would accept it. Violence was unacceptable under any circumstances.

Why individual men would seek to 'control' their partners was also addressed in the course. Through challenges, discussion and thus 'consciousness raising' the men became 'aware' of traditional masculine expectations, such as men being tough, in control and the king of the castle, which, from this perspective, encourages the use of violence towards wives and partners. Consequently men were 'resocialised' to a degree from the course. The meaning of a relationship was explored and the 'equality' ideal was imparted and contrasted with the dark

side of a one-sided 'power and controlling' relationship. The men were constantly being referred to as "men" and their gender was emphasised as important and worth thinking about. Gender norms and stereotypes for both sexes were explored in depth and the men went through a symbolic process of rubbing these out and rebuilding 'healthier' more androgynous and less constraining ideals. They were encouraged to role model these changes to other men and boys, thereby challenging the broader socio-cultural system.

The feminist 'power triangle' model of society was imparted to the men also, providing an awareness of the context of their abuse. This gave the men an insight into some of the external social forces which have helped to shape their relationships and behaviour and which have encouraged them to be violent to their partners. Awareness of these violence provoking structures surrounding the relationship enables the men, from a Liberal humanist position, to choose to not be directed by such forces in this manner and to ensure that they do not direct others within this system also. They can behave differently. This co-articulation with the Liberal humanist constructs of 'awareness' and 'choice' was apparent in each of the 'consciousness raising' issues and strategies informed through this discourse. An implicit question throughout the course was whether the participants were 'responsible' enough to make 'intentional' changes in their lives based upon their new found awareness of 'social systemic' normative constraints.

Co-articulations with the 'expressive tension' account of violence were also apparent. Consciousness raising of gender issues, besides raising 'awareness', presumably had the additional effect of 'developing' or 'restructuring' the men's expectations of their partners, thereby reducing their frustration and anger towards their partners when their 'sexist' expectations were not met. Aside from overt challenges to their 'sexist' and 'violent' world view the men were also exposed to new ways of relating to each other and to experiencing themselves emotionally in ways existing outside traditional bounds of masculinity. These new skills, from an 'expressive tension' discursive position, further enable the men look after themselves emotionally, keeping them from becoming unnecessarily or prematurely 'angry' or 'tense'. Through the facilitator's role modelling, through their emotional questions and through the experience of being in a group with other overtly emotional men, the men were exposed to new ways of experiencing themselves and of 'being men'. Their awareness of

themselves emotionally and other people's emotionality was expanded and they became more sensitive to these processes.

The men also experimented with another major social taboo; caring and being emotionally supportive towards other men. By teaching the men to engage in emotionally open and supportive talk with each other, not only could their emotional needs and tension be more readily attended to (before they rise to dangerous levels), but their emotional dependence upon their partners would consequently be reduced, along with their 'needs for control' and 'instrumental' motivation for violence (Corey and Corey, 1990; Marriot, 1988; Stordeur and Stille, 1989). In this way structural norms which facilitate the men's dependence upon their partners are subverted, thereby reducing violence towards them.

Aside from consciousness raising, the men have also 'learnt' from the course many new skills designed to enable healthier, more fulfilling and 'equal' relationships with their partners. The skills imparted, typically through a learning discourse, compliment the consciousness raising by providing new behaviours for the men. These skills typically exist outside the various norms of masculinity and include listening to and empathizing with their partners, compromising and communicating assertively, clearly and respectfully with them.

5) Group development practices.

Existing also within the course are a number of practices which enable the group to develop in such a way as to heighten the potential 'learning' for each man. These practices can be seen as process elements which make the men more likely to think about and digest the content presented to them. These include the name games and continuum exercises through which the men came to meet each other. They also include the warm humanistic climate the facilitators offered to the men. Such practices, I think, were essential to the smooth running and motivated learning and participation which took place in the course.

The facilitators respected the men, validated their feelings and were supportive of their concerns. They had fun with the men. They opened themselves up to the men emotionally, placed themselves on their level and shared with them their similar stories. This enabled the men to feel safe and to take risks in this environment (Yalom, 1985). Through such a climate highly personal information was shared by everyone. Personal disclosure within the group is

considered to be essential for the men to own up to and take responsibility for their violence (Edleson and Tolman, 1992).

The men were 'invited' to participate in group activities, giving them autonomy and choice about their input. Such a strategy, while consistent with the overarching theme of Liberal humanism, is thought to reduce 'resistance' in the men whilst engaging their participation (Jenkins, 1991). Each man was called upon and his involvement in the group was facilitated in this way, ensuring that each man participated in the various activities and discussions. A group identity and sense of belonging emerged quickly in this climate. The men were able to give and receive feedback and to learn much from both the facilitators and each other. These 'humanistic' 'process' practices are standard features of facilitative Adult Learning programmes (e.g. Hunter, Bailey and Taylor, 1992; Knowles, 1970).

Discourse Dynamics within the Course Structure

The various discourses identified as constituting the MMAV programme afford an abundance and variety of intervention strategies, all aimed at and contributing in different ways towards stopping the men's violence to their partners. As a discrete series of discourses the summation of discourses employed by MMAV provide contradictory messages to the men concerning their violence. The way in which these discourses are organised and presented in the programme however provides a more coherent message. The MMAV programme organises the different strands of thought and afforded strategies available into a meaningful and consistent whole. How MMAV achieves this and the way in which these discrete discourses are packaged and presented is very interesting.

One notable feature of this organisation is the absence of one of the discourses which features significantly in the social science literature. Four of the five discourses identified in the literature review are represented in the course and these comprise the basic building blocks which structure the programme. One discourse is not employed however and this is the Medical 'pathology' position. There is no evidence of this discourse being imparted to the men in any form at any stage of the programme. The absence of this discourse, which labels the men, the woman or the relationship as 'sick' or 'temporarily insane', is a significant discursive move on MMAV's part. It gives room for the Liberal humanist position on violence to become a dominant accounting principle of the programme. Through the strong use of this

discourse, and in the absence of the 'pathological' account, the men are explicitly constructed as being 'responsible' and implicitly as 'sane'. This has significant implications for the amalgamation of other discourses within the programme structure and flavours the way in which each of the discourses employed are presented to the men.

The Liberal humanist contention of individual 'free will' and 'personal responsibility' underlies the programme and is the core around which other discourses are shaped and presented. First and foremost the men are informed that they must take responsibility for their 'purposeful' violations of others, for 'monitoring and managing their stress levels', for being aware of their 'sexist expectations' and for 'choosing' 'alternative non-violent behaviours' to cope with violence provoking life events. These basic assumptions of 'awareness', 'choice' and 'responsibility' form the backbone to the course. There can be no excuses for the men's violence and their purposeful violation of another's personal rights to autonomy and moral rights to live a life free of violence. Such acts are immoral in this sense (Dobash and Dobash, 1992) and are discouraged as such.

Couched within this overarching official philosophy of the programme are other discourses which, while not necessarily consistent with this discursive world view, are incorporated within its parameters. The 'expressive-tension' discourse, for example, affords an abundance of tension and anger reduction strategies which imply to the group that violence is a result of the build up of their 'frustration', 'tension' or 'anger'. This account of violence informs a major component of the course. This Romantic discourse however is not compatible with the dominant Liberal account of the programme. These discourses articulate 'incommensurable' constructions of human agency, as has been discussed in the first study of this report; the Liberal humanist agent is rational and autonomous, the Romantic agent, in contrast, is subject to 'irrational' 'overwhelming' forces from within.

MMAV have managed to couch these Romantic constructions within the overarching Liberal humanist discourse. They have been able to do this primarily through subsuming Romantic constructs within the Liberal humanist position, through employing the concepts of 'awareness', 'choice' and 'responsibility' and elevating these constructs to an 'official' status. This practice informs and enables 'anger management'; a construct co-articulating these discrete linguistic resources. The message imparted by MMAV in respect to the co-articulation

is essentially that "these forces are powerful but they are not necessarily overwhelming. You do have some control over them and we will teach you how. It's up to you to 'decide' to use these skills and to harness these forces". The 'rational' 'liberal' agent must 'manage' these Romantic 'forces from within' and is thus one hundred percent 'responsible' for ensuring that they do not overwhelm him.

In this way, through the constructs of 'awareness', 'choice' and 'responsibility', each of the discourses and strategies identified as being imparted to the men are contextualised within the broader 'official' Liberal humanist philosophy of the programme. In strong support of this organising principle the 'learning' discourse emphasises that the men can be non-violent when they have alternative behaviours within their repertoire of responses (Bandura, 1973). Through imparting alternative strategies, such as IRTO, for dealing with 'anger' (expressive tension discourse) and also through modelling and imparting less traditional 'norms' for men's behaviour, thinking and feeling (social system discourse), the MMAV programme imparts new behavioural and cognitive repertoires to the group, which the men must, from a Liberal humanist standpoint, 'consciously' and 'intentionally' 'choose' to employ. The 'learning' discourse thus helps to cohere the various discourses and informed strategies around the Liberal humanist core. It is the glue which holds this structure together.

MMAV imparts constructs and practices informed by the Structuralist 'social system' discourse in this way also, through employing 'learning' and Liberal humanist accounts of agency, as it challenges and imparts ideas and practices which subvert traditional cultural constructions of 'violence', 'masculinity' and 'femininity', all of which are thought to support men's violence towards their women partners. Particular 'cultural norms' subject to challenge include; the acceptability of violence in the home; an equation of masculinity with being tough, in control and 'winning' arguments; an equation of femininity with subservience; and belief systems of men being breadwinners and rulers of the roost. MMAV counteracts and subverts these conventions by imparting a clear and consistent message that violence is unacceptable under any circumstances, by confronting the men directly with reference to 'sexism' and through imparting specific 'alternative' behaviours for dealing with conflict. The facilitators challenge the men to 'consciously' resist fulfilling dangerous stereotypes in the public world and to become 'aware' of the various constraints afforded through our 'sexist' and 'violent' culture at present. The men thus 'learn' new forms of subjectivity and new ways

of being in the world. The men must 'choose' to act upon these insights and to foster this new 'awareness'.

At times the 'social systemic' discourse works with and compliments constructs from the 'expressive tension' discourse also, co-articulating intervention practices designed to reduce the likelihood of the build up of tension specifically, so that the men's 'frustration' and 'tension' does not reach 'explosion' point. These subversive and tension reducing strategies include cognitive restructuring of the men's expectations of their partners, so they do not become 'frustrated' with them for not meeting their standards, and imparting new emotional and social behaviours such as empathy, communication, assertion, and non-homophobic support.

Again each of these insights are incorporated within a Liberal humanist framework, through the notions of 'awareness', 'choice' and 'responsibility'. The awareness of sexist cultural norms, which makes partners a likely target of aggression, coupled with the notion of personal responsibility, constitutes a powerful message. The men are challenged to resist blindly following cultural norms of gender and violence and to oppose these in the social world. They are challenged to adopt new behaviours outside of these 'social system' constraints, such as leaning on other men for support, to model these alternatives to other men and to identify and resist traditional supports for their violence.

As with the Romantic 'expressive tension' discourse discussed above however, there is tension and conflict between the 'social system' discourse and the dominant individualist Liberal humanist position. Liberal humanism holds that the men are individually responsible for their choices in behaviour. Simultaneously however, although more overtly so in the latter stages of the course, MMAV suggest that the men's culture and social system have geared them in this direction. They have been programmed and pushed by the social system to be violent in general and violent towards their partners specifically. In respect to this contradiction MMAV imparts a message which essentially acknowledges that while "No-one is responsible for this state of affairs, you are 'aware' of this state of affairs now. You are now 'responsible' for 'choosing' not to collude with or perpetuate it". The men seemed to accept this Liberal humanist couching of the Structuralist issue and thus did not question or challenge it.

The conflict between the Romantic and Liberal humanist world views however emerged more overtly, more frequently and more consistently during the programme. For example on the first day when the men shared their stories one man indicated that stress at work had a lot to do with his violence and was quickly challenged by the facilitators that he 'chose' to go home and be violent to his wife in a certain way to a certain degree. His violence to her was defined as a 'chosen' act and his attribution of stress was defined as an 'excuse'. Soon after when several men had indicated that they felt their violence had much to do with a sudden and mysterious explosion of rage, Mike offered them an analogy of a cup slowly filling up with stress and tension that will 'overflow' one day. He added that most men live out their lives "pretty wired" with quite high average levels of stress. We were instructed that we must keep this from reaching '10' and exploding in violence. The course, he said, would impart skills to the men which would help them keep these tension levels down. The men did not question this contradiction as it arose even in this overt form. The issue was similarly couched within the Liberal humanist position through the concepts of 'awareness', 'choice' and 'responsibility'.

In summary the Liberal humanist position forms the backbone to the programme and is the couch in which each of the other discourses sit. The organisational effect that this dominant discourse engenders in the programme is, in part, afforded by the absence of the pathological discourse, which, if employed by MMAV would strongly challenge the Liberal humanist assumptions of individual choice, rationality and personal responsibility. Mediated through the 'learning' position, the 'expressive tension' and 'social system' discourses have been integrated and applied in imaginative and useful combinations, affording a rich variety of intervention strategies. Although these discourses fit and work well together in this arrangement, in terms of the options and strategies they afford for the men, there are points of conflict which emerge in this organisation.

The couching of the Romantic 'expressive tension' and the Structuralist 'social systemic' discourse within the Liberal humanist centred framework is not an easy one. Mediated through terms such as 'awareness', 'responsibility' and 'choice' however, this combination is convincing to the men and appears to be useful for them. The couching is so successful in fact that this conflict and tension is never challenged explicitly. This could reflect the dominance of the Liberal humanist discourse in the modern era. It may be that these contradictions will

emerge more overtly in the men's talk as they arise in the interviews. Overall however, the discourses as they are selected, presented and organised together in the MMAV course do seem to work well together, affording a diverse and rich array of strategies for stopping the men's violence. The men seemed to, after initially resisting the official Liberal humanist position, to experiment with and to accept this discursive structure and it will be interesting to see how this manifests in their post-interview talk.

The particular structure to the discourses as they are selected, organised and imparted by MMAV seems to reflect a pro-feminist approach to stopping the men's violence. As Adams (1988a, 1989) and Dobash and Dobash (1992) point out, different intervention strategies for batterers can be placed on a continuum of the degree to which they might be considered 'feminist'. A feminist standpoint takes a distinct position on each of the discourses identified in the social science literature, having strong implications for the selection and organisation of discourses for intervention. Adams (1988a, 1989) and Dobash and Dobash (1992) discuss the features characterising feminist interventions, with which MMAV's programme is in high accordance. MMAV's commitment to a pro-feminist approach to stopping the men's violence (Tisdall, 1993) could explain the particular discursive organizational structure identified to be informing and operating in the programme.

The broad definition of violence as an 'intentional' 'power and control' 'strategy', as opposed to being an 'anger problem', is most basic to a feminist standpoint. A second central feature is that, because violence is 'instrumental', as in the Liberal humanist position, there is no excuse for one's violence. Too often professional therapists in couple counselling or individual psychotherapy postulate causes for the man's violence which are outside his responsibility, thus, from a feminist standpoint, colluding in his violence. A feminist position imparts messages of personal responsibility and choice. A feminist approach, through postulating that the behaviour is intentional, will not accept any excuses. Period. Confrontation of any attempts to deny such responsibility is a standard feature of feminist interventions.

Feminist work aimed at stopping men's violence to their partners or to women in general advocate, alongside legal interventions, the use of groups as an appropriate format for bringing about change in batterers. This is because feminist and pro-feminist theorists see men's violence as being a logical extension of various 'cultural norms' within our patriarchal 'social

system', such as those of masculinity and sexism, and thus they provide the message to the men that their problem is a social one and not an individual 'pathology'. In these groups men are held to be personally responsible and one hundred per cent accountable for their behaviour whilst simultaneously their violence against women is acknowledged as being endorsed and constrained from within the social structure.

By implication stopping men's violence to women means changing the values, beliefs and behaviours acquired by the men which underlie their violence. Feminist programmes thus seek to 're-educate' the men, confronting them with the insights offered by a feminist critique of the social order. They seek to 're-socialise' the men in terms of their gendered and sexist upbringing and to impart an awareness of gender issues which are seen as basic to male violence. This intervention strategy has two levels to it. On the one hand men's sex role socialisation is explored and challenged, such as in the case of sexist expectations and emotional, communication and empathy skill deficits, and on the other the patriarchal institutional context of men's violence is explored and linked to the individual's 'intentional' behaviour. By contextualising men's violence within a male dominated institutional context, awareness is fostered about the reality and dangers of a patriarchal system in which men have more power than women both publicly and privately and the group can be encouraged to locate themselves within this state of affairs and to challenge this.

A feminist approach, through emphasising men's socialisation, is additionally sympathetic to the unintended side effects of men's sex role socialisation and the various implications this can have for men's 'tension' and 'expression'. Various components of men's socialisation, beyond their immediate controlling tendencies, are confronted in this respect, such as men's bravado, emotional ineptness and communication skill deficits which are thought to increase men's inner tension. Whilst not wanting to support 'expressive tension' accounts of men's violence, feminist informed programmes maintain that because a woman's safety is paramount the development of a 'personalised safety plan' is an essential ingredient to any comprehensive programme for batterers. Conventional anger management strategies are frequently used to this end and can be found to exist alongside the consciousness raising strategies which dominate feminist programmes (e.g. Pence and Paymar, 1993). In the MMAV programme IRTO is a practice which fulfils this requirement, imparting a series of specific skills which enable the man to attain a safety plan in the event of a highly aroused and potentially violent situation.

Such practices occur within an established context of no-one having the right to violate another's personal space or autonomy for whatever reason. There are no 'excuses'.

Each of these features are distinctive landmarks of pro-feminist programmes such as the innovative and influential Duluth, Emerge and Raven programmes founded in America early in the battered women's movement (Gondolf, 1985a; Pence and Paymar, 1993). MMAV appears to be utilising the discourses and the practical applications employed in these groups and in this way seem to rest strongly on the feminist side of the feminist/non-feminist continuum of stopping violence groups. The fact that MMAV calls its programme a 'Stopping Violence' programme is indicative of this as non-feminist group programmes typically work under the banner of a predominantly 'expressive tension' position; 'anger management' (Gondolf, 1985a).

In summary the particular choice of discourses and the way in which these are woven together in the programme by MMAV can thus be understood as reflecting an integrated, feminist informed, eclectic position on men's violence. The distinctive structure and organisation to the course makes much sense when it is placed within this broader standpoint. Given this however, it is interesting to note that whilst the 'power and control' model is presented as the official standpoint on violence to the group, and is the hub around which the course is structured, this 'feminist' model is never explicitly described and presented to the group as a model of 'male' 'controlling' behaviour occurring in a 'patriarchal' context. Whilst each these messages are imparted at different times throughout the course, it is left up to the men to make this theoretically essential link.

Reflexivity

In terms of my own development in understanding men who are violent to their partners I have learnt a lot from participating in this course. The subjective stance which I hold towards the men has developed as the course has progressed and as I have grown to know the men better. Before we met as a group I constructed batterers as bullies who wanted power for its own sake. I thought that they were selfish and sexist men who basically wanted everything their own way, demanding subservience and domestic care from the women in their lives. I thought these men did not care about the pain their partners would feel. Needless to say I didn't like them very much and felt angry towards them. At this stage my understanding of

the men reflected a pro-feminist position, a position co-articulating 'social systemic' and 'instrumental' accounts on wife abuse.

Now, after spending an extended period of time in a sharing context with such men, I find myself caring and feeling sorry for these men as much as I am angry at them. I no longer despise them, although I most certainly do not respect or endorse their abuse. I now see these men more as emotionally overwhelmed and distraught 'victims' rather than cold hearted 'patriarchs'. My construction and subject positioning of the violent men has shifted as a consequence of participation in the course. I have undergone a personal transformation. In a sense this transformation validates the 'participant observation' choice of research method. As a participant in the programme I have been effected by my experience and this is realised in my experience as an observer; in the shifts in how I construct and position violent men.

Whilst I still think there are elements of sexism and control in the men's violence, I now construct their violence primarily in terms of 'social systemic' and 'expressive tension' discourses working together. I see the men as having limited abilities, due to their sex role socialisation, which pre-disposes them to high tension and distress, particularly within the intimate relationship. They tend to lack the interpersonal skills required to deal with or prevent the build up of this tension/emotional distress non-violently. They bury their pain. Their violence, it seems to me now, is primarily an outcome of a culture which defines masculinity very narrowly; feeding into both the men's emotional 'tension' and their inability to cope with this non-violently. This tension is readily overwhelming for the men and because they seem so genuinely remorseful, I don't think these men terrorise their partners needlessly and intentionally, as I once did, although I can see how this might happen once the 'cycle of violence' has repeated itself a multitude of times. Rather I accept the men's view of their violence as an outcome of their 'all too ready' rage and distress. I construct the men's tension itself as an 'unintended consequence' of a particular configuration of 'cultural norms'. I now position myself as a 'Structuralist Romantic' and it is through this co-articulated discourse that I construct the men and their violence.

In general I sense two particular kinds of wife assaulting men. Some are frustrated, disappointed and desperate men seeking comfort and security in their lives. These men seem to feel powerless with their partners, feeling unappreciated, insecure and unsafe in their

relationships. They feel distressed, unconfident and consequently find themselves angry with their partners all too easily. They do not want to be like this. These men seem to need a lot of emotional affirmation but because of their limited emotional involvement with others in their lives they are dependent on their partners for this affirmation. When this is not forthcoming they hurt a lot, becoming dangerous through their sudden distress and anger. These men do not feel like 'real men' in their relationships. They are dependent, feel vulnerable and this 'demasculinisation' enrages them with their partners.

Other men, I sense, feel on edge and are tense the whole time, not appearing to need this love and affection, but rather prefer peace, quiet and predictability. Their partners build on the men's strain by putting pressure on or annoying them in various ways. These men are highly strung in general and as their anger quickly rises, they blame their wives for this tension, expressing it violently towards them, thinking perhaps that this response is justified, given the 'provocation'. These men are closed off emotionally and are very reluctant to talk about their emotional or personal lives. They do share their emotionality with anyone and consequently they remain in a constant state of 'inner tension'.

These impressions of the men I have come to know in the group are not mutually exclusive and I feel there are varying degrees of each within each man. All of these men seem to be rigid in their thinking, expecting their expectations to be met. They place great emphasis on their goals and generally appear to lack the skills to attend sensitively to the moment to moment and day to day emotional and social processes by which they live their lives. All of this occurs, I sense, within a sexist 'social system' which legitimates such responses.

The way in which the MMAV programme is structured and organised helps the men in many of these respects and I think that the course affords an excellent learning experience for these men, as is indicated in the appreciation shared in the final session. The men have learnt new forms of masculinity, new ways of being in the world and new ways of dealing with emotional distress. Furthermore they have learnt, through the management model, to take responsibility for their feelings and their behaviour and to look after themselves emotionally. All of the men are enthusiastic about what they have learnt in the course. It has taught them some specific skills to help deal with their anger and has opened them up to new ways, outside of traditional cultural norms, of looking at themselves and their partners. They have

been exposed to ways of thinking and acting which can reduce their tension, reduce their willingness to be violent and which increases their respect and tolerance for their partners. The course acknowledges the men's pain and suffering whilst encouraging them to monitor their tension levels and to express their feelings more openly, all of which can only be good, from the position I am coming from, for stopping these men's violence.

I liked the way the facilitators ran the course. Their group development and process skills were excellent. I liked how the men are respected in the course and are 'invited' to participate in the various activities. The facilitators are relaxed and open with the men, helping the men to relax and to share also, but they are very hard-line too, stating the MMAV position and holding to the official Liberal humanist position always, never letting it slip when it is challenged. They gain the men's respect and likewise they seem to respect each man. All up I was very impressed with the course structure and with how it was run.

STUDY THREE

A POST-STRUCTURALIST ANALYSIS OF VIOLENT MEN'S PRE AND POST PROGRAMME TALK

CHAPTER NINE

THE MEN'S PRE-PROGRAMME STORIES

Introduction

The third and final study to this research project spans five chapters and thus constitutes the longest report to this thesis. It's length, in part, is due to the three levels of post-structural analysis involved in exploring the men's interviews and in identifying the changes in subjectivity which occur as a consequence of their participation in the Stopping Violence programme.

The first level of analysis involves a search for regularities in the way in which the men construct objects, events, themselves and others. This preliminary analysis identifies common stories and themes to the men's accounts. Two chapters are dedicated to the presentation of this analysis, in effect an account of the men's stories as it is told through their own words. The present chapter presents recurring patterns of meaning from the pre-programme interviews and chapter eleven similarly reports these from the post-course interviews. Approaching the men's stories from a post-structuralist position, in which the individual's subjectivity is accepted as being fragmentary and contradictory (Bannister et al., 1994; Gavey, 1989, 1992; Weedon, 1987), this preliminary analysis has been sensitive to the various ways of speaking which have emerged both between and within interviewee's talk. This account is thus sensitive to the different stories which occur across the men's talk.

The second level of analysis locates these constructions and accounting devices within the culturally available discursive resources from which they emerge and considers the implications of these discourses for the men themselves and for the listener. Two chapters are dedicated to presenting these accounts once more. Chapter ten provides an account of the men's pre-programme discursive resources and chapter twelve provides an discursive account of the men's post-programme stories.

The third level of analysis compares the men's pre and post programme accounts. It is a comparative analysis exploring the discursive dynamics of the men's talk and their shifts and

continuities in subject positioning and accounting practice which have occurred over the period of the programme. This account is reported in the fifth and final chapter surrounding this study and it is in this higher order analysis and discussion that conclusions are drawn about the programme (Chapter thirteen).

For clarity and simplicity the presentation of the interview analyses have been broken into broad sections, reflecting the different points of focus and concern to the interview structures. For the pre-programme interviews the first section (a), comprising the bulk of the interview material, explores the men's accounts of their personal violence to their partners. In the second section (b) the men have been invited to discuss 'family violence' and 'men's violence to their partners' as a community problem. The purpose of these sections are to document the men's constructions of violence both before and after participation in a MMAV Stopping Violence programme.

In the third section (c) the men have been asked to talk about the gender dynamics of their existing and ideal co-habiting intimate relationships. These questions were guided by a pro-feminist perspective on men's violence which holds that men's sexist attitudes and expectations are responsible for their acts of violence. As a pro-feminist man I considered it important to explore not only the men's constructions of their violence but also the context in which their violence occurs, in particular how they construct their relationships.

Through a careful reading of the interview transcripts a number of recurring explanations were identified as being put forward by the men to account for their experience. There were many themes and variations in the way in which the men constructed their accounts and the men typically told several stories within each of their stories. The extent to which the various constructions identified are shared between the men vary, ranging from universal themes, constructed by all the men, to minor themes, employed by three or four. The extent to which a particular construction is converged upon by the men will be incorporated into the account through a gist of its prevalence delimited somewhere within this range. Identified themes in the men's constructions are furthermore presented with supporting extracts from the original interview transcripts. Where extracts are employed to this effect a pseudonym will be used to preserve the identity of the interviewee.

Section (a): The men's accounts of their violence to their partners

When accounting for their violence against their partners, the dominant story, as told by each of the participants, constructed high levels of 'stress', 'frustration' and 'anger' as causing an inner emotional state which became too much for the men to bear, at which point they would be overwhelmed by their inner 'pressure' and 'explode', becoming momentarily violent. A number of metaphors were involved in the construction of this story.

Metaphors characterising 'wild' 'inner pressure' occurred synonymously in the men's talk with their violence.

"I just get *wild* you know, *inside me*, really *wild*...Well it's sort of in the head too really, you know *it feels like pressure to get out*" (George).

"There's *something that will build up* in me" (John).

"*A lot of pressure...built up and up* and all of a sudden I snapped" (Carl).

"It *let out* some frustration I suppose" (Paul).

"I was feeling fine at the beginning then it sort of *built up*" (John).

"You get *wound up* so much" (Peter).

"I get *uptight*" (David).

"it's a *release*" (Mike).

Metaphors surrounding 'heat' and 'ignition' were commonly employed in conjunction with this 'pressure'.

"I just you know, it's just that *short fuse*...Just sort of *lose my cool* and then that's it, like I get angry and then I, you know, *lose my cool* and it just happens so quick you know" (Chris).

"Just a little thing will start me *flaring up* you know. Suddenly *explode*" (John).

"*Short fuse* and just *nutting off*" (Sean).

"I just *fly off me wick*" (Andrew).

"I get very uptight, my heart's racing and *I get all hot...it boils...blows out of proportion*" (David).

This 'pressure' and 'heat' was typically posited as reaching a 'limit' of some sort at which point the person would 'snap' or lose his 'cool'.

"My first reaction is to yell and scream and *get to the edge*, to the *verge of violence*, where I want to strike out, and I don't like that when I can't seem to handle the stress, family stress at home type thing. I physically *get to the point* where I'm over exerted, yeah...and I just can't handle it...to *the point* where I've actually pushed her a couple of times and that's not on (David).

"It gets to a *certain point* where it's too late to turn it around...it turns to violence" (Sean).

"I *lose my cool* pretty fast. Um, had a few arguments with the wife, and ah, *flying of the handle*. Hit her a few times...it sort of built up and then um, like *something just clicked in me* and I sort of got pretty agro...get to that *breaking point*" (John).

"I can't seem to handle the stress, family stress...I just *snap*" (George).

"I just *snapped* and couldn't take it any more" (Chris).

This 'snapping' and subsequent violence was frequently articulated as a reflex 'lash out' or 'explosion' response with no volition on the part of the agent.

"You get *wound up* so much inside *like a spring*, and the *release* of that spring is your arm *shooting out* with a closed fist...I didn't think about punching, I didn't think about hitting...it's just a *reflex action*...If I'm at the stage where, on reflex, because it's not a conscious thing, *on reflex I lash out* with a closed fist, then I'm at the stage where I need some serious help" (Peter).

"I've got no patience whatsoever but I mean a lot of people have got that but also that they get to that stage, I mean everyone gets angry. It's just the way that I do it. I'd like to change because I get *violently angry*. I mean you'll call it that because that's what it is when you abuse and violently *lash out*, so yeah" (Paul).

"I just *lashed out*" (Robert).

"I just *fly of me wick*...Once it happens, *BANG!*, and it's all over in 10-15 seconds, and I think what the hell did I do that for" (Andrew).

"I was *blowing up*" (Chris).

The men frequently reported 'blacking out' and/or 'losing control' over themselves and their behaviour during the latter stages of this 'pressure' and 'heat' build up. Several of the men could not consciously recall engaging in the violent episode.

"A lot of pressure...built up and built up and all of a sudden I snapped, it was a split second. I did a lot of damage *apparently*, which *I can't even remember...nothing, total blank...I blanked out*, it's their word" (Carl).

"I *blanked out* when I hit her. I *can't remember* it at all. *Blanked out*. I've thought about it a million times. I honestly don't know why I did it...*It just happened*. I can only just remember punching her. I just *lashed out* while she was on top of me. There was no intention to do it. It just happened" (Robert).

"I just looped out, snapped out, just you know went blank just for I don't know, however long it was...I *wasn't really conscious* of what I was doing, *just happened*, and then when I sort of did come clear I sort of stopped straight away in horror, and went oh no...I just *looped out, snapped out*" (Mike).

"I mean most of the time it's not even, it doesn't even *register* with me that I'm doing it, *it just happens*" (Paul).

Among the men who could recall the violent episode, it was typically reported that they felt 'out of control' of their behaviour and 'unable to stop themselves'.

"There was no need to stay and let it get out of hand, all I had to do was turn and walk away. But I don't know, you feel *trapped* sometimes, it's not that easy...*I couldn't walk away*...It's a double sided coin, or um a spiral effect, a *catch 22*. You can't walk away to relieve the anger because *the anger is stopping you* from walking away" (Peter).

"I could feel myself doing it, beating her up and that but *I couldn't stop myself*...it was just *like blacking out*...I didn't want to do it but *I couldn't stop myself*" (Chris).

"I've a foul, well I don't know if it's a foul, well I don't know what other people's tempers are like sort of...I just *fly off my wick*...I just get *bloody wild* at times...I don't know why I do it, well I do know why I do it, I get *bloody mad*. I do get bloody mad. It's quick and *BANG!* and then I think 'shit, what a big prick' um, I feel horrible...I'd *fly off the handle* in the sense that if *I'd sat down and thought about it* I would never have done it" (Andrew).

"I've always thought of myself as *in control* of my own situation, but I find *I'm not now*" (David).

Many of the men claimed that this 'stress' reaction could be set off by silly, trivial and small things that would just 'blow up' into huge, retrospectively unnecessary, arguments and violence. They were shocked with their 'over reactions' yet felt powerless to respond otherwise.

"I do get quite bad tempered quickly, it doesn't take much really. Yeah, Yeah. A lot of the time I just *fly off the handle at nothing* really" (George).

"The whole tragedy, I suppose you'd call it, the whole thing about it was, that it was over such an *insignificant little thing*, that it should never have *got that far*" (Peter).

"um *short fuse* and just *nutting off over little things* and things like that, yeah" (Sean).

"She'll wonder why I sort of fly off the handle, cause when you think about it *wasn't that much* to argue over. Just *a little thing starts me flaring up*, you know. *Suddenly explode*" (John).

Alongside their bewilderment the men reported feeling remorse for their actions.

"It just happened. I *regretted it straight after* and *I regret it* just as much today. You wouldn't have a clue how big I regret it" (Robert).

"...after I did the damage I didn't feel to damn hot. I felt like a *gutter rat* at the time" (Carl).

"It's not very nice is it and once you've calmed down and you think of it. I sort of think, *I'm sorry. I didn't mean to snap off the handle*" (George).

"What was best was, she's actually seen me, was to be able to *apologise*, you know, to let her know how *sorry I was* for what I'd done" (Peter).

The men typically owned their violence, seeing themselves as having an underlying 'problem' with it. They identified this problem with part of their character; a part they wanted to change.

"*I've got a problem...That's the type of person I am*. I'm the one that's dishing out the violence...I can certainly do without it as *part of my character*. *It's a part of my life that I don't want*" (Peter).

"I always knew *I had a bit of a problem* with it...I sort of never realised that it affected everybody else so much. Until I spoke to a few people...*I'd like to be able to change that*" (Paul).

"A positive thing for me at the moment is being *able to admit it* and do something about it you know, rather than just keep pushing it off and pushing it off and cause *that's how you solve a problem, you gotta admit you've got one* eh. No matter what the problem is...I'm hoping I can learn something for myself and *the better I can make myself*, the better it is for those around me" (Mike).

"I thought I'll come along here and try to sort it out...*sort out what the problem is*...Violence in another person is pretty scary to live with and that. Wonder what she's thinking yeah. Started to get *a bit worried* about that myself. Thought *I didn't want to be known as that*" (John).

The stopping family violence adverts on television appeared to help many of the men to admit to 'having a problem' with violence.

"It's quite shocking that one on TV. *It touched home to me what I was doing to the family without even realising I was doing it...those would have been our kids that were on TV you know*" (Sean).

"In the past three weeks it's like *a shot directly at me*. Like in itself that tells me *I'm taking that to heart* and there's a reason I'm taking it to heart, and that's because it's directed at me" (Peter).

"It's fairly shocking considering it does happen, and I mean it sort of makes you stop and think, especially when you, like with me coming here, *I sort of look at it* and say to Sarah, *Oh I'm not that bad am I?* And she goes no, but that's the other thing too, *it could progress into that, which is what I'm afraid of* with it...I'd hate it to get to that stage" (Paul).

"Well first time I saw it *I thought shit that's me*, you know, and when you see the little boy or the kids in the high chair screaming their heads off I think of my kids you know, *it's got to stop* somewhere along the line" (Carl).

Most typically the men constructed themselves as possessing 'anger' or 'temper' problems.

"I've got a *short temper* and when I get angry I just get physically violent...I get *violently angry*" (Paul).

"I've got a *bad temper*. I've *always had a bad temper*...I can certainly do without it as *part of my character*...I can do without the consequences, I can do without the hassles...It would be nice to go out and play badminton and not break a racquet" (Peter).

"*Anger problems*...I don't like that when I can't seem to *handle the stress*" (David).

"*I was the abuser*...I want to put a stop to it...that's part of the parcel of what *I'm trying to receive help* for...a better way of *dealing with anger* before it *turns to violence*...you know you can be angry and disagree but it doesn't have to get to the real abusive violence and physical violence" (Sean).

"I just, you know, stood back and looked at myself, the way I was treating my family and people that care about me, my girlfriend you know, this was, you know, all me, like *I was blowing up* at them, you know, and moaning at them what have you. It's something that I stood back and looked at and I knew that *I had to get help* for this because it's something that you've got to take charge of straight away...I know that I don't want to do it. I know that it's hurting a lot of people...there's still that inclination for that sort of thing, even without the violent side to me *I just get angry to early*, I just you know, it's just that *short fuse*" (Chris).

Given their underlying 'anger problem' it is understandable perhaps that from MMAV the men typically wanted one thing; strategies and skills which would help them to deal with their 'bad temperament' and 'inner tension' without resorting to violence.

"Well the reason I've come (to MMAV) is because I'm aware of the anger that I've got inside me on certain issues and I want to *learn how to deal with it* in a more positive way...I want to become aware of some *different mechanisms to deal with it* sort of thing" (Mike).

"I want to *learn to control*, or not control, *get a handle on my temper*. I got a bad temper, I've always had a bad temper, but increasingly it's going from just a temper to a violent temper. So, from say an over reaction, to a violent reaction" (Peter).

"What I was hoping was to get some way of *channelling the anger* into an area where it was not so volatile, perhaps *learning a technique* or something to know when I'm starting to get to the point where I won't be able *to control it or handle it*, it's just very open ground to me" (David).

"Well I want to sort my anger out one way or the other, so I don't get shitty and all angry and that...*To try and learn to control my temper* for a start, you know cause I do get quite bad tempered quickly, it doesn't take much really" (George).

"I want to *find a way to sort of take my anger out on something else*, you know, sort out the problem...why I suddenly explode...That's something I need to find out...*Just to learn to control my anger* and uh, sort of *not to get to that breaking point* and get violent" (John).

"I hope I'll *learn to control my temper*" (Peter).

"Well hopefully *a way to deal with that frustration* so I don't, I don't know, so *I channel it somewhere else* I suppose, so I don't end up doing things like throwing chairs at the wall...it's just a totally childish and stupid thing to do but um, rather than lashing out at what happens around me *it would be a lot nicer to be able to do something else*" (Aaron).

Many of the men identified their 'problem' as their own to the extent that they would protest the 'innocence' of the woman who was the victim of their abuse. The wife/partner of the man was frequently identified in the stories as bearing the brunt of the man's anger/tension 'release'. These men acknowledged that they, at least some of the time, would take their anger out, unfairly, on their partners.

"If I was in a foul mood from work *I'd take it out on her*, like yell at her and call her names and that which I thought was not *very fair*...I take it out on her when *it's not her fault*...it lets out some frustration I suppose" (Paul).

"Well you tend to make your partner suffer don't you. Maybe it's a release, *dump it all on something else or someone else*, let them deal with it. Maybe self consciously it makes me feel better" (Mike).

"I think that by *lashing out at everyone else* I think you know it's sort of an *easy way to deal with my problems*, without having to deal with them" (Chris).

"Bad temper...I just fly off the handle at her...If my car was outside and had a flat battery or something and I couldn't get it going like if Joan was out there and I was out there I would probably abuse her, cause the car wouldn't go, and *it's not her fault* if she can't get the car to go" (George).

"I suppose you could say a lot of the anger was directed towards myself for being suckered in I suppose. And *it manifested by taking it out on her*" (Peter).

Not all the men, all the time however, stated that their violence was their own 'personal' problem, reflecting 'character flaws' and 'anger problems' exclusively on their part. Co-existing with this story were other explanations, employed simultaneously or alternatively by the men. One of these variations, a common theme found in many of the men's stories, was the construction of their partner's behaviour as 'pushing' the men's 'stress' or 'anger' levels to the 'brink' of violence. In this account it is not the man's 'temper' that is constructed as the 'problem' but rather the woman's 'behaviour'. A variety of constructions constituted this theme.

Some of the men referred to the woman's 'irrationality' to explain his stress build up and consequent violent outburst.

"I was getting *very angry* cause it's not OK for me to go away and things that were happening wasn't OK either...I just felt like there was *one rule for her and another rule for me*...I felt like I was getting picked on basically...*I didn't know what she was on about*...a lot of *irrational* things came up...I was feeling *very confused*...I was getting very angry...I was just feeling everything is so *unjustified and unfair*...I just got so *frustrated* and I sort of felt like hurting Jane" (Aaron).

"Well she didn't want me there yeah, no cause she told me umpteen times I'm not to go there when I've been drinking. But why she didn't say that before we had tea I don't know that's what *I can't work out*, cause I went round there, had tea and she knew I never had any beer there and I had the same amount of beer in my system when she brought the subject up as when I went there and had tea, so I don't know. *She's a strange woman*. I've told her *she does weird things*...I don't know why she didn't say well you're not having tea here, that would have been *the logical thing*...I was a bit pissed off about it...seems *a bit weird*" (Andrew).

"The comments that she was slinging back at me were attacks on my trustworthiness...accusing me of things that I know I am not capable of and yet she still accused me of it...It upset me. *It upset me to the point where I lashed out...*I've tried my darndest to prove that *she's got nothing to be insecure about* and yet at the end of the day that still gets thrown *back in my face* and *that is frustrating*, very frustrating and frustration leads to anger" (Peter).

"It just wasn't an *adult attitude* to my way of thinking...it *buggered me right up*" (Carl).

Sometimes the women were constructed as being simply 'impossible' to deal with.

"*I told her she was wrong* and things were getting out of hand and she said that, claimed that I was picking on him for no reason, such and such and *then it boils...*blows out of proportion. *David has to change same as Julie* will have to towards him...She steps in and protects him when *she shouldn't be...**I can't win. She's as stubborn as I am...you can't get through...*I wish she wasn't as stubborn as me...*I get very tense...*I've never believed in hitting a woman...but I do feel like it" (David).

"her being *domineering* and her having always the last say, and *being bossy, pretty argumentative* and all that, that's probably the only thing giving us our ups and downs...*She's pretty stubborn* and *wants to get her own way all the time* and me *I just sort of couldn't handle it any more...*her being all dominant...she wouldn't let me have my say...I was feeling you know, alright at the beginning, then it sort of built up and then um, like something just clicked in me and I sort of got pretty agro, and *I thought I was sort of put down* again...*I just snapped* and couldn't take it any more" (John).

"Every argument started off just like how we are talking, you know, in a proper manner, *trying to force my point of views...*I just sort of lost it really and trying to back up your own argument, you know when *I was running out* or *getting defeated* or something like that...I felt that *you never had much control* or anything, you know. *You didn't have a standing there*" (Sean).

The woman's 'excessive' and 'ongoing' demands were similarly constructed as 'tension' building.

"A lot of pressure...a *nagging wife* for a start...built up and up and all of a sudden I snapped" (Carl).

"She was *going on...*and she was *going on*" (Chris).

"She's *pretty bossy. Moaning* for me to *do this* and moaning for me to *do that*" (John).

Also, to a lesser extent, the construct of her vindictive behaviour was employed to explain the build up of anger.

"She's got a *very quick mouth, very sarcastic...um*, if nothing went right with her *everybody else copped a lot*, if she was having a bitch of a day she was gonna *make sure that I knew about it*, you know put me in her area, and if I'd had a bugger of a day and she drags me into her area a lot of heated words come out...every time *I see her my blood starts to boil*" (Carl).

"There has always been *snide catty remarks*" (Peter).

"She might *get at me sometimes* and *I might get angry*" (George).

Some of the men indicated that they lacked the 'ability' or 'skill' to communicate their needs and views effectively with their partners, thus taking some responsibility for their 'tense' response.

"I haven't got much *skills* there *to get my point across*, to have my say too when we argue about stuff...I'm sort of a shy person really you know, *it's hard to talk about stuff* that counts sometimes" (Chris).

"I have *problems communicating* and I know most of male friends don't sort of like talking about feelings or anything....when I was in my teenage years and stuff
I think I could have benefitted from some counselling, to do with *communication*" (Aaron).

"Probably not getting my way, um yeah, not being able to, well it's essentially *not being able to get my point across*, cause *I can't explain it properly*. Can't get my point across to her in the right way, like *put my thoughts into the right words*. Sometimes there are no words and no right way to explain it and that's annoying too. What do you do?" (Paul).

Sometimes, for a couple of the men, the woman was considered to be 'out of order', through infidelity and lack of dutiful care giving.

"There were a lot of reasons for the anger that I felt were *justified...Feeling neglected* and not having a say sort of sparked a lot of violence...*you care about everyone else's needs than mine*, you know, *I don't feel secure with you as a wife* because you're more likely to stick up for everyone else than me...She started *pulling away more too* you know from being as close as she was so he could notice that and that sort of *stirred up more anger...The anger yeah was probably justified...you sort of felt justified in feeling the way you were...sort of blaming her*" (Sean).

"She was *playing around* with another guy and that just *didn't wash with me...they say that a marriage is supposed to be under trust* isn't it, that blew

that out the window didn't it? I wasn't very pleased at all...*very angry when I found out...*the whole thing just boiled up...gotta short fuse when it comes to that kind of stuff" (Carl).

In a separate story a minority of men 'justified' their violence as a legitimate response to a precipitating physical attack on them.

"When it comes to *violence she's got it in her* and *I aint gonna stand there* for anyone to hit me that's for sure, male or female, well *I'll take it to a limit...*I get things thrown at me not a problem, um, *had a knife thrown at me* and cups and plates, you name it, I've had it...Between the both of us we've always had *a very rocky relationship, um, been a very violent one* and that's *not just me*" (Carl).

"I'm not really a violent person...it's never been part of my make up...*She was always an instigator* like she'd *lash out at me first*. I've never sort of been a person prone to lashing out against someone else unless I'm really angry...I punched her up pretty bad one night...I vindicated myself by thinking she threw the broom through the window so *she got what she deserved...*I just looped out, snapped out...probably because *I got hit. I always have retaliated when I've got hit*, like I said before *I'm not the one normally to throw the first punch*" (Mike).

"It was the *only time* that I've ever hit her and it was when *she was being physically and verbally violent to me*.It was the only time and I only slapped her. It was when she was being physically and verbally violent and I just lashed out while *she was on top of me...*when I came in the door she pushed me over and started whacking me, screaming and yelling at me. She was in a right state. After a bit of that carry on I whacked her back...in my relationship *I was getting hit all the time*" (Robert).

"If I grab her or something it's because she won't let me go, I mean I have also, like if *she grabs me or pinches me* or something, if we're having an argument or *hits me on the leg* or something *then I'll grab her leg* and sort of, or twist her arms or something *if she's trying to hit me*, something like that" (Paul).

Through locating causal 'precipitatory' responsibility for the violence with the woman, some of these men, momentarily at least, considered themselves as not necessarily having a 'problem' with violence.

"*I'm not really a violent person*. I've been prone to lash out, but as far as being someone who looks for violence...*it's not part of my make up*" (Mike).

"If it's just a one-off thing then that's different from an ongoing serious severe thing. The ongoing one needs something done about it. *Mine was a one-off event...*She lashed out at me first" (Robert).

Others constructed themselves as not having a problem through other means, such as through drugs and alcohol, which were constructed as causes of an otherwise 'unintended' violent act.

"I do get quite bad tempered. It doesn't take much...I don't know why. It could be I used to be a *heavy drinker* and I mean a real heavy drinker and I'd sort of gone off it and *that could be going off it*. It could *make me moody* and that. That could have something to do with it...If she says something that I don't understand or I don't want to happen, I just fly off the handle at her" (George).

"She started bringing *pills* and that into the house...I'm pretty sure that *she drugged me*...Like I left here about eight o'clock and it was only a coupla hours down the line...I was only gone a few hours cause I stayed here, I was with my mother and that you know, and I just can't remember what happened after that. I can remember you know, I blacked out...I hadn't drunk a lot and I sort of just remember coming back and you know her saying the police were on their way, and I was saying what have I done. I didn't even know, I sort of, after the last few months, I've sort of got bit's back but that's all...I got to the stage where *whatever this chick's put in my drink* you know, she must have said something the wrong way and I was just into it, you know *it's something I wouldn't do* if I was you know...*I'm pretty sure that she drugged my drink*...*Even the police* they weren't going to arrest me for it, they said just *go into your room* and sleep it off. They thought I'd been drinking heavily all night and they still do to this day...well like I say I can't really explain it because *it wasn't me*. Like, there's no way you can be like that on the amount of alcohol I had...*the drugs you know, someone had drugged me*" (Chris).

"The judge said come along and do something about your *problem*. I suppose a bit of *alcohol, violence*. They *go together*...I haven't been violent for a long time. *Beers the main problem*...Drinking too much beer...Something's gotta set me off eh. It's stink eh, if you're running around like a lunatic...*Anger and beer*...gotta try to control myself a bit more" (Terry).

A couple of the men claimed that the law had overreacted through not understanding their circumstances, thereby sending them to MMAV through the legal system.

"In all intention and *my honest belief* I never had any intention of breaking this bloody window, *slipped over* in the garden with this bloody bag in my hand, and if I was going to bust the window I wouldn't have hit it with that hand cause I'm right handed and there's no way I was going to hit anything with the other hand, and anyway she called the cops...*She don't reckon I did it accidentally*, she reckoned I busted it deliberately because I was *bloody wild*, she reckoned it was because she'd said I better bugger off...*she was freaked out*. She thought well I've busted the window what am I going to do next sort of thing so she grabbed the phone, it was right next door and *rang 111*" (Andrew).

"She said she was about to come in the door and *I thought she wasn't* and *I thought she was actually turning away from the door*, but that aside I slammed

the door. The fact that the glass broke and cut her face, that was more scary" (Aaron).

"I blanked out...it's their word...Reading the statements from my partner I was getting convinced that I did it but I don't know. And the amount of alcohol that she's had in her system, drinking all day, *she could have put anything down and been at the police station saying it*. She'd have to say it's true but *that's one thing I can't accept...calling out to the police in some sense is wrong* because the way they look at it. *A lot of them they overreact*" (Carl).

In summary there were many interrelated explanations given for the men's violence. The dominant story, employed by all the men, constructed stress and anger responses as causing a violent outburst. Most of the men claimed that they had a problem with anger. Many of the men also or alternatively blamed their partners for making them angry. A minority claimed not to have a problem, accounting for their violence through a precipitating attack, their partner's behaviour or through drugs and alcohol. Some claimed that they had been misunderstood and were in fact not violent. The majority of the men used several of these explanations and construction of events during the interview.

Section (b): Family violence as a community problem

This second part of the interview asked the men to comment on questions exploring 'family violence' and 'men's violence to their partners' in general. The men were asked what they considered 'family violence' to be, what they thought might cause other men's violence to their partners, whether or not this is a problem for the community, and to comment on appropriate solutions for this in the community. This section was designed to explore the men's understandings and constructions of 'family violence' as a community problem.

In defining 'family violence' the men predominantly constructed this as a 'physical' assault or series of 'physical' assaults from one family member to another.

"*Hitting* kids and *hitting* your partner that's what family violence is" (Robert).

"Most of what I have seen has been *physical* violence. Yeah. *Smashing* things up. *Smashing* them up" (Andrew).

"*beating* on the wife. There's lots of facets to it, kids as well you know, even brother and sister or whatever all come into it" (Chris).

"Violence is something that shouldn't be happening in a house. If you want to do something stupid then go down the *boxing ring*" (Carl).

"Hit a partner and *punch* up your brother or something like that. It's all family violence...*punching* your kids around, *smacking* your kids. You know things like that...*fighting* in front of them" (Mike).

Less prevalently, some of the men built upon this 'physical assault' orientation to the problem, including a 'verbal' element in their construction. When this occurred this was commonly contrasted with 'actual physical violence' by demarking a separate category called 'abuse' - non physical violence; 'verbal abuse'.

"There's actual *physical violence* and there's *verbal abuse*, *name calling*, that stuff" (Aaron).

"Violence to me is always, like people talk about verbal violence, but then is it *verbal violence* or is it *verbal abuse*? Violence to me has always been *physical violence*. Um *abuse* on the other hand, um, you can *verbally abuse* somebody. So, it's, I don't know, is it a textbook definition or..." (Peter).

"Any form of abuse really, *physical or verbal*. It's violent. Well not so much violence as it's family *abuse* but yeah just any *physical type of abuse*...Slapping, hitting, yeah, *swearing*, *that's abuse*, same thing in general" (Paul).

"Getting on the booze and throwing *punches* and stuff. *Yelling abuse* too" (Terry).

"I think what happens is abuse, *verbal abuse*, and *violence*. Like hitting them and beating them" (George).

The men were typically concerned about the 'harm' engendered by such behaviours.

"put downs and stuff, they're *screwing people up*" (David).

"People get really badly *hurt* and families break up" (Robert).

"little wee kids in the corner, *smashed up* faces and that...it's bloody shocking" (Andrew).

Most of the men considered 'family violence' to be both pervasive and severe enough to be considered a community problem warranting some form of remedial intervention.

"It's *bad*. I think it's a problem. A *big problem*...Someone should stop it" (Robert).

"domestic violence in the house and that, it's not on. I've seen *heaps* of it...There's a *lot more goes on* than you ever, well I believe that you *ever hear about*" (Andrew).

"Shit yeah it's a *big problem*, cause there's *quite a bit of it* out there" (John).

"It's about time that something is done about it. Um, there is *a lot more* of it than people realise" (Peter).

The dynamics of the problem in terms of 'who' in the family was behaving violently varied. Many of men constructed 'family violence' as a 'mutual' act taking place between adults or partners in which both men and women were equally likely to initiate, engage in and be the targets of violence.

"*Men* tend to hit out but *women* can be violent too. It's not all the guys that start it. In my situation *I was getting hit all the time*" (Robert).

"It's *both*. It's not *male or female*. Some of the places that I have been involved in recently the husband's the breadwinner and some of the woman's the breadwinner and in some the person that's not bringing the money in is dealing it out, and in some the person that's is bringing the money in, is dealing out the violence. Sometimes *it's the man* that's doing the knocking around other times *it's the lady lashing out and bashing him* with things...the sheila to the joker, the joker to the sheila, you know *it's both ways*, some people think it's only the jokers that come back with problems but that's an untruth" (Andrew).

"Like there's *a lot of women* out there who can intimidate their men, let's be real, but from a male's point of view I think yeah I think that you know people have got the right to call the police, why should they live in fear and not knowing what's gonna happen next and you know if the police are called it's good cause it normally wakes up the person to thinking you know eh, I'm not a law unto *myself or herself* or whatever" (Mike).

Others however spoke of 'family violence' as essentially a male dominated domain in which the woman was the more likely target and the man the initiator and terroriser.

"I usually think of husband and wife you know, *husband* comes home from the pub *beating on the wife*" (Chris).

"Most of the violence is not man on man or woman on woman. It's usually a man woman situation in which the *fella's getting agro on the wife*" (Sean).

"I've known quite a few *guys* who have *hit their girlfriends*" (David).

The men postulated several reasons as to why a man might assault his partner in the home. Stress, particularly financial stress, was commonly cited as a causal agent in a 'domestic' assault.

"*Money* hassles and the *stress* that that brings puts *pressure* on everyone including the guy (Robert).

"*Financial stress*" (David).

"*Stress*, yeah, um, like I remember at high school I never learnt to deal with the *stress* of getting *work*" (Aaron).

"*Money stress*...money, you know, money" (George).

"more than often, you'd have to be, seventy percent of it's got to be money, got to be *money*, might even be up to eighty percent, eighty five percent" (Andrew).

Conflict and escalating arguments, resulting from 'differences of opinion', were also constructed as causal factors. Arguments were constructed as building up, with increasing tension, to the point where the man 'snaps' and becomes violent.

"*arguments* between different parents...different opinions, different sorts of attitudes...causes *stress and strain* and in the end it will *blow up*...it leads to an *argument* and *progresses* to violence" (David).

"they start to *argue*, it *blows out* of proportion and sooner or later someone starts yelling and someone starts hitting" (Robert).

"Well there's a *row* that starts up...and *wham* somebody says something that the other half didn't like and whoopsy do dam there's a punch or a chair or a glass" (Andrew).

"*Arguments*...People *drive each other up the wall* through shouting abuse and that. It's not getting anywhere" (John).

The men involved in these disputes and stressful situations, who become violent, were sometimes constructed as having 'short tempers' and 'quick fuses'.

"I don't know what causes it in general, no, well just people who *can't control their tempers* basically" (Paul).

"Someone with a *short fuse loses their cool* and they just *blow up*" (Robert).

"just (click of the fingers) they *fly off the handle* like that, whammo, tonking each other" (Andrew).

"if the police were involved at least they do something about it, take you away for the night to calm you down. I mean what do you do with someone whose *lost their cool*?" (George).

In some stories, as with the men's accounts of their own violence, the woman was described as precipitating her abuse through 'driving' the man to lose his temper and thereby assault her - the source of his tension.

"Some women can be *bitchy*, you know, *get at you* all the time...there are *women* that *can be like that* and the male will if he's like that will probably strike or something, hit her" (George).

"I don't feel that a lot of it has got a lot to do with the males, cause a lot of *females* they *can rark up a hell of a lot*" (Carl).

"a few things on their plate, the *women*, the *wife*, the *partner*, they can be so *demanding*" (Chris).

"*She* can put a lot of *pressure on him* without realising just how much it's gonna affect him. He might be *only able to take so much*" (Robert).

Some of the men talked about family violence as an inter-generational problem.

"I believe like the adverts say, it does come from *how you're brought up, like you see what you do*" (David).

"I think it could be a *bit of a cycle* as well *come down* from your *parents or grandparents* or whatever. *Beating up on themselves* you know" (Chris).

"I reckon that if your *parents* do it your *kids* grow up and *do it*" (George).

Drugs and alcohol were considered to play an important part in inducing the men's violence. The men who took drugs or drank frequently were considered to be prone to violence through becoming less restrained from the effects of alcohol.

"*Drugs and alcohol is a big cause*...He might be an alcoholic and that brings all sorts of problems like *money hassles and stress* and arguments. All these things put *pressure* on the woman at home with the kids with no husband around and no money. She hassles him about it and he's not gonna care. The guy get's pretty stupid from the drink and *anything could set him off*. He's not gonna take any stick from anybody" (Robert).

"Well the only thing I've seen cause it strangely enough is *alcohol*...I'd have to say that I don't think I've ever seen violence anywhere, in any of the violence that I've seen where it hasn't been *drugs*, well originally alcohol but now drugs as well, involved" (Andrew).

"getting on the *booze* and throwing punches" (Terry).

"alcohol, I think *alcohol* is the main cause of it" (George).

Providing solutions to stopping men's 'domestic violence' was not an easy task for many of the men. Some of the men openly stated that they did not know how to go about stopping this in the community.

"I know there's a problem there but I just *don't know* how to answer it in the community as a whole" (Aaron).

"I'm not saying. That's like asking me what is the answer to violence or what is the answer to stopping abuse. *I don't know the answers*" (Peter).

"*Never thought about it before*" (John).

Others proposed that some sort of preventative education of 'skills' to the young was the best means for stopping family violence in the future. What the specific nature of this early intervention would be was not forthcoming although a couple of the men suggested the imparting of 'relationship' skills to reduce unnecessary conflict and tension in the future.

"I think it just needs to be taught at a younger age, I think through *schooling*. I think there should be special classes there to actually, to help *prevent it*...and I think if you were *taught* at a *young age* the *respect* for each other, um and each other's beliefs and that I think it would help you know. I think it should be *taught* in schools to have the two sexes be able to *get on* and have more respect for each other through the *schools* (Sean).

"Some *information system* in the *high schools* would help...*communication skills* and also *learning* how to *compromise*...most people can't *communicate* their view without getting people's back up" (Aaron).

"I would say that if you *started in the young ones* it would have to *peter it's way out* in the *future*" (David).

"The best way to stop anything is *prevention*. Prevention is the best cure and for something like that um, *knowledge is power*. Um, *schooling* people, if they're *taught* or *shown* that *a certain method* works, as opposed to...Preventative education's got to be the, well it is the answer, but how would you achieve that, and what is the actual education that you're going to teach, I haven't thought about, I don't know" (Peter).

Many of the men commented on the usefulness of the advertisements on TV for imparting community 'awareness' of the problem. This awareness was considered useful for people to acknowledge violence in their home and for feeling justified and capable of doing something about it.

"Those television ads are to the point. They make people *aware* that it's *not acceptable* and that there is *help out there* for the man and the woman" (Robert).

"TV ads are a step in the right direction, they're *raising public awareness*. Um, If all the public is *aware* then there is less opportunity for an abusive person to abuse and get away with it. Um yeah, because if more people are aware of the effects or the results, yeah I suppose the effects or results" (Peter).

"*Education...Those ads are good value*. Good value. Family violence is a crime and the sooner it's stamped out the better" (Mike).

Consequently having community resources and contact points to help individuals deal with the problem was also considered essential.

"Making the *information available*, letting males and females know there is some sort of *help available...like this manline course...and also I think a good way to do that is to have more money available as well*" (Aaron).

"Tell someone. *Ring up those numbers. Find out stuff*. See what the problem is and *what you can do*" (Terry).

"The way I see it is that if you're in that situation *call out for help*" (Carl).

"Everyone should know there is *somewhere they can call and go for help*. Women's refuge help women. There's this place too for men" (Robert).

Some of the men added that they thought the recent moves for tougher policing of domestic assaults was an excellent community resource for stopping the abuse.

"If he's not prepared to do something about it then *smoke the guy*. Well, like if they're going to go on about the law now in these ads and stuff, well, *set the law up so that the guy does get a big penalty*. If he's prepared to do something off his own back, um, then all credit to him" (Peter).

"It's hard to define where it is *right for police to come along*, to be called in just because you're yelling at each other, or is it when either partner is hitting the other partner or hitting the other children? Definitely if you're hitting...*it would definitely be merited if you're physically violent towards your partner or your family*" (David).

"I think that you know people have got *the right to call the police*. Why should they live in fear and not knowing what's going to happen next and you know if the police are called it's good cause it normally wakes up the person" (Mike).

"I've got no other suggestions of any other way of stopping it cause it's only *the law* that could cause if you're gonna get other people to step in then they might turn on the other people and then it might get real ugly then...Well they should do what they've done to me, they should be you know, they should be *locked away*, taught a lesson I reckon." (George).

At other times the men thought that the violent man and/or his children should undergo counselling or therapeutic help as a means to stopping the violence.

"in this kind of situation there's got to be counselling somewhere, there's got to be *a need for more counsellors*" (Carl).

"I think you should send both the man and woman to a *counsellor*, especially the one doing the hitting, maybe along to anger management, and the kids to could do with some *counselling* if they've seen it or been hit themselves. It wouldn't hurt. That could probably *help stop it in the long run* too. If that doesn't work then lock them up for a while, that'll shock them" (Robert).

"I can't really think of anything else but setting up *counselling stuff*" (Paul).

"The ideal people as far as child abuse goes would be teachers. They see the children eight hours a day, or whatever it is in schools. They can either have a *counsellor* in the schools or whatever" (Peter).

In summary the men typically constructed men's violence in the community as physical assaults exchanged between family members. Less frequently this definition was expanded to include verbal abuse. While half of the men constructed the problem as a 'male problem', others considered it to be gender free. All agreed that these practices were problematic in the community and warranted some form of intervention.

The men typically accounted for men's violence in the community through the same constructions used to account for their own violence. These constructions included stress, conflict fuelled tension, bad temperaments and the woman's precipitous tension evoking behaviour. These constructions were commonly employed together within the same men's stories. Less frequently the men constructed family violence as an inter-generational problem. At other times drugs and alcohol were cited.

The men found coming up with solutions to the problem to be difficult. While some advocated preventative education of relationship skills others employed the constructs of pricing and

counselling to suggest interventions. The 'awareness' raising adds were commonly praised and the need for community based support for those acting upon this awareness was emphasised.

Section (c): Gender structures in the men's relationships

This third part of the interview invited the men to comment on the gendered structures and social arrangements existing within their sexually intimate relationships. More specifically the men were asked to comment on how they felt about being a man, on what they liked and disliked about their partners, on the roles played out in their own relationships and in their ideal relationships.

When questioned about how they felt about 'being a man' the men typically indicated that this was something which they did not ordinarily think about. They did not think about themselves as 'men', but rather as 'persons'.

"I've never thought about it, that's what I am. You take it for granted, um, I don't know. I've never really considered it. I've never looked at it, well I'm a man and this is the way I'm supposed to be, like um the stereotypical male or the macho male or whatever the middle of the road male or whatever. I've never looked at myself and said, well, this is the type of man that I want to be or this is what everyone thinks I will be so that's what I'll be. *I am me. The fact that my gender is male is irrelevant* because if I was a female then I would still look at it from the sense of, I am me and this is how I want to be. It's not I am a woman I want to be this way or I am a man I want to be this way. It's I am me, the male or female doesn't. I suppose I'm a man but that's beside the point, I am my own man...I don't look at it as man or woman. It's what you want to be, *the body is not necessarily the self*" (Peter).

"I think we're *all the same, all one* lot of people. I don't think of myself as a man. *I'm a person, same as she is and you are*" (Robert).

I've got *no real thoughts* about *being a man*" (Andrew).

"Being a man I'm not so sure about. I mean yeah sure I am a man at one level but that is *not who I am* and what I decide to do. *I just do my best just like she would*" (Chris).

When asked about gender and roles in the men's relationships the men overwhelmingly responded that relationships should be 'equal' with gender being an irrelevant issue in the dynamics of the 'partnership'.

"I think they're *equal, each do their share*. It's got to be *a two person thing* to be in a *relationship* cause you got to learn to *give and take*" (Chris).

"I don't believe that there are *different roles for men and women* in a *partnership* today. We're all *just people*. *Both sexes* should be treated the *same*" (Robert).

"I'd like to believe in you know, *equality*...if you can both work together...it's gotta work, you gotta work hard at it eh, *each individual's* gotta work hard at what they want in a relationship other wise they just don't happen" (Mike).

"It's been obvious over the last few years that they should be *treated on an equal basis as same as men*. I don't believe we have any rights over them. I believe they should have *equal rights* on everything" (Sean).

"I think it should be *equal*" (Aaron).

The men professed to be holding egalitarian attitudes in their own and ideal relationships and used constructions consistent with this account in their talk surrounding decision making;

"When there's a *decision* to be made you have to *come together* and do what you think's *best for both of you* or whoever is in your situation. *You talk about it*. I don't think anyone has to be the boss or do all (phone rings). Yeah I don't think anyone has to be the *boss of the relationship or wear the pants in the family*" (Chris).

"We *both make decisions*...if we want to buy something *we talk about it*, whether we can afford it or not" (Terry).

"That's gotta be a *joint decision*. I mean *relationships* have got to be give and take and *compromise*" (Aaron).

"Ideally...you would be able to *communicate, really communicate*. Not just I wear the pants so I'm going to sit down and tell you what's going to happen, and because I said it that is what will happen. Um, it's more a case of, it would be more a case of, *this is how I see things happening, how do you see them happening?* Or this is how I see us dealing with this situation, how do you see us dealing with this situation? OK *we differ here, but we agree on these points* so let's find a common ground where we differ and try it out. Or, ok, that sounds a better idea to me. You've got to be open, and not just open about how you feel but *open to suggestion*" (Peter).

men's role in housework;

"*I do the housework* regardless, *laundry and cooking*. Oh it's easy for me. It just comes *natural*" (David).

"I've always thought that the *two partners should share everything*. They should be *equal* and share the *cooking* and the *cleaning*. I like cooking and *I'm into doing my share* of the cleaning. It wouldn't get to the *point* of me being asked to clean the floor for example because it would be done *before it was needed*" (Robert).

"We're very whanau orientated and like *I cook* and the flatmate cooks, my partner cooks, *we all cook*. There's no set duties, like you just do it. Like if my partners cooks *I'll get up and wash the dishes*. If my flatmate cooks she might get up and do the dishes, yeah" (Mike).

"I enjoy *cooking*, I mean I don't mind *cleaning the toilet*. Sometimes it's pretty disgusting...as long as it's not too windy *it's not a problem for me doing the washing and stuff*" (Aaron).

child care;

"*We just split him up* (looking after a child), like he comes with me most of the time and he goes to kindie three days a week" (Mike).

"*I'm home with the kids and the house* and that...It just comes natural" (David).

"I mean I'd be perfectly happy to, if we did have children, *stay at home and look after them* while she went out and worked" (Paul).

"If there's kids around the man should have the option too of *staying home and looking after them*" (Robert).

and women's work outside the home.

"I mean *if Suzy wanted to work that would be fine* and she could do that and if she didn't want to she could stay at home, I mean that would be entirely up to her. I mean she's got a mind of her own. She can do what she wants. So I definitely don't think it should be a *male dominated home* like you stay home and look after the kids and I'll go out and earn the money" (Paul).

"Well, *she's gonna get back into work*, she's got a job lined up now in computers and *I mightn't even go back to work*. If ACC can't sort out what's happening with my arm I'm gonna stay at home and *she's gonna go to work* and I'm quite happy about that" (Andrew).

"*She's going to polytech now to be a social worker*. She's got her dream and her goal and she's going after it, which is really admirable..*I think it's great, brilliant*, yeah. She's been a mother for so long, a mother and a wife for so long and that's all she's ever known, and she felt incomplete you know, she felt wasted and you know...I'm really proud of what she's done and I think it's really great, takes a lot of courage" (Peter).

"*If she wanted to be working that would be fine* with me. I really don't think there's any need for *old fashioned roles* today, like they had for men and women in my parents day. If the *woman wants to work then she should*" (Robert).

The men were aware others that did not necessarily agree with their personal position. The

men frequently contrasted their egalitarian attitudes with the gendered expectations of others around them.

"Basically they should be about the same anyway. *Most men* think that they should be *more dominant* and that. I think that they should be both equal" (John).

"*I get a bit of shit about it, cooking tea and all the washing, cleaning the house. Oh her father and that... 'house husband' and just a load of stupid shit*" (Terry).

"You know back in the old days it's um, *man was the breadwinner*, OK, *a lot of people still think that way*, but now this is *the nineties* and it's everybody for themselves. If they want to work and get a career out of it OK" (Carl).

"I know *there are a lot of guys out there* who wouldn't like to do it but I can't talk for them" (Chris).

"I think most of the relationships are just the *old nuclear family* thing where the *man goes out to work* and the *woman stays at home* and looks after the kids" (Aaron).

Some of the men spoke of a personal history of 'sexism' and 'chauvinism'. These men claimed they had in recent times become 'aware' of their 'sexism' and had changed, leaving their 'sexism' in the past.

"Three months ago I would have laughed at you if anybody said I'd be staying home looking after the kids and she was going to work. I wouldn't hack that cause somebody would have said ha ha you bloody bugger, your missus out working and you're sitting on your arse. I just wouldn't have anything to do with it. But now I'm *woken up* if you like, *I've changed*...I never cooked anything at all before. I never did the dishes, I wouldn't do the dishes...I never touched cooking or nothing cause tea was on the table, she just cooked tea and lunch and that was it. Well *it wasn't my place to do bloody dishes*, it wasn't my scene. I was making the money...looking at it now I sort of think that I thought then that *it wasn't the male thing to be involved* in you know...It was *a chauvinist bloody thing*, it wasn't my scenario. Not going out with snotty nosed little kids in the bloody supermarket, and I can honestly see that now" (Andrew).

"If you asked me five, six, seven, eight years ago I'd have said they're just there for this and that and the other and blah blah blah. The way I see it today is equality...I grew up with the *male's boss* and blah blah blah...*Do as you're fucking told or I'll punch your fucking head in*. That was for everyone in the family. Coming from the old man...I've used that all through my life, like in my first relationship and to a degree in this relationship as well, and to a degree in this one but in a more mellow perspective. The old thing's there but it's not as out in the open and upfront and full on...*I'm more aware of it and*

I try to correct it, that's what I'm trying to say, as you get older you learn don't you? What's the saying? You get wiser as you get older" (Mike).

"Also a lot of confusion about, people gotta live up to stuff like role modelling for their kids and it's the whole changing *gender issues* like what's *a man's position in the household*, what's a woman's position in the household?...Basically most people I know the people are still following the old male/female stereotypes...Basically *I've had to change a lot of my views*" (Aaron).

"*She ended up doing all the work* so I said yeah, well, *I'll do some more cooking*...About a month ago, or two months ago, *we decided to change* and cook every second night and she cooks day on day off sort of thing" (John).

Sometimes, during their accounts of 'equal' relationships, some of the men implied that there were in fact separate roles for each sex within their relationship.

"I also, you know, I done cooking, washing you name it, vacuuming, *just to help her...helping out* with the washing and things like that" (Sean).

"I'm pretty clean around the house you know...I used to do the housework if she had to go to work early or *if I had a day off like if it was wet or something*" (George).

"Mary had a working job like, before she got pregnant with our second kid, she ran the office where I worked. She had to chuck all that. She enjoyed it, computers and this and that. She had to throw in that *cause she was a woman* and I felt sorry for her, cause I caused it in a sense" (Andrew).

"If she wants to get a job and earn some money that's fine. I'll look after the kids. I'll pick the older ones up after school no problem but *the baby needs more care that I can give and that's something that she'll need to think about*" (Terry).

When questioned about what they liked about their partners, the men typically praised their partners for being good 'homekeepers';

"She's a *good woman* in that area, she was, like in *keeping the house very tidy*, um, *meals on the table*" (Carl).

"*Excellent mother*, never raises her voice to the children no matter what, I mean she works, she *takes care of the home*, *excellent cook* and everything" (Sean).

good 'caregivers';

"She's a real *good woman...a good mother*, you know I love her very much and she's been really good to me, she's helped me out...*she's not one of these*

women that go out and spend heaps of money on herself, *family comes first*" (George).

"She's *considerate*, I'll give her that much. When I'm down and out she can be really *nice*. *Looks after me* when I'm sick" (Robert).

"you know the *kids* are never without anything, um just overall *a really good lady*...she was an *excellent wife*...I never went without anything...she *looked after me* in every way, shared everything she had with me, the children" (Sean).

and good friends.

"we were *friends* before we were ever *partners* so I think that's one of the good things. *We get on*, you know we *always have* got on well, used to *spend a lot of time together* as friends and that's something that's just carried on. We're still *good friends* now you know, even though *we're together*. *She's straight up* to me and that's what *I like the most*, doesn't try to be anything" (Chris).

"She's a *happy go lucky sort of person*, *sense of humour*" (Terry).

"*Good company*. She's good to be with and that" (John).

Characteristics of the woman partner constructed as dislikeable by the men included 'uncleanliness';

"I respect her...but there's other things like her attitudes towards *cleanliness* in the house and that and *tidiness*, it's *not up to my standard*...once I set a *standard* that's great for a while but then it get's too much for her" (David).

"Like the house being in a *mess* all the time. I don't know *how many times I had to bring that up* with her. It just seemed *unfair* that she would let that happen" (Sean).

'selfishness';

"When you got kids you got to treat them equal and that's something that she never came up with. Not that kind of stuff, *more concerned with herself* and the two boys than what *other part of the family* that she had...that's where a lot of tension comes into it" (Carl).

"Sometimes she would get incredibly *selfish* and *not care* about the rest of us. I'd just look at her and think what a *bitch*, what am I doing here with you?...*I don't like her when she's like that*" (Robert).

and 'dominance'.

"I wish I could have *more of a say* you know. Sometimes I feel like *I can't have an opinion*, well not one that's *right* anyway" (John).

"She's a good woman...but in the other way too she was a *very domineering* person" (Carl).

"She's pretty *bossy*, moaning for me to do this and moaning for me to do that...her having always *the final say*, and being bossy, pretty *argumentative* and all" (John).

"I just remember that if *I've got a viewpoint* that differs from Jane and she doesn't like it, she doesn't like me *disagreeing* with her, she just say's you *barsted* how dare you think that" (Aaron).

In summary the men, prior to participation in the MMAV course, saw themselves as persons rather than men and claimed to live in or aspire to relationships where gender was irrelevant to the 'equal' 'partnership'. They advocated sharing access to and responsibility for decision making, housework, childcare and working outside the home. They frequently contrasted themselves with others who were not 'egalitarian'. Some constructed themselves as once being sexist or chauvinistic, of which they were no more. Another theme emerged, this one a different story, in which some of the men constructed a sex role division of labour within their relationships.

When asked what they liked about their partners the men typically appreciated them for being good friends and the high quality of their caregiving and homekeeping skills. They were disliked for being 'dominant', 'untidy' and 'selfish'.

CHAPTER TEN

PRE-COURSE DISCURSIVE RESOURCES

The men's accounts at each stage of the pre-course interview schedule have now been subjected to a preliminary analysis in which themes and variations in the men's talk have been identified and presented. In this chapter the analysis is taken one step further and the culturally available discursive resources represented in these regularities are discussed. The constructions employed by the men represent particular discourses and it is the intention of this chapter to locate these constructions and accounting devices within the discourses from which they emerge and to consider the dynamics of these accounts. It should be acknowledged at this point that considering all of the constructions emerging from the men's accounts is beyond the scope of this study. This study will focus upon the constructions surrounding the men's violence, their relationships and the violence of others.

The men's pre-course stories, as presented in the previous chapter, are not without implication and consequence and thus whilst this analysis seeks to identify and demonstrate the culturally available discursive resources accessed and employed by the men, it seeks also to demonstrate the effects and consequences that the various constructions and linguistic resources are having for the men themselves and for the listener. A summary of the men's narrative resources for each section can be located at the end of this chapter.

Section (a): The men's accounts of their violence to their partners

When accounting for their violence towards their own partners the dominant story employed by the men is one of 'inner tension' 'overwhelming' the man to the point where he, temporarily, loses 'conscious' and/or 'rational' 'control' over his behaviour. This explanation employs two of the culturally available discourses identified in the literature review. These are the Romantic 'expressive tension' and Medical 'pathological' accounts. These two discourses are typically combined as the men's preferred means to understanding and experiencing their violence.

The Romantic 'expressive tension' discourse is the most overt account employed and this is evident throughout the men's stories. This discourse is realised through a number of inter-

relating constructions and metaphors. 'Stress' and 'frustration' were constructed as causing 'hot' 'strung' 'inner pressure'. The extent to which the person could cope with this 'inner tension' was furthermore constructed as 'limited'. At capacity/boiling point the 'fuse' would 'ignite' and the person would 'snap', 'explode' and 'lash out'. The 'spring' is 'sprung' and violence occurs as a 'reflex' action, without any volition on the part of the agent.

"I *lose my cool* pretty fast. Um, had a few arguments with the wife, and ah, *flying of the handle*. Hit her a few times...it sort of built up and then um, like *something just clicked in me* and I sort of got pretty agro...get to that *breaking point*" (John).

'Inner tension', according to the men through this dominant story, 'overwhelms' them. Through their inability to cope with this 'inner tension', they become temporarily 'abnormal'. They contrast themselves with and position themselves outside of the Liberal humanist subject. They construct themselves as *not* being rational free-willed agents at the time of their violence. They lose their 'cool' rationality for a moment and construct themselves as agents propelled by 'explosive' forces from within. They are surprised by this 'momentary lapse of reason' and regret this 'strange' outburst.

"I just looped out, snapped out, just you know went blank just for I don't know, however long it was...I *wasn't really conscious* of what I was doing, it *just happened*, and then when I sort of did come clear I sort of stopped straight away in horror, and went oh no...I just *looped out, snapped out*" (Mike).

This particular construction of events, whilst explicitly drawing upon a Romantic 'expressive tension' model of violence, concurrently draws also upon a 'pathological' account of the human subject. The men present themselves as incapable of coping with their inner tension and, when they 'lose their cool', as being temporarily out of control over their behaviour.

"You get *wound up* so much inside *like a spring*, and the *release* of that spring is your arm *shooting out* with a closed fist...If I'm at the stage where, on reflex, because it's not a conscious thing, *on reflex I lash out* with a closed fist, then I'm at the stage where I need some serious help" (Peter).

Consistent with this account the men typically identify themselves as the violent perpetrator, taking up this subject position and accounting for this through both 'pathological and 'expressive tension' linguistic resources. They construct themselves as having a 'problem' with violence; specifically an 'anger' or 'temper' problem. The men acknowledge and want to change this 'personal' 'impairment'. They purport that it is up to them to do something about

their underlying malady, so that the 'symptom' of their violence will disappear.

In effect, through the employment of this Medical 'pathological' discourse, the men took responsibility for owning their problem, whilst simultaneously they were able to excuse themselves, subtly, of taking complete responsibility for their behaviour/'symptoms'. The men's story suggests to the listener that they are not quite abnormal enough to be considered 'mentally ill', given that they are 'normal' and in 'conscious control' over themselves most of the time, when they haven't 'lost their cool'. The effect of this account is to 'excuse' the individual man for his violence. He is not sufficiently 'sane', 'aware' and 'responsible' enough to be considered a criminal. He needs 'help' not punishment.

"It's something that I stood back and looked at and I knew that *I had to get help* for this because it's something that you've got to take charge of straight away...I know that I don't want to do it. I know that it's hurting a lot of people...there's still that inclination for that sort of thing, even without the violent side to me *I just get angry to early*, I just you know, it's just that *short fuse*" (Chris).

From MMAV consequently, through this 'pathological' and 'expressive tension' co-articulation of 'their' 'problem', the men were wanting to learn 'symptom management' skills. Their 'anger' and problematic 'short tempers' were seen as propelling their violence and of the many solutions afforded through this co-articulated account the one advocated by the men was typically a 'containment' strategy; to contain the 'overwhelming forces' emerging from within. They did not advocate therapy, as they could have given their constructions of the 'problem', which may have reduced their anger. Rather they typically sought a strategy which could reduce their symptoms without changing their basic characters.

"What I was hoping was to get some way of *channelling the anger* into an area where it was not so volatile, perhaps *learning a technique* or something to know when I'm starting to get to the point where I won't be able *to control it or handle it*, it's just very open ground to me" (David).

In this way they employed a Liberal humanist account alongside their 'pathological' and 'expressive tension' constructions. The solution was 'anger management' or 'symptom control'; a blending of Romantic, 'pathological' and Liberal humanist discourses, reflecting their analysis of the 'problem' and their normative assumptions of themselves as 'rational' 'free willed' 'autonomous' agents, when they haven't 'lost their cool'. The men thus considered themselves able to 'learn' new skills, unbeknown to them as yet, which would

enable them to 'manage' their inner tension and thus curb or cope with their violent nature.

Many of the men, through the classical Medical 'pathology' discourse, took up the position of the 'sick' 'perpetrator' suffering from 'anger problems' to the extent that they would bear complete responsibility for their violence. It was their problem and their problem alone.

"If I was in a foul mood from work *I'd take it out on her...*I take it out on her when *it's not her fault*" (Paul).

Not all the men, all the time however, took up this subject position; that their violence was their own 'personal' problem, reflecting 'character flaws' and 'anger problems' exclusively on their part. Co-existing with this account were other explanations employed simultaneously or alternatively by the men. These complimented the dominant 'expressive tension' - 'pathological' account discussed thus far. An alternative account, employing these same discursive resources, organised in a different fashion however, was presented by several of the men. In general the 'expressive tension' account is stable throughout this form of explanation whilst new variations of the 'pathological' model are evident, enabling new constructions and subject positionings.

In this alternative explanation the men constructed their partner's behaviour as pushing their 'tension levels' to the 'brink' of violence. Through this account many of the men, at least some of the time, were consequently able to place causal responsibility for their anger and violence onto the woman and thereby 'excuse' their violence towards her once more. Through this account, the woman's 'abnormal', 'irrational' and 'frustrating' behaviour was constructed as driving the man to the point where his 'inner tension' would 'explode' in violence. In this account it is not the man's 'temper' that is the 'problem' but rather the woman's 'character' although these two variations could be, and frequently were, employed together.

In this alternative yet prevalent account the men's 'expressive tension' has been presented in conjunction with a reversed 'pathological' position in which the woman is constructed as being, at least temporarily, 'abnormal' and the man paradoxically the 'victim'. A reversal of subject positions is thus evident. The man blames the woman for his violence, whilst positioning himself as the 'victim'. He is a victim in the sense that his rights and wellbeing are being violated from external forces, namely her 'pathological' behaviour, which is having an intensely negative impact upon his 'inner tension'.

"There were a lot of reasons for the anger that I felt were *justified*...Feeling *neglected* and not having a say sort of sparked a lot of violence...*you care about everyone else's needs than mine*, you know, *I don't feel secure with you as a wife* because you're more likely to stick up for everyone else than me...She started *pulling away more too* you know from being as close as she was so he could notice that and that sort of *stirred up more anger*...*The anger yeah was probably justified*...you sort of felt justified in feeling the way you were...sort of *blaming her*" (Sean).

At other times some of the men would 'justify' their violence in terms of a legitimate response to a precipitating physical attack on them. In this way the men constructed themselves once more as the 'victim', a victim of a violent attack from which they could legitimately defend themselves. In this way they extended the 'victim blaming' 'abnormal woman' account beyond the bounds of the Romantic 'tension reduction' discourse, to the issue of rights and justice; a Liberal humanist notion.

"When it comes to *violence she's got it in her* and *I aint gonna stand there* for anyone to hit me that's for sure, male or female, well *I'll take it to a limit*" (Carl).

Two different discursive accounts, the 'violation' by the woman and her 'pathologically' provocative behavioural characteristics, were thus employed by many of the men, at least some of the time, to locate causal 'precipitatory' responsibility for the violence with the woman. When these accounts were employed this enabled the men to justify and/or excuse their actions, and thus some of these men could, momentarily at least, consider themselves as not necessarily having a 'problem' with violence. In this way a small minority of the men, whilst they acknowledged their violence to their partner, were able to exclude themselves from being identified with the category of the 'violent man'.

"If it's just a one-off thing then *that's different* from an ongoing *serious severe* thing. The ongoing one needs something done about it. *Mine was a one-off event...she lashed out at me first*" (Robert).

Another explanation, this one independent of the woman's actions, similarly accounted for and excused the men's behaviour, thus once more enabling some of the men to avoid taking responsibility for their violence. 'Pathological' factors such as drugs and alcohol were further cited by a few of the men as a cause of their otherwise 'unintended' violent act. The men reported 'losing control' of their behaviour temporarily, as in 'temporary insanity', and this was constructed as being mediated through the effects of drugs and alcohol. The account

suggests that without these 'pathological' contingencies violence against their partners would not have happened.

"Beers the main problem...Drinking too much beer...Something's gotta set me off eh. It's stink eh, if you're running around like a lunatic" (Terry).

Another explanation, allowing some of the men to avoid taking responsibility for their violence, assuming they have been violent, was 'innocence'. Taking up the position of the 'victim' of mistaken circumstances. A misidentified culprit.

"She said she was about to come in the door and I thought she wasn't and I thought she was actually turning away from the door, but that aside I slammed the door. The fact that the glass broke and cut her face, that was more scary" (Aaron).

In summary, when explaining their own violence to their partners the men typically employed two discourses and through these were able to take up a number of subject positions. These were the 'expressive tension' and 'pathological' discourses and through a variety of combination of these resources the men were typically able to own yet take relatively little responsibility for their actions. Through constructing their violence as the outcome of 'overwhelming forces from within' the men most typically took up the position of the 'sick' person, unable to cope with these forces rationally. In this capacity the men typically wanted help to cope with their symptoms and excused both themselves and their 'victims' of responsibility. At other times however the men were able to place varying degrees of responsibility onto the receiver of their violence through explicitly and implicitly suggesting that the woman's 'abnormal' behaviour precipitated and drove him to his abuse. In this construction of events the man, in contrast, took up the position of the 'victim'.

Other constructions were also employed to strengthen the man's 'victim' or 'innocent' subject position, such as alcohol and drugs and inappropriate police intervention. Typically the men who accepted the problem as their own sought a blend of Liberal humanist, 'learning' and 'expressive tension' informed intervention strategies, enabling them to 'manage' their 'symptoms' non-violently.

Section (b): Family violence as a community problem

When asked what 'family violence' means to the men it is typically constructed as a series of 'physical' assaults exchanged between family members. Less frequently 'verbal abuse' is

included within this account. This construction of violence is relatively narrow, compared with other definitions such as that of the 'feminist' account. Because broader definitions typically employ Liberal humanist 'instrumental' 'violation' constructs, involving a wider array of 'strategies' than 'physical assault' and 'verbal abuse', the men's construction of violence can be read as implicitly drawing from and supporting a Romantic 'expressive tension' discourse.

In the Romantic account violence is seen as a specific and explosive manifestation of 'inner tension' releasing 'hot' 'forces from within' and is typically talked about through a narrow range of associated constructs. Although the men's narrow definition does not necessarily preclude the possibility of a 'cool' 'instrumental' 'strategic' account, the constructions employed by the men, such as 'hitting', 'punching', 'swearing', 'name calling' and 'smashing', do lend themselves towards this 'hot' interpretation in which 'inner tension' is 'released' in the 'heat' and rashness of the moment. They are not dissimilar to the men's Romantic explanations surrounding their own violence in which constructs such as 'nutting off' and 'lashing out' were frequently employed.

"Most of what I have seen has been *physical* violence. Yeah. *Smashing* things up. *Smashing* them up" (Andrew).

"Any form of abuse really, *physical or verbal*. It's violent. Well not so much violence as it's family *abuse* but yeah just any *physical type of abuse*...Slapping, hitting, yeah, *swearing, that's abuse*, same thing in general" (Paul).

The outcomes associated by the men with this 'violence' also supports this interpretation. The men typically talk about the 'harm' engendered by such behaviours as opposed to the violation of 'rights'.

"People get really badly *hurt*" (Robert).

Intentionally or not the men's talk implicitly delimits what constitutes violence and non-violence and this has implications for what is acceptable and unacceptable 'family' behaviour. Physical 'violence' and 'verbal abuse' is unacceptable, but as violence is defined so narrowly by the men it is implicitly constructed as 'explosive' and perhaps excusable. Calculated manipulations are excluded from the category 'violence', and consequently these 'broader' extra-Romantic constructs, describing a 'violation' of personal 'rights', are omitted. This narrow definition thus functions to delimit acceptable and unacceptable behaviour and to

implicitly account for, and quite possibly excuse, 'unacceptable' behaviour.

The men considered 'family violence', constructed as physical assault and to a lesser extent verbal abuse taking place in homes, to be a prevalent problem in the community, occurring to such an extent that it warrants serious community attention. Some of the men, employing a gender specific Structural account constructed the issue as a 'male problem', whilst others considered it to be gender neutral, a Liberal humanist notion in which agents are equal and exchanges are not bound by 'sex'.

These constructions of 'family violence' provide an informative context for exploring the discursive resources employed by the men to understand and intervene in this 'prevalent problem'. As has been discussed, the men's interpretations and definitions of 'violence' appear, through the narrow range of constructions employed and their ready association with 'hot' sudden outbursts, to implicitly employ an 'expressive tension' account.

The men postulated several reasons as to why a man might assault his partner in the home. Consistent with the men's explanations of their own violence and the interpretation of the men's definitions given above, these accounts of why violence occurs were dominated by 'expressive tension' discursive resources. 'Tension', particularly 'financial stress', was commonly cited as a causal agent in a 'domestic' assault.

"Money hassles and the stress that that brings puts pressure on everyone including the guy (Robert).

Disagreements and conflict were constructed as fuelling frustration and thus escalating tension, reflecting the men's accounts of their own violence.

"arguments between different parents...different opinions, different sorts of attitudes...causes stress and strain and in the end it will blow up...it leads to an argument and progresses to violence" (David).

The men involved in these disputes and stressful situations who become violent were constructed by the interviewees, through 'pathological' and 'expressive tension' discourses, as dispositionally having short tempers, or low 'frustration tolerance'.

"I don't know what causes it in general, no, well just people who can't control their tempers basically" (Paul).

In some constructions of events the woman was described as precipitating her abuse through her pathological and tension evoking behaviour. Again this is a similar explanation to the 'victim reversal' position taken up in the men's accounts of their violence. The same resources are being employed. This description draws from both 'expressive tension' and 'pathological other' discourses.

"I don't feel that a lot of it has got a lot to do with the males, cause a lot of *females they can rark up a hell of a lot*" (Carl).

Some of the men were also inclined to use an exclusively 'pathological' discourse when accounting for men's violence in the home. A few, for example, considered family violence to be a 'dysfunctional' intergenerational heirloom.

"I think it could be a *bit of a cycle* as well *come down from your parents or grandparents* or whatever. *Beating up on themselves* you know" (Chris).

Other 'pathological' resources such as 'drugs' and 'alcohol' were also considered to play an important part in inducing the men's violence. The men who took drugs or drank alcohol were constructed once more as 'temporarily insane'.

"*Drugs and alcohol is a big cause...*The guy get's pretty stupid from the drink and *anything could set him off*. He's not gonna take any stick from *anybody*" (Robert).

The men thus predominantly employed a combination of 'expressive tension' and 'pathological' discursive resources to account for men's violence to their partners in the community. This formulation of events enabled them to suggest several options for preventing and stopping the problem of wife assault.

Through 'learning' and 'expressive tension accounts some proposed preventative education of 'skills', such as 'relationship skills, which would reduce later frustration and inner tension.

"I think it just needs to be taught at a younger age, I think through *schooling*. I think there should be special classes there to actually, to help *prevent it...*and I think if you were *taught* at a *young age* the *respect* for each other, um and each other's beliefs and that I think it would help you know. I think it should be *taught* in schools to have the two sexes be able to *get on* and have more respect for each other through the *schools* (Sean).

Awareness raising in the community, such as through TV advertisements, was advocated by many of the men. The support for this intervention strategy is informed by a Liberal humanist position on the men and women involved; by providing an 'awareness' of issues and options to the community individual men and women are afforded greater 'choices' and opportunities for dealing with violence in their homes.

"Those television adds are to the point. They make people *aware* that it's *not acceptable* and that there is *help out there* for the man and the woman" (Robert).

Violent men were frequently constructed, through a medical discourse, as having a 'temper problem' over which they needed help. Through this 'pathological' model many of the men held that the violent perpetrator needed some form of 'therapy' to stop their violence.

"I think you should send both the man and woman to a *counsellor*, especially the one doing the hitting, maybe along to anger management, and the kids to could do with some *counselling* if they've seen it or been hit themselves. It wouldn't hurt. That could probably *help stop it in the long run* to" (Robert).

Using a Liberal humanist discourse some of the men advocated the policing of domestic assaults, with severe legal consequences for the 'criminal', as an appropriate means to curbing men's violence in the community. This legalist position, in contrast to the 'pathological' model, holds offenders to be responsible and accountable for their actions. Through Liberal humanist constructions the offender's behaviour is seen as a 'violation' of another's 'rights' to live a life free from violence.

"I've got no other suggestions of any other way of stopping it cause it's only *the law* that could...they should be *locked away*, taught a lesson I reckon." (George).

Sometimes the violent men were constructed through a co-articulation of these 'pathological' and Liberal humanist models; as being responsible for getting help for their 'temper problem'. In the absence of attempts to do anything about the problem, criminal justice was then and only then advocated.

"If he's not prepared to do something about it then smoke the guy. Well, like if they're going to go on about the law now in these adds and stuff, well, *set the law up so that the guy does get a big penalty*" (Peter).

Some of the men, employing a 'pathological' position, strongly objected to legal interventions full stop; constructing the assailants as 'sick', in need of 'help' with their 'anger problems', and not 'criminals'. The conflict between these two accounts and their implications was at times acute.

"I mean to me calling out to the *police in some sense is wrong* because the way they look at it. A lot of them they overreact...Instead of charging the people in court for it, why can't they *help* them. Like this family here goes to a blimmen *counsellor*, why put them in court? You're only making the tax payer pay up for something where a counsellor could help out more than throwing some guy in court or jail...this kind of situation there's got to be counselling somewhere, there's got to be *a need for more counsellors*" (Carl).

These discursive resources employed by the men to account for and intervene in 'domestic violence' in the community are very similar to the resources and subject positions employed by the men when accounting for their own violence. Predominantly an 'expressive tension' discourse is used, frequently co-articulated with a 'pathological' account. Once again a reversal of who is the 'victim' and who is the 'causal agent' is apparent in the some of the men's talk. Similarly, as with the men's own violence, 'learning' and Liberal humanist positions are additionally employed to construct intervention strategies to remedy the problem, and these are typically employed alongside of, although sometimes contrasting with, the Medical 'pathological' and Romantic 'expressive tension' accounts.

As with the men's own violence the Romantic 'expressive tension' position implicitly is used to define the issues at hand and pervades throughout the discussion. The hegemony of this account is typically punctured and blended with other discourses in the intervention strategies employed. At times the perpetrator is constructed as 'sick' and in need of therapy (pathology), at other times he is constructed as suffering from 'skill deficits' which lead to the 'overwhelming tension' (learning and inner tension). Others, such as police intervention, imply a 'responsible' 'aware' agent impinging upon the 'rights' of others (liberal humanist). A combination and co-articulation of these discourses enable a common position in which the violent man is constructed as 'responsible' for dealing with his 'symptomatic' behaviour; at least for 'managing' his 'explosive' symptoms in a non-violent manner - to get help if he needs it. If he does not do this out of choice then the police have the right to intervene. Other, more 'pathologically' orientated individuals, however were adamant that the police should involve 'counsellors' in this instance and not 'criminal' justice.

Section (c): Gender structures in the men's relationships

Because this section is informed by a pro-feminist concern with the men's constructions of their relationships, it is appropriate to acknowledge this position and, where appropriate, to employ this discursive resource in the analysis of the men's talk. Many of the men's constructions become particularly meaningful when analyzed through this discourse, as will be shown.

When the men were questioned about how they felt about 'being a man', an absence of a gendered awareness and male identity was apparent. Typically the men took up a Liberal humanist position through which their agency was constructed as representing an essential personhood, an underlying and universal self existing independently of gender.

"I am me. The fact that my gender is male is irrelevant...It's what you want to be, the body is not necessarily the self" (Peter).

When questioned about gender roles in the men's relationships the men overwhelmingly responded once more from a Liberal humanist subject position. Through this account they maintained that relationships between men and women should be 'equal' with gender being irrelevant to the structural dynamics of the 'partnership'. This supports the non-gendered 'personhood' subject position identified with by the men as presented above.

"I don't believe that there are different roles for men and women in a partnership today. We're all just people. Both sexes should be treated the same" (Robert).

The men were aware of other men that did not necessarily agree with their personal Liberal humanist position. They frequently contrasted themselves with and distanced themselves from the gendered perspective of other's around them. Through this contrast the men were able to construct other's implicitly as 'sexist' and themselves, logically, as 'non-sexist'.

"Most men think that they should be more dominant and that. I think that they should be both equal" (John).

Some of the men spoke of a personal history of 'sexism' and 'chauvinism'. Using a Structuralist 'social systemic' discourse on gender relations, probably a feminist one, these men claimed that they had in recent times become 'aware' of their 'sexism' and had changed their behaviour accordingly, leaving their 'sexism' in the past. This contrast further affirmed the men's 'non-sexist' subject positioning of themselves (now).

"I'm *woken up* if you like, *I've changed*...It was a *chauvinist bloodie thing*" (Andrew).

This Liberal humanist construction of the men's relationships as 'non-sexist' and 'egalitarian' could be found in the men's talk on decision making, men's role in housework, child care and women's work outside the home.

I definitely don't think it should be a *male dominated home* like you stay home and look after the kids and I'll go out and earn the money...I mean I'd be perfectly happy to, if we did have children, *stay at home and look after them* while she went out and worked" (Paul).

Although the men universally employed the Liberal humanist discourse to discuss their existing and ideal relationships, they frequently employed, although implicitly, gender specific assumptions of men and women and their role in the relationship. The men were not as 'liberal' as they presented themselves to be. They would slip out of the Liberal humanist subject position, occasionally positioning their partners with gender specific roles. This indicated that the men were in fact, at other times, using another discourse; a gender specific one.

"the baby needs more care that I can give and that's something that she'll need to think about" (Terry).

From a pro-feminist Structuralist position this 'non-liberal' 'gender specific' discourse is constructed as 'sexist'. The construction of this theme as such, as being informed by a 'sexist' world view, opens up the possibility that other themes in the men's talk are informed by such an account. This position may help to make 'intelligible' some of the other themes emerging from the men's talk and enable us to consider some of their implications; Important work from a pro-feminist position.

When questioned about what they liked and disliked about their partners, the men's positionings of their partners tended once more to slip in and out of the Liberal humanist account. Commonly, consistent with the Liberal humanist position, the women were constructed as good friends, being valued as persons and 'mates' in their own right.

"Good company. She's good to be with and that" (John).

It appeared that the men also constructed the women through a gender specific criteria. Their partners were typically praised for being 'good mothers', 'good cooks', 'family focused' and 'supportive'. Such virtues reflect traditional qualities associated with being a 'good wife'.

"Excellent mother, never raises her voice to the children no matter what, I mean she works, she takes care of the home, excellent cook and everything, you know the kids are never without anything, um just overall a really good lady...she was an excellent wife...I never went without anything...she looked after me in every way, shared everything she had with me, the children" (Sean).

Similarly, characteristics of the woman partner constructed by the men as dislikeable were typically traits which conflicted with conventional constructions of the 'good wife' such as 'assertiveness', 'uncleanliness' and 'selfishness'.

"I respect her...but there's other things like her attitudes towards cleanliness in the house and that and tidiness, it's not up to my standard...once I set a standard that's great for a while but then it get's to much for her" (David).

"She's a good woman...but in the other way too she was a very domineering person" (Carl).

This gender specific feature of the men's talk surrounding their partners may be related to some of the accounts of tension building provided by the men when they explain their own violence (section a). In such accounts the woman's unreasonable behaviour ("she was...") was constructed as 'precipitating' the violence through causing high degrees of stress and tension within the man - the 'victim' of this 'unreasonable' or 'abnormal' behaviour. This common construction of events co-articulated the 'pathological other' and 'expressive tension' discourses. This identified feature of the men's talk surrounding their violence is consistent with this observation that the women/partners were constructed by the men through a gender specific criteria. The men appeared to slip in and out of their 'official' Liberal humanist position. Whilst maintaining that they were not sexist, they constructed the women favourably when they fulfilled traditional sex role stereotypes and constructed them negatively when they did not meet this 'gender specific' criteria. This implication of a pro-feminist account thus warrants consideration.

The woman's 'out of order' precipitatory behaviour may, at least some of the time, simply be 'deviant' - operating outside traditional gender norms - indicating that whilst the men present themselves as 'non-sexist' 'liberal' men (section c) with 'abnormal' partners (section a and

c), they employ a gender specific criteria and set of expectations for their partners, which may cause stress, conflict, tension build-up and a sense of justification to their 'angry' feelings (section c). These angry feelings may then 'heat up' or 'explode' in violence. Such an interpretation of the data, reflecting my pro-feminist Structuralist-Romantic position, suggests that the men's employment of a gender specific discourse may inform their 'pathological' constructions of their partners and thus contribute to their overwhelming 'inner tension'. This interpretation, one which reads deeply into the men's stories, is supported strongly by something Sean had to say:

"I felt *justified in my anger*...I seemed to have lost *my rights as being able to speak out*...I mean every argument started off just like how we're talking, um you know in a proper manner, um trying to force my point of views...I think I was trying to um, because you felt like that *you found other ways of trying to reinforce your status as a man or so you went over the top in doing it*. I'm somebody. I'm gonna show I'm somebody by enforcing all these rules around here...you were in charge of what you implemented and that sort of made you feel a bit more important you know if you want to look at it that way" (Sean).

If 'inner tension' is the problem for the men, as they construct it, the pre-course interviews suggest that this problem may be a problem, in part, through the employment of a gender specific discourse. As with each of the men's constructions, it will be interesting to see how these develop over the period of the course.

Summaries of the analysis:

Section (a): The men's accounts of their own violence

The accounts given in the interviews, concerning the men's violence to their partners, revealed several themes in the men's talk which held their stories together in a consistent fashion. The dominant themes provided by the men employed combinations of 'expressive tension' and 'pathological' discursive resources. The men constructed themselves as unable to cope with 'hot' 'inner tension' without 'blacking out' or 'impulsively' becoming violent. The men typically owned their violence as their own problem and this problem was constructed as an 'abnormality' of some sort. Through intense 'tension' or 'anger' the men would somehow lose control of their 'normal' rational selves. Through such an account the men's violence could be excused. He could not be held responsible for his violence, since he could not control it. Rather he needed 'help' for his temporary loss of control; his proneness to be overwhelmed by forces from within. The men sort help for this like a sick person would a doctor, hoping for something to help them harness and control or redirect their 'anger'. The men typically

wanted 'symptom management' skills, an intervention strategy afforded further through 'learning' and Liberal humanist discursive positions. They did not want a deeper character change, as their 'pathological' subject position implied. This preferred intervention may be informed by other accounts put forward by the men.

Frequently the men constructed themselves as 'victims' of another's pathology - the distressing and unreasonable behaviour of their abnormal wives or partners. This 'pathological other' was portrayed as driving the man to the point where his tension would explode in violence. Here his tension and anger were justified and his behaviour was excused. Overbearing personality traits, irrationality and out of order 'bad wives' were frequently constructed examples of the other's 'abnormal' characteristics which 'precipitated' this effect.

Some of the men some of the time considered themselves to be 'innocent' and did not see themselves as having a problem with violence. They explained this through mitigating circumstances such as 'police ignorance', an 'accident' or the temporarily 'abnormal' effects of 'alcohol and drugs'. Similarly some of the men considered themselves justified in fighting back against an attack from a woman. Taking a Liberal humanist position the men considered it to be their 'right' to defend themselves against an attack.

Section (b): The men's accounts of family violence as a community problem

In the men's talk surrounding 'family violence' within the wider community several themes emerged which employed similar discursive resources to those employed by the men during their accounts of their own violence. Typically an 'expressive tension' discourse was used to explain violence in the home. 'Financial stress' and 'arguments' all built up tension in the home and in the man. Some violent men were constructed 'pathologically' as being 'dispositionally' prone to responding to stress violently. Other 'pathological' resources were used also to account for the abnormal build up and expression of tension, such as 'alcoholism' and the women's 'provocative' actions and 'precipitating' violent behaviour.

As a solution to the problem the men typically put a case forward for awareness raising and policing, a Liberal humanist position in which awareness, options, choice and rights were considered important constructs. Others contrasted with this view employing instead a 'pathological' discursive position, advocating counselling and therapy for the violent offender

as a preferred solution to law enforcement. The contrast between these two views was at times very explicit. Others advocated instead or conjointly, through 'learning' discursive resources, preventative education of relationship skills for younger males.

Section (c): Gender constructions in the men's talk

The men presented themselves, in response to questions concerning gender in their sexually intimate relationships, as agents saturated in a Liberal humanist discourse. They thought everyone should have 'equal' rights and be treated the same regardless of gender. In response to questions concerning housework, decision making in the home, childcare and women working in the public sphere the men were quick to demonstrate their liberalism and 'non-sexism'. Many of the men reported being aware of 'sexist' attitudes in the community at large but were quick to dissociate themselves with this. They presented themselves as different. Some confessed to being 'sexist' or 'chauvinistic' once but no longer.

Reading the men's stories more closely however revealed another story, one which, from a pro-feminist position, employed a gender specific criteria. This was evident in the way in which the men constructed their partners and the roles each sex would perform in daily life. This contrasted with the 'official' Liberal humanist position advocated by each of the men. It was suggested that, from a feminist Structuralist-Romantic perspective, the 'social systemic' issue of 'sex role stereotyping' may be playing a role in the build up of the men's 'tension' and 'explosive violence'. It appeared that the men's earlier construction of the woman as 'abnormal' and 'precipitator' and the man as 'victim' was possibly connected to this gender specific construction. The men did not seem to be aware of this alternative 'feminist' construction of their experience, and preferred to employ the 'pathological' 'out of order' account enabling them to 'blame the victim' along with their own 'temper problems' (expressive tension and pathology) for their violence.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

THE MEN'S POST-PROGRAMME STORIES

The men were interviewed a second time soon after they had taken part in and completed a MMAV Stopping Violence programme. This second series of interviews provides us with a post intervention record of the men's talk, allowing us to compare the men's pre and post course stories and thus to detect changes in subjectivity which have taken place, presumably, as a consequence of their participation in the programme. Eleven of the thirteen men originally interviewed in the first series of interviews were subsequently re-interviewed. The semi-structured interview invited the men to provide feedback on the course and to comment once more on the issues identified and explored in the first interview. As with the pre-course interview transcripts, these were analyzed for re-curring themes in construction and these are presented here, in this chapter. Once again a discursive analysis of these shared accounts is presented after the men's stories have been told, in the following chapter.

The interview analysis has been broken into specific sections, once more, for presentational clarity, reflecting the different points of focus and concern to the post-course interview structure. In the first section (a) the men's comments and feedback about the course are presented. In the second (b) the men's talk surrounding 'domestic violence' in the community in general is explored. The third component of the follow-up analysis (c) explores once more the men's accounts of their own violence to their partners while the fourth section (d) explores the men's talk concerning their gendered relationships.

Section (a): The MMAV Stopping Violence programme

When asked for feedback on the programme all the men spoke favourably of the MMAV course, claiming that they had learnt much from the course and that it had been a beneficial experience for them in a number of ways. They praised and affirmed the value and usefulness of the course for them, converging frequently upon the following features and constructions of their experience.

Many of the men felt 'woken up' and 'enlightened' to 'the big picture' surrounding their violence through the perspectives and ideas explored by MMAV. The men were typically

pleased with the change in their orientation towards violence and relationships fostered through this new 'awareness'.

"It wasn't what I expected but *I enjoyed it* and I looked forward to the meetings and that. It was quite *enlightening...a lot of things play up in my mind and it enlightened me to a lot of different ways of thinking*" (David).

"I thought Manline was *good*, I thought it's *a good course*. There should be more...*I learnt a heck of a lot, yeah a lot of good stuff eh, easy way of learning, easy way of giving you the big picture*. You know. A very simple way of explaining things, easy to understand...*there wasn't a lot that I would like to see changed*" (Sean).

"Oh yeah, it was good. It was. It *woke me up* a lot. There was a lot of things that I thought, well *I'd sort of never really thought about* until there were subjects or headings or whatever, and I'd sit there and see all those on the board and think '*shit*' and relate them back to, yeah, *that's right, that's right, you know*" (Andrew).

"I would say that the course has *enlightened me* to a few things" (Peter).

"I liked it. It was, um, it was *educational*. *It helped increase my awareness of factors involved in violence...It's made me more aware of issues*, of what I'm lacking and what I want to change in myself...*It's made me more aware of issues towards violence and what I can do about it*" (Aaron).

The course's emphasis on the distinction between violence and anger was reported as a particularly useful and novel idea for many of the men. The insight that these were different and separable phenomena, with anger not necessarily leading to violence, was something that several men valued and commented on.

"It made you more aware of when you are becoming angry. You know, being aware that *it's alright to be angry* but it's *not alright to be violent*. If you mix them up then you've got a problem you need to sort out" (Chris).

"They said *anger was alright* as long as you know that you know you're getting angry. Then you can decide to do something with it, something that's *not impulsive or violent*" (John).

"*Anger is Ok*, as long as it is *not out of control*" (David).

"I used to think *anger and violence were one in the same eh. You get angry enough, you get violent*. Let it off at the man, woman or machine. Nowadays I think *you can do something different with your anger*. You know, like not always having to hit out. It might not be anyone's fault" (Carl).

"You're *allowed to be angry*, it's just the excessive anger you know, and *turning it into violence*, I think that if you can knock off the, stop it *before it hits the violence*, then *anger's OK*...in the past, you know, anger and violence, you *didn't know the difference*. You were just angry and wanted to let somebody know, so now you know...it's okay to be angry and I haven't come to terms with that yet, because I knew where *my anger led me to*" (Sean).

The 'tension model' with the various associated strategies for monitoring and managing 'anger', such as rating scales and time out strategies, was consistently the most valued knowledge artifact imparted by the MMAV programme. The men unanimously valued this package highly as a means to helping them reduce or to stop their violence.

"It helped increase my awareness of factors involved in violence...like, *where you're at and the build up to it*. Just to be able to *monitor* sort of like where you're at and the *level* you're at and to *do something about it* before you reach *explosion point*. Like the *time out* thing. Go for a walk. Get away for a while and *calm down*" (Aaron).

"Um. I learned about the *time out*, and um all the different sorts of anger and violence eh. I thoroughly enjoyed it...They worked on a *scale from zero to ten* and taught us to look at yourself on that when you're starting to get *angry*, looking at yourself on that *graph* and um, working out where you are on that *graph* when you start getting angry. When you start getting up to sort of *eight or nine*, it's time to take a *time out* and *walk away* and stuff, yeah...I see myself get worked up and sort of think well it's time to get up and walk away...and so from going on to the manline course I know when I'm sort of working me way up to that stage to stop a bit earlier" (John).

"The biggest thing I got out of it I think was that I was probably sitting on a thing where I was probably about *seven on their scale*, like nought to ten, whatever, I was probably six and a half, seven, all the time and I only needed perhaps *one or one and a half to be over my head*. It was just a lot of pressure and this and that and I hadn't thought about that...I'm convinced now that *that is the reason why I was flying off my handle* because I was never down to say three or whatever at any part of it...you know *pressure, stress*. That woke me up and I thought about that quite a bit and you know, I'd be driving back home and I'd be *thinking* about what they'd been talking about, and that's um, yeah it certainly woke me up...I've got to the stage now where I just go, hang on a minute, and I just think well what's the use of that, it's not worth it to get heated about that" (Andrew).

"One thing I learned in the course is to *monitor* it. If you're *too wired* get the *hell out of there* eh, just get out of there. Go sit outside by yourself and think about what you're doing" (Chris).

These common constructions, promptly reported by the men as 'valued components to the course', appear to be intimately connected to a further feature of the men's feedback. Here

several of the men claimed that the course had facilitated the 'ownership' of and taking of 'personal responsibility' for their 'choices' of behaviour, including violence.

"I learnt heaps, um, basically briefly, um, firstly that *I'm responsible for my own actions*. I'm not responsible for how other people react to what I do, um, but *I am responsible for how I react to what they do*. At the end of the day *the choice is mine* as to whether I'm violent or not" (Peter).

"I learned to *take responsibility for myself*. Um. The way stress and that builds up. To *read the signs and to do something about it before I lose my cool*. Yeah. *It's up to me to do that*" (David).

"You make *a decision to be violent*. It's not an instantaneous reaction or something. It's a decision to be violent or not to be once you're aware of what's going on...Others can have an influence but when it finally comes down to it, *I choose what I do. I'm totally responsible for my actions* but it's a long hard road to realise that" (Aaron).

"It's sort of made me realise that um, that *I had a problem*" (John).

"You've gotta realise that *you've got a problem* and do something about it. *It's up to you and no-one else can do it*" (Chris).

An additional component to the 'enlightening' 'broader picture' acquired by the men was a broader definition of violence. This re-construction expanded the men's awareness and sense of ownership for their 'violent' behaviour.

"It made me aware that I wasn't only ah, *one type of abuser*, when you sit down in there and they put it all in front of you, you actually end up in about *three or four different categories*, where if you didn't know that you could sit here and say but I only *verbally abused* her you know, hell she can handle it, you know, I didn't beat her up or anything, but when you get into the course you realise how *damaging* that is. You do see the *effects* of, that's it's just as bad as *bullying* or *threatening* or whatever, you know, I mean I came into about *four categories* and I was thinking I was good" (Sean).

"You know, prior to the course I knew that there was a lot of, I think, *areas to violence than just physical violence*, but the extent of the areas outside of physical violence, I was a bit *naive* or, yeah naive in the sense that I didn't really see it that way or consider it or even *realise that I was being violent* sometimes" (Peter).

"I learned that there is actually quite *a few different types of violence* eh, like um, yeah like *verbal violence* and *physical, emotional, financial*, stuff like that. Yeah, like how we were being *violent without even knowing it*" (John).

"The *forms of violence* particularly. All the different, I mean when I first went up I thought, oh sure pushing and punching are violent but there's just *so many other forms of violence*, it's not funny" (Paul).

MMAV's definition of violence however was not necessarily accepted by everyone. Some of the men, a small minority, resisted this account, constructing it as 'too broad' to be useful.

"I thought *their definition of violence was pretty broad*. Too broad to me. You know under their definition *anything can be violent*, even yelling at each other and *I don't know about that*. Abuse maybe, but not all of it's violence you know. Not to my way of thinking it wasn't. I could sort of see what they were on about but I dunno. *Seemed a bit too broad for my mind*. You know, it's *not like giving someone a kick*" (George).

"I felt at odds there at some stages. And I didn't agree with a lot of things that were said...I didn't like the *controversial points* of view that were *contrary* to me. Everyone has their own point of view but no matter how I tried to look at it *I couldn't see their point of view*. The way they were thinking and the way they were directing things. Like the way you deal with children and things like that. Myself and my partner have strong beliefs in how it should be done and what aims and goals we try to achieve with the children. And um I realised they did enlighten me a lot with the children being children and not possessions but I can't see how you can let the children run all on top of you and let them get away with it. That's no good in my book. You *have to draw the line somewhere*. Discipline them you know? And *that is not violence* in my book, as long as you don't go overboard" (David).

Some of the men spoke of gaining an insight into the problems associated with being 'macho'. The 'big picture' thus appeared to include, and thereby enable the possibility of rejecting, gender stereotypes.

"I think one of the main things I have gotten out of this course is *the awareness that men have been put in a situation where they have not been able to learn to deal with their emotions constructively. And to show their emotions at the time*. I'm guilty of that. Stuffing emotions in...*In my case* if it's stuffed in too much without realising it, my internal level of anger rises and then I totally over react to little things. Because I'm already up there and it doesn't take much to pop" (Aaron).

"I don't think I have to *win arguments* anymore. It's OK to have differences of opinion and leave it there. In some ways that makes you *more of a man* you know. All this *macho bullshit* doesn't do anyone any good. Better to let things go. You don't have to get any angrier if you think differently, you know, so yeah, I use a lot of that stuff" (Sean).

"At first you think oh why should you walk away from it eh, you know, *what sort of man are you?* But when you go away and think about it it's probably better and that than sort of lashing out at somebody. *Sometimes it takes more of a man to walk away you know.* Not stay just to make a point...*you're not such a wuss* just walking away from a problem, it's probably made me a bit more of a man than being a coward" (John).

"You don't have to have that *macho attitude* you know. You've got to realise that you've got a problem and do something about it" (Chris).

Several men spoke of a new dynamic in the way they interacted with other people, including their partners, occurring as a consequence of their participation. This shift involved new relationship skills such as 'listening' and 'respecting opinions' even when these were different from their own.

"What did I get out of it? More *awareness about other people's beliefs and feelings* and that you know, *rather than just mine.* So I listen a lot more now. I seem to *listen a lot more, um more attentively* really" (Sean).

"I think I've thought *most about rights* more than anything. Um. I've never sort of taken much to, well *I've always sort of thought that I was right,* and I never sort of thought about any sense of anybody else's, you know. Nowadays *I can accept some one else's opinion even if it is a bit different from mine.* It's like they said. You've got to be one hundred per cent responsible for fifty percent of the relationship, well I sort of hadn't thought about that you know. I sort of thought it was a relationship and that was that. But it isn't like that and I can wake up to that...*I used to just take what I wanted and that was the end of it*" (Andrew).

"I think I have a different way of thinking about what I am doing now, and what's happening, yeah. A different way of thinking about it, not thinking that *my way is right or the best way.* Trying to get more *equality* I guess...I'm by no means perfect but I'm trying to *give her more of a say,* and sort of, like I say, *be a bit more equal.* Yeah, so that's a good thing that I took away from the course, trying to get a bit more of equality into the relationship because what I heard and from what was happening, it just doesn't work, *one sided relationships...not just me, me, me...*I mean no-one sort of stood up and pointed out that you're a *selfish bastard* but I mean it's just something that sort of hits you...it's just sorting it out in a calm way I suppose. Trying to *let her have her say* without me saying, no this is the way it is" (Paul).

"Back then I was, like, if *I want it, I want it done now* and I wanted it my way. I believe that these days I give it *more consideration,* um, of what I want and of *what other people want and how we go about it,* yeah. I think it initiated from the course, the seed of thought was set there" (David).

Some of the men claimed that the learning of specific communication skills had been particularly useful.

"The *communication skills*, that sort of thing. Learning them was good...it's something that's not that easy for me, especially with my girlfriend and that, you know. *We talk a lot more and that these days* and it's good...I was sort of a quiet guy, now I find it easier to talk to other people and that. *It helps*" (Chris).

"The course *did help me with sort of talking more about how you feel*. Say like outline *what should be done*, well not what should be done but *how to help in a tense situation* like that. How emotional talk or conversation, communication being the word, is *one of the biggest things to do*. Without communication it's a waste of time. If you can't communicate without swearing and pushing and slapping and that it just doesn't work" (Paul).

"We learned talking stuff too. Like *how to say things* you don't like *without getting all uptight about it*. Yeah. *Listening*. Communication they call it. Pretty basic stuff really but good. Kinda different kind of talking. Not yelling" (Carl).

These social skills of 'communication' and 'respectful sensitivity' were valued by the men, in part because of the reduction in stress and tension they afforded. These new skills were constructed by the men as helping them to be more relaxed and tolerant with their partners and thus helping to reduce their violence.

"We do a lot *more communicating* before *we make decisions* and everyone gets their sort of say, and if there's no answer there generally is an agreement to disagree...I've learnt to *compromise*. I think she enjoys that. She feels that um, she has her, her say. Her will is being listened to. She's getting her share of it...I feel like, *less stressed out* by it when I can share it, the responsibility I mean" (David).

"I've *wound down* a bit, well I have, I've *wound down*, yeah. I don't know why but as I said, thinking about relationships, this and that, it's got to be shared. Input from both sides. There's *two sides to a relationship not just mine*. There's good and bad in both parts of it. I'm not right which I thought. Well I probably thought that I was right, and I've certainly realised now that i'm not, there's input from all over the place and you've got to take the good from the bad, whereas I used to just take what I wanted, and that was the end of it" (Andrew).

"It's all basically about learning greater self control. Greater understandings of yourself and the ways you should react to situations. It has increased my self control. Basically it has increased my *understandings and patience* with other people. *I've dropped down my levels of anger*. I can be *more patient* and *accepting* of other's now...I'm more *relaxed and tolerant*" (Robert).

"I do agree now that you can both disagree and leave it there. I sort of use a bit of it sort of now...when I find myself *getting a little bit agitated*, I'll always say, you know, *can we leave this*, or you know, and *it sort of gives me strength* to be able to do that because that's the end of it, there's no more" (Sean).

The course was valued by the men to the point where it was highly recommended to other men in a similar situation. Every man endorsed the course in this respect.

"The course was good. *Brilliant* actually. I think *every man* who is about to get married should go through them. Maybe something not so long though but yeah, they're *excellent*...I'd *recommend* it to lots of people I know. Most people do some form of violence" (Robert).

"I thought it was a *good course*. I can *recommend hundreds of people* that I know to do it you know, cause *there's a lot of violent people out there*" (Chris).

"It was *good*. I'd *recommend it* to anyone that wants to know a bit more about violence and anger. It teaches you a lot about both of them. Stuff you don't think about otherwise. Good stuff to know...I *reckon if anyone's got a problem with violence they should do a manline course cause they're good*" (John).

"I *definitely would recommend it* to anybody that feels they have a problem, or to anybody that I know that I think has got a problem, definitely" (Paul).

A few of men claimed however that the course was incomplete, in that it addressed many useful issues for them but in itself did not address the real issues of concern. Whilst the course was appreciated for providing tools for enabling the men to 'manage their tension' in a non-violent fashion, the course was criticised by some for not reducing their 'anger'.

"I spent nine sessions there and that was good but I really needed to keep going, doing something else. *It woke me up but it wasn't enough*. I needed that support from the other guys and that you know. It was like a release talking about our stuff. That gave me strength not to get affected you know. For a while I felt really strong. *I needed them to help me not get so mad all the time*. Don't get me wrong, the time out and that was great but *it's a plaster eh. A strategy to help. I still get Jesus mad*. There's *heaps of shit behind that door eh and that's the real problem*. I need to get at that. I wanted for us to have more time to *look at what's going on inside us* but we didn't have much time. If I could *nip it at the bud* things would be better, eh" (Carl).

"It was good but yeah. Well I probably need more *counselling* to be quite honest. I'll have to look at doing something else I think, later on...It just hasn't worked out right...I *still get angry* though. The *course hasn't really helped* in that respect. I still get angry quick, just now I know when I am heading that way. I'd like to know *why I get angry and to do something about that, which the course hasn't really helped with*...My foul temper. Why have I got it? I

want to find out, from a counsellor I hope. *Get at the problem that way*. It just happens so fast, get angry over nothing" (George).

"The course most definitely *left me open ended*. I didn't feel complete about myself at all. When I finished the course, I enjoyed the course and um, like I said, but *I didn't achieve what I wanted*...What I wanted was *an understanding of why I get angry* and I had to go on a different course to get that...I think the grounding was done at Manline, the mind opening and enlightening was done there and yeah, the achievement, the actual achieving of goals and that was done on *the second course really*...I didn't understand, or realise, that *I was still getting angry with my father and all that sort of crap*. You don't conceive that it goes that far back, why when you get angry at a boy or your partner why you're getting angry at yourself and that when you were fourteen. I didn't understand that, now I can see it, and I can click and relate to it. *That was what I wanted, some understanding of why I get so angry for no reason*" (David).

One other complaint emerged as a theme from the group. This concerned the time involved in the course. This was a divided issue however as some of the men considered the course to be too time consuming while others thought there was not enough time spent on key issues.

"I didn't like the times. *Three hours a week was a bit much for me*, especially for nine weeks. I had to miss a couple of sessions and I didn't really want to do that but you know, work commitments" (Robert).

"Ah what did I like least about the course? Um. *It was the time factor* I suppose. It didn't seem to progress. I mean *it would have helped maybe if it had been an extra hour every night*, but the three hours, I think it was three hours, time that we were on it for, wasn't enough. It would have been good to say, have an extra couple of weeks or something, more exploration of certain issues...Um. It just seemed to skim a lot. It just seemed to skim, like um, whatever we did, we just seemed to run out of time and had to go on to the next thing...Oh, *I didn't feel like there was enough time to explore everything to the depth I would have liked*" (Aaron).

"The *timing of the course* was a bit of a problem. On the one hand it was *grouse to look at all the different issues* and that. On the other it took *a hell of a lot of time*. Some weeks I couldn't do that time you know, so I missed out. I don't know. *Six of one and half a dozen of the other really*" (Carl).

Upon reflection of the course, the men frequently praised the work of the co-facilitators who ran the course. Their non-judgmentalism and down to earth approach were greatly appreciated.

"What I liked most was that *we weren't treated like crims*, um, that sought of thing" (Aaron).

"Good course eh. *Good guys running it too. Um. Real understanding guys*" (Sean).

"The men who take the course are good too. They put the message across *clearly and simply and don't try to talk down to you you know. Understanding they were and good guys...They know what they're talking about*" (Carl).

Another valued part of the course lay in the peer group format of the programme, reportedly beneficial through providing the men with the opportunity to learn from others, to share with others, and to realise that one was not on one's own.

"*I can't say I took in everything, not all of it, but um, I don't know, hearing stories from other guys and that, it all sounded familiar and they'd sort of, not like give advice, but just sort of just talk through what's going on and that, and you sort of think aha!...getting together with a whole lot of guys that are in the same situation and sort of talking everything through, knowing that I wasn't the only one that sort of carried on like that, yeah it was good*" (Paul).

"With *the group of guys* that are around we were all talking and saying what actually happened, in our own time and whatever, it was *like a relief* to let somebody else know how you actually felt instead of having it bottled up inside you...having *a group of guys* around and *everybody's throwing ideas* and bringing up different things and what have you and that kind of *releases the door* that, you know the one that's got a hell of a lot hidden behind it" (Carl).

"It was *mainly the other guys*. They were *real good guys* and just someone different to meet...just being *able to talk about it with other people* was really good...*I felt more sure about it, you know*" (Chris).

To summarise the men's feedback on the MMAV Stopping violence programme, the men generally reported positive things about the course and claimed that they had learnt much from it. They had become more 'aware' of the 'big picture' through participation in the programme. They reported acquiring new insights into the nature of violence and relationships and these appeared to have positive implications for tension relief and non-violence. This 'new awareness' had brought about changes in their personal lives such as rejecting gender stereotypes, improving relationships and taking personal responsibility for their actions. The men liked the facilitators' non-judgmental approach and appeared to enjoy the company of other men in the group.

Many of the men felt their lives had changed through the 'illumination' of constructs that the course had produced. A few of the men however disagreed with some of these, challenging

most typically the equating of control with violence. The men strongly valued the 'management' skills, such as the self monitoring and time-out procedures. Not all the men were satisfied with this however, for this did not stop their 'anger' as they would have liked.

Section (b): Accounts of 'family violence' as a community problem

In response to more specific questions such as "what is violence?" or "what does 'domestic violence' mean to you?", the vast majority of participants constructed 'violence' as a broad set of behaviours, encompassing the physical, verbal and beyond.

"It's an *aggressive behaviour* and it doesn't necessarily have to be *physical*, you know. I think that's a good thing that I did learn you know. You're no better off if you're *verbally* violent, *sexually* violent, *emotionally* abusive, into *intimidation* or whatever. It's all violent...I mean I came into about four categories" (Sean).

"How would I define violence? Okay there's, the major part of violence is the actual *physical* stuff and there's also, like pushing and shoving and just getting in people's way intentionally, um, there's also *verbal abuse* as well and things like *emotional* abuse, *intimidation* and *mind games*" (Aaron).

"Violence to me is all the sorts of things you can do to someone to hurt them you know. And that can be in any form. *Physical* for starters. That's the most obvious one but not the only one eh. Um *emotional* abuse that one's a sad one. Um there's *sexual* too which is using the other person for what you want without respecting them. That's degrading eh. Not that I ever did anything like that. Nah, not me. I just yelled abuse and lashed out once in a while eh. Um *intimidation*. I did that too. There's *financial* abuse, *loads of ways to hurt or violate* the other person" (Carl).

"Domestic violence? Anything from *hitting, pushing* to *mentally blocking out, verbally* abusing, um *ignoring, financially* abusing, um, maintaining the *money status*, not letting anybody else have any control over it" (Paul).

"Violence is the *whole range* of forms of abuse; *verbal, physical, emotional, sexual*. There's many different forms out there. Different people do it differently" (Robert).

This broad definition was not accepted universally however. Some of the men didn't agree with this construction, considering violence to be 'physical' only with the other forms proposed by MMAV constructed as 'abuse'.

"I tend to look at *violence* and *abuse* as still two *similar* things, but *separate*, like for me violence has always been *physical* stuff and *abuse is everything else*" (Aaron).

"There's violence and abuse as I see it...*Abuse* is something that is *not physical*. It's *a form of attack that is not physical*...Violence to me is not isolation. Silent treatment is not violence. *I didn't agree with that*. The degrees are well, financial violence that's a load of bollocks. That's just abuse" (David).

"Violence is *abuse* and *assault*. *Verbal abuse* is one of the *worser ones of abuse*, like emotional abuse, along with like *physical assault* too, that's pretty bad" (George).

In defining what constitutes violence two criteria were constructed by the men. As with traditional explanations, some of the men considered 'harm' and 'hurt' to be the defining features of whether any particular behaviour was considered 'violent' or not.

"Violence is any form of attack that *hurts* the other person, such as physical, emotional, sarcasm sort of thing...the physical *pain that you inflict*...the *emotional hurt* of it all" (David).

"Violence is anything that intentionally *hurts* the other person. Causes them harm" (George).

"Most people I know are violent towards each other in some way or another. There's lots of different ways to *hurt* each other...you *hurt* someone when you are violent, whether it's physical or emotional. You *hurt* them and that's not fair" (Robert).

"Whatever the consequences are of whatever the sort of violence is there's always something or someone or *somebody is hurt* out of it which in a lot of cases, even if it's just verbal, you can never take it back...the fact is that at the end of the day I've said it and I've really *hurt* people. I've been violent to them. *Hurt them mentally* or whatever" (Andrew).

The second criteria employed equally by the men in defining violence was the 'control' of another person.

"Anything you do to try to *impose your will* upon someone else, um, like to try and make someone *do something against their will*...me attempting to *impose* my sense of reality on them" (Aaron).

"Just basically *controlling*" (Paul).

"Violence is a lot of things really, it's *depriving someone of a right*, or you know, yeah to be, or to be heard, or you know, yeah, depriving them of *their right to speak*" (Sean).

"Violence is *controlling someone else*, or attempting to *control someone else against their will*. *Imposing your will* on them...that's all violence is, it's a *strategy to win*" (Peter).

In discussing the notion of domestic violence, following the course, the men were predominantly more likely to construct the problem as a 'male' problem.

"It's the old *male* prerogative type thing...it's ok to yell and scream and sometimes hit...if something bad happens to them their response is to get even, usually violently. That's why it's a very tricky situation for a *wife, girlfriend what have you to be living with a guy whose like that*. What can they do?...It's not just one sided, though *it is more prevalent for men* to be more violent than women" (Aaron).

"From what I can tell it's *the guys* that are doing it you know but the *women are doing it too*. Not to the same extent mind you. More verbal and slapping. I've seen it happen, but *mostly guys* eh" (Carl).

"Basically *guys* you know, it's *basically them* whose doing it" (Chris).

"It's us *guys* who are doing the damage...*men* are just so used to getting their own way full stop" (Sean).

It was frequently pointed out however, although to a lesser extent, that women too could be violent.

"You can't just blame *one partner*. The *wife* is often verbally abusive and the man retaliates physically. They're *both violent* in that sense" (Robert).

"Arguments. Verbal violence from *both sides* eh. Someone starts yelling obscenities and someone slaps or pushes and there's a fist you know...*one or the other*" (John).

In accounting for men's 'domestic violence' in the community many continuities with the pre-course constructions were found. The participants once more constructed 'pressure', 'stress' and 'frustration' as fuelling a state of 'tension' or 'anger'.

"Probably the *stresses* of today...I think the *stresses* of just everyday living have doubled or tripled since the times when our parents stayed together all their lives, type of thing. I think it's all changed. I think the *financial burdens* today and the *pressures*. Just the *pressures of everyday living* is enough to have someone *angry*, and I mean, I feel guilty about being *angry* but um, *it's a feeling in you*. It's in you, you know, it's there." (Sean).

"*frustration*...easily triggered off. You know, like it doesn't take them long to get from the *angry* stage into the violent stage...like some people react more sensitively to it than others" (John).

The subjects in this discourse were constructed as getting 'wound up' or filled with 'tension', like a spring.

"*Building up* in you. For some guys it's like a *pressure cooker* eh" (Carl).

"That happens heaps. Jokers get *wound up* over nothing sometimes, well what we would consider nothing. They *race up the anger scale*, something triggers them off and whammo, they start getting agro as" (Peter).

Violence was constructed as a release for this 'inner tension'.

"*stress and anger*...Violence is just a *release of tension*, I think. It comes around in a cycle, violence. It *builds up and builds up* and then you have to lash out. You don't have to, you do and then you won't be so *tense*, it will be alright for a while, again till it builds up again. You have to *release* it someway and for some people violence is that way" (Chris).

"I think the main cause is pure and simple. *Anger*. You know, getting angry and that. *Stress and frustration* with what's going on around you eh...by acting up a lot or cursing or whatever a lot of that *pressure is released*. They'll be fine for a while, till the next thing *sparks* them off or the thing after that. Might be an argument or a flat tyre" (Carl).

Once again money was discussed by the majority of men as a causal factor. Financial problems were construed of as being very stressful and thus a producer of 'tension'.

"What might cause violence? *Financial matters, no money*, stress and tension in the relationship...I believe *most of your troubles in the home are financial...pressures from finances* and trying to cope with day to day living" (Sean).

"*money* too. That brings *all sorts of stresses* when there is not enough of it" (Robert).

"A lot of it probably goes back to *money*. Um. The *stress* of where there is money involved. Not enough, or lack of" (Andrew).

Conflict was also constructed as a cause of men's violence to their partners. Here conflict was similarly construed of as causing 'tension' and 'frustration' and thus violence.

"Disagreements tend to be more *heated* and *intense* in relationships than with your peers you know" (Peter).

"Household arguments between the man and the wife. Fights about the way to do things. These can *escalate* to the point of violence where both parties are so involved that there's no going back, unless one back's down or something and they *calm down*...it get's out of control" (George).

"The wife or the husband might both be *frustrated* with the other one and *argue* all the time. Like the wife might be stuck at home all day with the kids

and the man comes home late after a drink at the pub and wants to relax. She's *pissed off* he's not helping out, they *argue* and fight. It *builds into* a full blown scrap" (Robert).

Interestingly, in contrast to the pre-group interviews, the men articulated the emotions underlying 'anger' as playing an integral part in the development of the men's anger and violence to their partners. Here, the men construct feelings such as 'insecurity', 'fear' and 'anxiety' as underlying the development of 'tension' and 'anger'.

"...he feels somehow *wounded* and *insecure* so he might get *defensive* and have a fit" (Robert).

"*Jealousy...insecurities*, insecurity" (Chris).

"...*fear, shame, anxieties*" (Paul).

"I would say that for some guys, looking at times when I've been most violent, the reason is *fear*...and I can see that's *snowballing* and it comes to a *fear* that I'm going to lose this woman and I love her and I don't want to lose her...it's its own trigger...They *race up the anger scale*" (Peter).

"The guy might be *depressed* and feeling *vulnerable* as. A real bad day at work or bad week. *Feeling like shit and worthless* and um what's the word? *Vulnerable. Exposed. Insecure about himself*. You know, something like that. A bad time to hit him up about the bills" (Carl).

Related to this, 'men's emotional inarticulateness' was constructed by a few of the men as a causal agent in the men's build up of tension.

"*Not knowing why they are actually angry and what they are angry at*. Lots of guys get angry but *they might be getting angry at a totally different thing to what they might appear to be getting angry at*. Us men haven't learnt too well how to tell the difference you know" (David).

"I'd say it would be mostly the way *men* at least, have been *taught to handle their emotions* and what stress there is in their lives. The old tough guy routine has to go. And that general view has been it's ok to yell and scream and sometimes hit. It's the old male prerogative type thing...It's still going on in all the TV programmes and that. The dangerous males and woman needing rescuing. It's the old stereotypes are reinforced on TV. Rambo and stuff. *Men violent and tough and not showing their emotions*...men have been put in a situation where they have *not been able to deal with emotions constructively*. And to show their emotions at the time" (Aaron).

Men's sexist expectations of dominance and control were identified as a causal factor by several of the men.

"Probably the way we were *brought up*. I think even the best of men are still struggling to come to terms with the fact of, that we don't *rule the roost*. You know, I think we were *brought up that way*. I think men were, you know, brought up to be *in control of our women*, well in my era anyway. It's changing now, and people are becoming *more aware* that it's not like that...*I think men are just so used to getting their own way full stop*" (Sean).

"Lack of respect basically. They *don't respect their wives*, treat them poorly. That sort of thing. Like *servants* sometimes. *Stereotypes* and that don't help" (Robert).

"*History, history, not necessarily personal history*...it's *ingrained* and everything but at the end of the day it's still your choice whether you're going to be like that or not. Will I be like my father or? A little bit on that line, yes but I think history as a whole, *man has always been superior. Man is the breadwinner*. Man is this, man is that and society has changed. Man is not the breadwinner. Man does not necessarily wear the pants. *Home is not a man's castle*. It's a woman's castle. It's whoever's castle. It's the couple's castle...*I think a lot of men feel threatened by the idea that they are not in control anymore*, but my father was in control, and my grandfather was in control, and my great grandfather was in control, but I'm not, so therefore I'm *less of a man*, and if you go out in society and people see that then you're less and less a man, but in fact he's not, he's more of a man...it's almost like a *peer pressure* thing, peer pressure concept, you know. In society you have to look to be the *decision maker*, the *ruler of the house with your little lady behind you walking three paces back, bowing to your every whim*...that concept is still believed in and therefore you're expected to live up to it" (Peter).

"I suppose it's a big part of the violence that goes on out there eh. *Men being all dominant* yeah, *power*, and just being the ones in *control* full time (Paul).

Consistent with pre-course interviews the perpetrators background was also constructed as a causal factor to be considered.

"*Personal history*, your own *upbringing*, your own *background*, stuff like that. A lot of people on the course came from *violent backgrounds* or *abusive backgrounds*, which is, okay, that might be a cause...it's something that's *ingrained*, you've had *all your life*. That's how they've reacted so why can't I react like that?...it is *deep seated* in a lot of cases and it goes back to upbringing" (Peter).

"*Upbringing*. The way you have been *brought up* to communicate and *habits* like that you've *learnt when you're a kid*...it all depends on their personal circumstances and right now: I don't like to make to make generalisations because each case is unique...it's *a lot of habits I learnt as a kid to cope*...*it's upbringing as well*" (Aaron).

"*Background*, what was happening, like *in your past* sort of thing" (Paul).

"They might be *angry* because *something happened in their past* or whatever. Keeps *popping up*" (David).

Another construction also frequently employed and retained by the men was 'alcohol' and its 'disinhibiting' effects for the release of tension.

"...*alcohol, drugs...everything seems to come out* when you've been *drinking*" (Chris).

"*Alcohol's* a big cause too, probably the biggest cause. It *sets people right off*" (Robert).

"Oh yeah, some guys have *alcohol problems and drug problems* and that sort of *brings a lot of things* into it" (John).

"*Alcohol* is one of the causes. *Alcohol and drugs* is one of the main reasons" (George).

When asked to comment on appropriate interventions for stopping men's violence in the community, two suggestions were typically put forward by the majority of men. One suggestion called for an increase in the availability of MMAV Stopping Violence programmes, to 'help' the offender with his problem.

"I think the opportunity to, more outlets for *dealing with it, our anger*, like *Manline*, such and such, Samaritans. Something they can easily get at without having to think about it so long and hard and then sort of making the plunge towards it. It should be there so that if they want to make an enquiry it's just there already in the form of Samaritans or Manline whatever. But it's not. It's still a big plunge to make that big move. It's not a natural reaction type thing. If you got an overdraft problem you go to the bank manager to sort it out type thing. It's just a *natural reaction*. If you got an *anger problem*, what do you do? If the public was more aware of the *opportunities and easy access* and confidential type thing. It's the stigma thing" (David).

"*More manline courses* are needed to help with *the problem* I think. There should be more available, cause it's a big problem. Let people know they're there so they can book in. I think it's, when you've got a problem like that you can't really book in three months ahead or something like that. I think there should be continuation, there should be something out there. *Courses like manline's available when you need it*" (Sean).

"*More programmes like this*. More public sort of support from it. Definitely *more programmes like this, um, to alleviate the problem in the community*. Probably a wider outlook or coverage of it is needed, letting people know that *it is out there*, and it does happen. Making people aware that *there's help available when you need it*" (Paul).

"You mean stopping violence in the community? *Take a manline course*, yeah. Everyone who is violent for whatever reason. Yeah, I found it really good. It's helped me a lot in a lot of ways" (John).

"Putting *more people on these courses* would be a good start" (Chris).

Another suggestion endorsed the publicity campaigns occurring on TV, in newspapers and on billboards at present. These suggestions constructed 'awareness' as important for perpetrators to acknowledge, confront and take responsibility for their violence.

"Those *T.V.* things and that. Those bits that are on *telly* and that whatever, they're good value, cause I would have never, I sort of didn't take any notice of them but I watch them now and when they come on I sort of sit up and take notice of them...a *road sign*, that sign coming into Palmy, that big sign on the road there. You know everytime I go past that now I read that...I think that is a good idea yeah, *cause people see things and makes them think* and you know if *it wakes them up to what they're doing*, if it wakes one person up it's worth having" (Andrew).

"The *TV campaigns* are really good. They *raise awareness*. People might see them and *recognise themselves* in there. It makes them *think about it* a lot more. Yep. The whole add campaigns are really good. I drive past a sign on my way to work and I think, yeah. I didn't notice them before this stuff started happening. *It makes you resolved to never doing it again* you know?" (Robert).

"Um. *Public recognition*. A lot of people *don't even know* that they are angry or getting over violent or even getting to the point where they are going to be violent. They can live for years on the end of a cliff and suddenly go to the end and it's too late. The *adds and that are good* in that sense because they *make people think* a bit you know?" (David).

Community 'awareness' was constructed in this story as important for the identification of and pro-active response to violence.

"A big thing is getting across a *message to everybody that it is not acceptable*. On the part of *women* there might be *education* that they *do not have to put up with it*...So *let people know it's not acceptable* and that they can do something about it" (Aaron).

"*Awareness* is the key and *those ads are good* in that sense. Um, basically get all the people that it *stays indoors with to recognise and say what's really going on*, making sure that other people around *the community are aware* of what's going on inside their doors. That's the main problem. People are not, *the women are not telling anyone*, they are just *putting up* with it...if the community is *more aware of the problem* as a whole and were prepared to *act on this* they could tell people and they could keep an eye on you or whatever. Basically that's the way I look at it" (Chris).

"At the end of the day, pretty much all they can do is be *more informative*, like the campaigns that were on *TV* at the start of the year. I don't even know if they're still running. At the time I was going through my violence and all the trouble to do with my violence, there seemed to be thousands of *ads about domestic violence on the TV* all pointed directly at me...certainly *the add campaigns, TV, radio, any form of media; billboards* around the bloody tress...*making more people aware and bringing it out into the open*, it's no longer something that's *behind closed doors*; my husbands hits me, whatever, my boyfriend, and not just physical violence. The *ads* should go onto mental abuse, verbal abuse um, you know, financial abuse, stuff like that. Um. If it's *brought to the surface* and society as a whole is made *aware* of it, then there's *less chance that it's gonna survive*, right, because people are *more aware of it* and they tend to notice little symptoms that prior to the ads or whatever, they might have taken for granted" (Peter).

Several participants pointed to the individual as an important source of change, claiming it was his responsibility to come forward and ask for help. Here the man was simultaneously constructed as having a problem with violence and also the ability for doing something about it.

"Well, it's up to the *individual person*. It's up to him to do it himself...you've got to do it *yourself*. You're your own person so if you're going to go home and beat your up your wife, you've got to *get help yourself*. You can't expect other people to help you...the *person has to choose to put a stop to it*. Or at least get help" (George).

"Individual people have individual sort of niche's I suppose, that make them do it... I suppose at the end of the day *it's up to the individual* whether they want *help* or not" (Paul).

"It's up to the *individuals themselves to come out and get help*" (Sean).

"If the females are not gonna say anything about it, it's just as bad as doing it really, that's the way I feel. Like the guys, they *have to come forward and let people know they need help*" (Chris).

In allegiance with this construction, several of the men further voiced support for active police involvement in cases of ongoing violence with no call for help or change. This time no-one disputed the practice of legal intervention.

"It's *up to him* to do it himself. Otherwise *the law is going to do it*. The *police* have to do something. I you're going to go home and beat your wife...you're going to get *locked up*...when it get's bad *the police have to get involved*" (George).

"What's being done now is good. The *police involvement and presence is excellent*" (Robert).

"The *law's involvement* has been good. At first I didn't think it was such a good idea. *Police stopping violent guys* and saying come on or else you'll be *locked up* is a powerful way of *confronting the problem*. It's not the answer but it's, in extreme cases a powerful way of saying no mate, this is not on and *we'll lock you up if you do it again*" (Carl).

"If the *police* need to be *involved so be it*" (Aaron).

Others looked to the future and emphasised change in the population through preventative education. A minor theme of which constructed a need to explore 'masculinity' and 'emotional development' in such a context.

"A *manline course* would be really good if it was *adjusted* and taken into the *schools* for an hour a week or so. That would be a really good idea. *School counsellors* could get involved. *Skills taught* in schools for adolescents becoming adults. They should be prepared for that...*it's OK to express your emotions for boys*. That *violence is not an acceptable solution*" (Aaron).

"We need to *learn* at a *younger age* about *anger* and *how we feel about stuff* otherwise we'll probably live on that cliff all our lives" (David).

"I don't know, other than what Manline's doing, but then the trouble with that is that it's *too late* in a lot of cases. By the time it get's to that *the guys should have had it before* they ever came anywhere near here, they wouldn't have been here you know...We need *something earlier on for the fellas growing up*" (Andrew).

"What can be done to stop violence in the community? I don't think we're gonna stop this generation. I think we can *educate the next one, by education really...yeah just education at a younger age*" (Sean).

When discussing the hypothetical situation of a friend being verbally and physically violent to his partner, all the men indicated that this was unacceptable and that they would intervene in the situation in an attempt to stop it. Most were inclined to intervene by taking the man aside in an effort to talk sense to him and thus change his behaviour.

"Try and *stop it*. If it was me I'd expect and hope someone would try and *stop* me so yeah. Cause they've *gone to far* if he's started hitting and letting it get *out of hand*" (George).

"I would *stop it*, like try to *put a stop to it*...I know what I have done, just *pull him aside and told him to stop it*" (Paul).

"I don't like it eh, even though I am violent, I don't like it...I *wouldn't just stand there* and let it happen, na I'd do everything that I could to *stop it...I'd take him aside* and just you know, that's enough, don't let her get to you, like that, *don't hit her*" (Chris).

"I wouldn't have worried about it before, I would have thought, well that's their problem...(now) *I'd haul him aside and give him a speech*, and I'd haul her aside and give her a speech, individually. I already have actually funnily enough, to a couple of mates of mine, and one's a missus and ones a girlfriend, and I hauled the whole four of them aside and I said it's just not worth it, you know, you're really out of order. You don't know what you're doing to each other. You don't mean it at the end of the day, cause you're still together...*it's just not worth it...think about it*...I wouldn't have done that before I came here" (Andrew).

In stopping another man's violence many of the men claimed that, given their own history of violence, they would feel like 'hypocrites'.

"after I've thought, what a *hypocrite*. But no yeah, I would stop it, like try and put a stop to it" (Paul).

"I wouldn't just stand here and let it happen, na I'd do everything that I could to stop it, it *sounds a bit rude* but" (Chris).

"I'd probably be pretty *hypocritical* if I really poked in there too far eh" (Sean).

"the fact that I've been charged with male-assault-female, so I would get the old, don't be such a fucking *hypocrite*" (Peter).

When asked why they would intervene and what was wrong with violence the men typically responded in one of two ways. Firstly, in aid of preventing the unnecessary physical and emotional suffering which comes to the victim of the attack.

"Well, there's *hurt*. You can never take that back...something or someone or some body is *hurt* out of it" (Andrew).

"I don't want to see her get *hurt*" (Paul).

"The um, the physical *pain* that you inflict...The um, the emotional *hurt* of it all" (David).

"Also you *hurt* someone when you are violent. Whether it's physical or emotional. You *hurt* them" (Robert).

"Violence is wrong cause it *hurts* a lot of people" (George).

A second reason expressed a concern for the longer term secondary 'harm' to the relationship and individuals concerned.

"The *repercussions* of it being seen and heard. If someone kicks the shit out of someone and goes to prison, that's pretty bad, but if he knocks his wife around and loses his kids and his home, *that's worse* to me" (David).

"Domestic violence. Um, I suppose it *splits up marriages* and your family. You know you work *all your life to achieve those things* and you get domestic violence. You break up and *that's no good*" (George).

"It *destroys*. It's the ultimate destroyer. It destroys everything. It *destroys the violent person* to start off with...It *destroys relationships*...it destroys the violent person; be it through the *legal system*, the *image that others hold of him*, it just rips everything down" (Peter).

"it's not a very good lifestyle. Well, when you start being violent, like when your *partner starts getting...getting scared* and starts you know getting real *frightened* of you and that and they sort of feel like they can't stand up for themselves, yeah and that *kills the relationship* for a start, if *it's based on fear*" (John).

In general it appears that the men have shifted in their construction of men's domestic violence in the community. They have moved towards a broader definition of violence, one that encompasses a broader array of behaviours. This shift is a tendency only however and not universal. Similarly some of the men have defined violence in traditional terms, such as through its harmful and hurting effects, as they had prior to the course, whilst others employ the new 'violation' construct.

In explaining men's violence to their partners, shifts and continuities with constructions found in the first interviews are apparent. Pressure and frustration, caused through stressful events such as conflict and financial worries, were constructed as fuelling a state of tension or anger. The men are wound up and their violence releases this inner pressure. Emotions underlying anger and men's inability to deal with these effectively were freshly constructed as facilitating this process. The construct of men's sexism was also freshly employed. Men had been trained to assume control, it was claimed. As with the pre-group interviews alcohol and the perpetrator's background were considered causal also.

In terms of intervention, educational programmes like MMAV's were strongly advocated, alongside awareness raising campaigns. Police interventions were more fully endorsed this

time and therapeutic measures were notably less endorsed. Preventative educational interventions surrounding violence and masculinity were also advocated. The men claimed that they would intervene if they witnessed a man assaulting his partner, although they would feel like a hypocrite in doing so. Short and longer term 'harm' to the victim and the perpetrator were the main reasons given for this.

Section (c): The men's accounts of their violence to their partners

The men described and explained their violence in a number of ways. These accounts centred around two particular constructions. The first way of speaking found in the men's talk of their violence constructed once more the build up an explosive inner 'tension'.

"I started *feeling pretty angry*...one thing lead to another and you know, I got pretty violent and hit her...*I didn't really mean to do that*, but it's to late and you've done it...when you get into a *rage* or when you *get to a certain point*, it's hard to work out *if you know* you're doing what you should be doing. I found it fairly difficult eh, cause when *I get to a certain point* I just get a *feeling inside me* that there's *no stopping me* eh. *Hit that stage* and that's it, that's it" (John).

"Well because *I got wound up past the point of no return* and just went to nine and a half or ten and something had to happen...I just *pulled a plug* and *the pressure went off* just like pulling the top off a *pressure cooker* and the *valve* went off and the *pressure went off* and I was happy you know, till the next time...*I didn't think*, that's the honest truth about it, but I've always been like it, *filthy temper*" (Andrew).

"Well, just me and my *bad temper*. Um, *losing my cool* with Jude and that and yelling and that...I lost some money last week and I blamed her for it, so there's no need for that and after I *calmed down* and that and she told me that that's not on. I shouldn't have done it. It's not her fault. She didn't lose the money. I got *frustrated*, I blamed her for it and *I let her have it*...I don't know why that happened and it happens quite a bit...*Angry, Getting angry quick and snap*...it seems that I speak and act *before I think*. *I want to start thinking about it before I fly off the handle*...It just happens so fast, get angry over nothing" (George).

"I was *pumped up*...you just *break* you know. Just *tense you up, tense you up*, whammo. You've got to *lash out*. You don't have to, but that's just what I do, that's what I feel, it's just *a release*" (Chris).

"*out of that frustration*, yeah, I sort of *lost it* there on a couple of occasions" (Sean).

The source of this 'overpowering' 'tension' was attributed to several factors, such as being unfairly treated. The woman was thus constructed as 'out of order'.

"She'd been giving me the old no speak treatment for about three or four hours, so that's the worst thing. I knew I'd done something wrong to upset her, but I didn't know what I'd done and I couldn't see what I'd done, um, so then I haven't done anything. It's an *unjust situation*. *How dare you* be mad at me because I know darn well that I haven't said or done anything *wrong*, that's where the *injustice comes in*. That's what really get's to me. *Get's me real mad*. It's my *biggest trigger*" (Peter).

"I was just expected to accept everything that was in place, um, and whilst I tried I didn't think it was fair either, and that's why I get back to this, *it wasn't equal* and that was *a constant source of frustration* for me" (Sean).

"I started feeling pretty *angry* and pretty, you know, *why is she gonna start to control my life* and stuff and that ended up in a bit of a row" (John).

Another contributing factor constructed in the build-up of this tension was the 'problematic' behaviour of the partner.

"She wasn't strong enough to *cope mentally* with it...and here I was trying to repair this thing and getting *frustrated* when it wasn't working...I couldn't live with that lady again until she *sorted some things out within herself* eh, there was *a lot of shit* that she's brought over into our relationship from the past, well her past relationships and you know, I just hope some day she'll *realise it* and *seek some help herself*...she admits she definitely needs *counselling* herself, but yeah I've only just realised this since I've been here. *I blamed myself* for too long" (Sean).

"My wife was *not a very nice person* in the end eh. Would deliberately try to upset me sometimes eh. If she was in a bad mood boy would you know about it quick smart. No consideration for me and the kids eh. Just going on all the time and making us all a bit uptight. Picking on my little one too. *It just wasn't right to my way of thinking, not a grown up attitude*" (Carl).

"like *she's got a problem* in one way...*her problem* is that she's probably *a bit stubborn* and sort of you know, always likes to be right...she's pretty *dominant* and you know, she likes to get her own way and that, you know, I guess *that's one way that my tension comes up*" (John).

Similarly escalating and prolonged conflict was once more employed to explain the frustration and consequent build-up of tension.

"after a while that brought a bit of *conflict* up...it started off you know, *talking*, and it sort of *built up* and got quite *tense* and one thing lead to another, yeah" (John).

"Oh, just an argument about something, it goes on for a while, a couple of hours. In the end you start swearing and calling each other names or whatever, and then she says something back that *hurts you* and so you get even more *shittier*...You're in this argument and *you're caught up in that* and you've got *tunnel vision*" (Chris).

"that got *blown out of all proportion* in a very whispered argument. It *got out of hand* really, it was *a very heated argument*" (Peter).

"We had been away on a trip and we had come back late and the children had done something somewhere and I asked them to simply pick something up and remove it, take it into their room. I asked the boy once, twice, three times. He was carrying on and then I told him off and Jackie (wife) jumped in and said I was picking on him and I told her that, and it sort of *escalated into an argument* between us and she started *yelling* and *screaming* and told me to move out and *I grabbed her* and told her to move out" (David).

Some of the men, a small minority, talked about alcohol once more as a reason for their violence. Here alcohol was constructed as a mediator or instigator of 'inner tension'.

"It could be all the years of being a heavy *drinker*. It's only since I've been with Jude that I've been *so quick to fly off the handle*. *Since I've stopped drinking*. She told me I would have to stop if I was going to be going with her. I stopped but maybe I'm *drying out* or something. I was a heavy drinker for a long time" (George).

"It's mostly been *alcohol related*, but um, yeah, everything seems to come out when you have been *drinking*, you know, the way you feel or your insecurities" (Chris).

"I don't know why it happened. *We were both pissed*. She was *rotten drunk*. It *just happened*" (Robert).

The second story identified in the men's talk was one of purposeful violence, with the 'intention' of their 'goal directed' behaviour being to get their way, to win or to gain control. This was also a dominant account. Here violence was constructed as a strategic means towards a higher end.

"...a very heated argument and she went to leave and I grabbed her wrists...*I didn't want her to leave* at that time because *I wanted to get control*. *I wanted to win the argument*. I wanted *to prove* that her fears, her assessments of the situation were *wrong* because they weren't my assessments of the situation...since I started the course I've been physically violent in the sense of grabbing or holding, restraining, preventing Jane from leaving the room or whatever...verbal violence or verbal abuse... put downs...derogatory comments along that line, you know put downs. *To get my way*...*I win by power play*, whether it's putting the other person down verbally or physically" (Peter).

"...that I sort of had the *upper hand* and her *take that, I've won this round, bugger you*. But in hindsight it's not, that's not true at all, I didn't *win* anything by doing it, but I thought I had" (Andrew).

"I think by something that she's said or done or something and that hurts you and you *just want to hurt her back* for hurting you...You *just want to* you know, it comes down to that *win-lose thing* I suppose. You just want to make sure you *come out on top*" (Chris).

"*I grabbed her and sort of forced her down on the couch and wouldn't let her go*...I suppose I thought that by *grabbing on to her* it *wouldn't make her go*, which is stupid really. And the verbal abuse, *I tried to make her feel worthless so she would feel like she had to come back*. It is stupid, because the more I do that the more that she's gonna be tempted to walk out the door" (Paul).

"let's get angry and *show that I am serious*, and that's what used to happen eh. If you can't hear me like this, I'll tell you like this, and if that's not good enough *I'll do it like this*. I'll *smash this cup* and um, you know this should *bring your attention to this little matter*" (Sean).

Frequently the men accounted for their motivation to control and/or for the build up of their tension through reference to their underlying 'emotional condition', which was constructed as a force, causing distress.

"*Fear. Fear* can stop me walking away...*Fear* of being treated unfairly. *Fear* of the silent treatment. *Fear of losing someone you love*. That can trigger me off sometimes" (Peter).

"I think my *anger and violence came out of emotional hurt*. It always started with emotional hurt...just feeling *hurt* and *not heard*...it just *builds up into anger for me*...it was just the grouping together of a whole lot of things, um *frustration, feeling annoyed, disappointed with myself or with them*. I think it got the better of me and once in a while it would get too, as I say and *I'd go to nine and a half or ten*...Yeah I thought that I sort of had the *upper hand* and her *take that, I've won this round, bugger you*...I didn't win anything by doing it but *I thought I had*" (Andrew).

"Oh, you just break you know...she's said or done something and that *hurts you* and you *think you have to hurt her back*...you've got tunnel vision, you just wanna, you know, it comes down to that *win-lose thing* I suppose. You just want to *make sure you come out on top*" (Chris).

"My *internal level of anger rises* and then I totally *overreact* to little things...I was feeling very *confused* and *trapped* and *upset*...I'd made a *violent decision*" (Aaron).

"I was feeling *hurt, jealous, scared, yeah pretty uptight*...I *tried to make her feel worthless so she wouldn't go*...sort of forced her down on the couch and wouldn't let her go" (Paul).

"I was so *angry* at being walked away on eh, that I just *lost it...feeling unimportant*, you know...I guess in some ways *I wanted to say hey, you can't do this to me*" (Carl).

On the whole the men tended to acknowledge their violence as being problematic and would frequently, in hindsight, take 'personal responsibility' for their behaviour. This theme emerged in a number of ways. Some of the men, for example, considered themselves to have been responsible for being aware of their feelings and thereby for monitoring their 'tension'. They reported that they should have realised they were reaching a dangerous level of arousal and thereby have done something about this.

"Yeah I mean I wish nice and earlier I'd cottoned on to how that *level was building up, I could have done something to divert it*. Not argue about it to her mum's place. It's just, *I could have stated exactly how I was feeling...I needed to get out because I was afraid of getting violent*" (Aaron).

"I just sort of sat there and thought, what are you doing, and sort of mulled it over and then I just went and talked to her and asked her blah blah blah...and it sorted itself out from there and afterwards I thought well why didn't we do that in the first place but, well I know why I didn't do that in the first place, cause *I was too pissed off to stop and think and I didn't get on to that till it was, well just about to late*" (Paul).

"I should have been *a bit more on to it* than that eh. You know, I guess *I knew I was getting pissed off but I didn't do anything about it until it was to late*" (Carl).

Others indicated 'responsibility' through constructing a need to have 'practised' employing the time out procedure. These men implied that their violence had occurred after or at least during the course.

"Just me and my bad temper. Um losing my cool with Jude and that and yelling and that. Sometimes with the kids. Throwing things. So we had a big talk about it last night. I've got to learn to bite my tongue, and go through that book and *re-learn the time out and practise it...I got some good ideas from the course too, I just need to practice them*. It was working at first you know, I was trying out the stuff like *rating and time outs* but then it just, dunno. If I'd got my book out and *practised what I need to do I'd probably be right*, which I'm going to start doing again, like going for a walk or something, when it's hot or something" (George).

"I need to work out a few contracts with Jackie and to *practise the time out contract* and...*reinforce the learning from the course*. I have the knowledge of how to do these things but I haven't incorporated them into my *habits*. I've

still got my old habits, *they're winning out...which is just a matter of getting off my bum and doing it*" (Aaron).

"I really need to *come to grips with the time out thing* eh. You know I know it but not well enough to know all my how you say it? *Cues* and things which get me going to ten and *time to get out of there*. I guess that's what I should be doing more of" (Carl).

"Um, I basically needed to *just walk away*...It seems pretty hard to do at the time, or sit down and talk about it, but by the time we've been arguing for three or four hours you're not really in the, you know, well it was hard back then anyway. *I hadn't really put much effort into the time out thing then*" (Chris).

At times some of the men explicitly realised this standpoint of being 'accountable' for their violent act.

"I'd made a *violent decision*" (Aaron).

"I wouldn't say it induced me to hit her, because nothing induces me to hit her, it wasn't induced by that. No, that's wrong to say that because that's putting the blame outside...*I choose how I react...At the end of the day the decision's mine*" (Peter).

"*I do take full blame for the violence* and that, that was *my choice* if you like...I mean it was *totally wrong*" (Sean).

"*I'd no right to hold her there*" (Paul).

"*it's really just me. It's the way I sort of was, or am*. I'm trying to change...I'm trying to get a handle on it. *Someone's got to* otherwise it just gets out of control and I'll hurt somebody quite seriously and *that's not the way I want to be*" (Paul).

When asked how they would have liked to have handled the situation the vast majority of men indicated that they wished they had taken a 'time out'.

"I wish I'd been able to *see myself building up, walking away, and coming back a bit more calm* and trying to talk about it, yeah" (John).

"I should have *told her I needed some space and some time*. It would have been a *good time for a time out*" (Aaron).

"I would have liked to have *walked away, let it go. Timed out*. Let things simmer down and then at a later date, I'm not sure, *talk about it calmly*" (Peter).

"I just wander away, just *time out or something, stress away*...I wouldn't have done that before. *I wish I'd had've though*. I wish I'd known you know, to slow down and think" (Andrew).

"I basically needed to just walk away. *I should've taken a time out or something*" (Chris).

Others indicated that they wished they had engaged in a calm rational discussion, to sort out a problem, rather than 'overreacting' and engaging in a 'heated' argument.

"Just the way we did in the end, *just talked about it* and, yeah definitely. I just wished *we could have done that sooner*. Stopped to think and calm down before I get to pissed off" (Paul).

"It wasn't appropriate. *I would have liked to have handled it quietly and calmly*, instead of telling Adam (stepson) to take such and such away, *I'd have liked to have asked him* and I would have got a better response I think" (David).

"what needed to happen there is that *we needed to sit down and discuss these things*" (Sean).

"I think I could have handled it a lot better by *being clear from the start, just talking about it before we left*, that I didn't really want to go there. I could have told her that I needed to get out of the van for five minutes just to calm down" (Aaron).

"(I would have liked) for us to *sit down and talk about*" (Chris).

A couple of the men acknowledged their role in causing a 'heated' situation, thereby taking, at least some, responsibility for the initiation and development of heated conflict, tension and violence.

"I think she was frustrated that *I was being so overpowering and demanding* on her children and so she stepped in to stand up for them...*She was right* in that sense. I think *I was being overbearing*, though *I wouldn't have thought that then*" (David).

"I probably *took advantage of that* and sort of *went out more often than what I should*, and after a while *that brought a bit of conflict up*" (John).

Although the men most typically took personal responsibility for their violence, as is indicated in the themes presented above, a few of the men in a minor theme, laid varying degrees of 'blame' and 'responsibility' for their tension and actions onto their partners.

"I think *she had her wires a bit crossed there and only time for her will make her realise that...* to me Haley has brought a lot of her shit over and she's just living the same pattern again and it just so happened you know, that *I was in the middle of it and it exposed my weakness and it exposed me to be violent...a lot of my anger to me I can justify*" (Sean).

"Well when you get into a *rage...*I just get *a feeling inside of me that there's no stopping me eh...she's pretty dominant* and you know, she likes to get her own way and that, you know *that's one way that it's brought up...* like she's got a problem in one way and I've got a problem in another way" (John).

"My wife...Would *deliberately try to upset me sometimes...*Just going on all the time and making us all a *bit uptight*" (Carl).

When asked about the possibility of becoming violent in the future, the men were divided on the issue. All respondents thought their violence would be significantly reduced, however some of the men were concerned for the future and had doubts about their capacity to maintain a non-violent life style. These men considered the future to be a 'long hard road' in which a high degree of vigilance and effort would be required on an ongoing basis. These men appeared dedicated to the cause but lacked confidence in their ability to lead a non-violent lifestyle forever, usually through reference to the unpredictable nature of 'inner tension' and 'underlying feelings'.

"Yep, in all honesty yep, in the short future, maybe up to next year, the year after, it's *a long process*, and it's a *very hard road*, you *can't stop just like that*. It really just doesn't work, and people who think they can are just naive, or just arrogant...It's not easy, just the little things, the smallest things, you can be going so well and then all of a sudden something really minute will just *trigger you* and things will *start escalating...*that's not always easy, to just walk away, ninety nine out of one hundred times in the past six months I've walked away, but there's still that one in every hundred where I haven't, um, and *as long as there is that one then I'm going to be violent in the future...*you can't learn a new behaviour, *you can't teach an old dog new tricks overnight*, it takes time, it takes *effort...*there is an *ongoing concern*" (Peter).

"I *can't really say* eh, you know, I can say one thing and *next minute turn around*, but as long as *I keep trying to look at the scale when I'm starting to get angry*, yeah, should be alright. I hope so anyway" (John).

"...I sort of thought, oh yeah, I'll sit through this for a little while and I'll come out and I'll be perfect, but *it's still hard*. I mean I've had my moments even after the course where it's sort of been hard..*I can't promise anything*. No, but definitely *working on it*. I'd like to think that yeah, everytime something like this comes up, any argument, that we can just sit down and talk about it. That's *the long hard road ahead*. I'm definitely *trying* to make sure I don't repeat that stupid stuff like holding her down and that" (Paul).

"I'm going to give it a *good try*, bite my tongue, walk away. But like I say, I really need to get more help with that. Some counselling or something so I don't *get so angry and fly off the handle*. It *get's too much for me sometimes* and I really need some sort of help with that" (George).

Others were much more optimistic about the future, feeling confident in their ability to maintain a non-violent lifestyle.

"I just *don't do it now*...I can't see me *ever doing it again*. Um, na *I've got to the stage where I, like I just said, I walk away, just take time out and go*...I haven't had any hassles so far and I don't know. *I can't see myself having any problems*" (Andrew).

"There's *no chance* of that now because *I know what to do. Get out of there* if that ever happens again" (Robert).

"Well, to be totally honest, it's not going to be easy...*I'm going to do it*. Not just try. *I'm committed* to learning the knowledge from the course, the how to do things and practising them. *I'm feeling pretty confident about it all these days*" (Aaron).

"Not with my girlfriend. There's too much at stake to lose really so I've gotta stop it or I'll be in a lot of trouble. *We're sorting our shit out these days and without the violence so yeah*. Things are looking up" (Chris)

In general, the men felt confident of significantly reducing, if not eliminating, their violence in the future. As with their fears, the men's confidence was frequently expressed through reference to the construct of 'tension'. In particular the men reported feeling empowered through the 'monitoring' and 'time out' strategies imparted by MMAV.

"I just *walk away* from it now, I just go, it doesn't happen now anyway it's, I don't get into that line of thing. I just don't do it now. Before *I know when I'm gonna fly off me handle and I just walk away from it and just go, take the car and just drive off and go and do something else or go and walk around the bloody golf course, or smack a ball in the park or something, or just wonder off for half an hour and do something and just relax and I wouldn't have done that before*...I've got to the stage where I just *walk away, just take time out and go*" (Andrew).

"I handle most situations now...*see myself building up, walking away, and coming back a bit more calm and trying to talk about it*" (John).

"I can *walk away* now, I do it, cause I still get angry and still on the brink of violence...I think of *when I am getting on the brink of violence. I'm thinking, shit, I'm just about there*, you know. I'm just about at my peak. It's *time to get out* or, plus we still have our, our agreement thing, that they gave through the course, our *time out* period thing, so *that's worked really well*" (Chris).

"we still have incidents, no longer anywhere near as bad as they used to be, but as long as there is an incident, it's still an incident, irrespective of how bad or how much less violent it is. The *time outs have helped us* there for sure, or me at least, but there is an ongoing concern" (Peter).

"I mean the *time out contracts* and all that that we drew up, I mean they *have come into effect* and they have *worked on numerous occasions*. Sometimes they have been forgotten and not used at all, but the times that we have sort of used it, it's worked well" (Paul).

Others felt confident through their 'increased awareness' of the processes by which their tension becomes violence. These men reported that they had 'slowed' down, to think about things more, to give more thought before they act in an impulsive and violent manner.

"*Thinking about things* first, that's what I'm trying to do now...I want to take as many bits out of it as I can and put them into practice, it doesn't always work but I try" (Paul).

"One thing the course has taught me is to *slow down and think about things* before I act" (Sean).

"I wouldn't have done that before, I'd have dealt to something. You know smashed a whole in the wall or punched something or, but I've just gone off it, *just thinking* you know, whereas I wouldn't have before...I didn't think, that's the honest truth about it...I never stopped to think about what I was doing. Now I do...I just *slowed down total and just think about things*" (Andrew).

Several interviewees indicated that improved 'communication' was helping them reduce the likelihood of conflict, tension and thus violence.

"I think it's getting better. I think I've been more *assertive* and been *able to tell her what's been happening for me...if it's stuffed in to much* without realising it, my internal *level of anger rises*" (Aaron).

"*just sorting it out in a calm way...mmm. We talk about things more now and that helps*" (Paul).

"*We're talking about things that bother us these days* to, trying to *sort them before they get to the fighting stage*" (Chris).

"*We talk about things now, discuss things total. We would never have done that before. We didn't do that before. I've never done that with anybody. I just did my thing*" (Andrew).

Another reason for personal optimism in the future was a sense of being more 'relaxed' and 'easy going'. This state was constructed by the participants as a condition which was relatively un-conducive to excessive 'tension'. The course, the men claimed, had enabled them to be more relaxed about things.

"But it probably wouldn't. I'm *more relaxed and tolerant now*" (Robert).

"I'm a hell of a lot better, I mean as far as a person...I don't fly off as much now. I sort of think about things and I see the funny side of things now, and yeah *more easy going about things*" (Sean).

"(my likelihood of future violence is) minimised...By the way *my attitude and my approach to people*...I feel like, *less stressed*" (David).

"I've *wound down a bit*, well I have, *I've wound down*, yeah..." (Andrew).

In summary there were two dominant constructions employed by the men in their post programme talk surrounding their violence. Many of the men employed both these stories when accounting for their violence. In one 'inner tension' is once more constructed as overwhelming the perpetrator. In the other the men talk about the 'intentions' of their violence.

The men additionally constructed, in contrast to the pre-course interviews, underlying emotions fuelling their anger 'rages' and informing their violent 'intentions'. Employing each of these constructions the men acknowledged that it was their fault that they had been violent, wishing that they had monitored themselves more closely, taken a time out, communicated with their partners more calmly or had practised their 'tension management' skills. These management 'skills' were appreciated by the men in general, enabling them to feel confident about a non-violent future. It was acknowledged by several that this would not necessarily be easy however, and would take an ongoing effort. Some of the men reported feeling more 'relaxed' in general and thus 'safer' than they had at the beginning of the course, in part through improved communication with their partners.

Section (d): The men's talk surrounding their gendered relationships

This section began with the men being asked to comment on the course's emphasis on equal power sharing in relationships. Two forms of responses typically occurred at this point. Either the men constructed themselves as 'unchanged' by the course in this respect, because they

already practised this philosophy, or the course was constructed as 'enlightening' them to becoming more 'equal' and less dominant in their relationships with their partners. Either way the men portrayed themselves as agreeing with the position on equality in relationships. The first position was indicated through the following statements.

"Yeah, I've *always sort of been a person* who sort of, you know who *shares the responsibilities* and that eh, you know like *cooking* and that, I've *always thought that to be alright*" (John).

"I've *always been into equal power sharing. Cooking, I love it and cleaning and housework. I've always done it.* Look around at this place, I keep it clean and tidy. I always give my girlfriend or defacto or whatever an opportunity for *her say in decisions...I'm for living an equal relationship. Always have been*" (Robert).

"Good, yeah, *equal power sharing* is very much what I like, or what I'm attempting to do. Both Jackie and I are career orientated...I'm *one hundred percent behind her* and her striving to get *her career*, and...Other than that, um, equal power sharing, well *we make decisions together...we've always had sort of an equal power base*" (Peter).

"That's *fine with me* that stuff. *We do it anyway.* Jo, she's the money holder. She pays all the bills. We always *discuss* what we're going to do, have *a lot of discussions*, yeah...*We're both working. Housework, we share it.* I get into it" (George).

Others indicated that their lives had changed as a consequence of the course's emphasis on equality and vowed to live their lives in accordance with this egalitarian philosophy.

"Yeah, that was probably the biggest thing as I said before when I first started it, I never sort of worried about it I was, I brought the dollars in so *I was the boss*, um, that might be a horrible thing to say but *I'd never really thought about it* but that's *the way I always acted*, um, and you're there because you're there and okay, if I want to do this or want to do that but *I would never ask about well what about this or what about that*, or shall we do this, or shall we do that, I just did it! and *it was just second nature* and there's no questions asked, that's what I *did*, but *I don't do that now*, I don't do anything in that line, um, she's at home with the kids, whatever, and *she's got as much say in what's going on as I have*, it's not her fault she's at home with the kids and I'm bringing the money in, yeah...that's the biggest thing, *we talk about things now, discuss things*, total, *we would never have done that before*, we didn't do that before, I've never done it with anybody, I just did my thing...as they said you know, you're a hundred percent responsible for fifty percent of the relationship, and that saying mightn't mean much but that saying woke me up, you know, it did, I don't know why it did but it sure as hell woke me up, because it is only, the relationship's only fifty percent, *it's only half mine so*

why should I have one hundred percent rights to it, I haven't got one hundred percent rights to it" (Andrew).

"It was a hard one for me because *I was very dominant, old fashioned values. The man works and keeps.* But um, the *enlightening* of it all and the accepting of it all was quite easy for me...*We do a lot more communicating before we make decisions and everyone get's there sort of say..I've learnt to compromise.* I think she enjoys that. She feels that um, she has her say. Her will is being listened to, she's getting her share of it...I believe that *these days I give it more consideration, um, of what I think and of what other people want and how we go about it" (David).*

"I'm trying to give her more of a say, and sort of, like I say, *be a bit more equal*, yeah, so that's a good thing that I took away from the course...I'm trying, I'm trying to be like that. It's not always easy and it's not always happening but I'm definitely more thoughtful of it when things are happening..*I've thought about it a lot* (laughs). Yep, it's *definitely the way to go*. It's not always easy swallowing your pride and sort of backing down on certain things but I mean *there's got to be equality otherwise it's just one-sided and it just doesn't work*. I mean one person getting all the say, the other person can get really sick of it. I know I would if I was getting overpowered everytime. I wouldn't be hanging around. So yeah *it kind of struck me and made me think about what I was doing and what I want to be. Not overpowering that's for sure" (Paul).*

"Yeah, I have actually. It's come up a bit lately with my partner. She thinks that *I sort of tend to make the rules...I've got to lay off* a bit, cause *I have been a bit heavy you know...while I was on the course, you know when they were talking about that it was ringing through to me...Yeah, trying to look at what I am. I want to be equal* I suppose, I don't suppose, I know" (Chris).

These men spoke of shifts in their relationships, involving greater diplomacy and communication.

"I believe that these days *I give it more consideration of what I want and what other people want...We get on much better now and I think in part that is due to my new attitude and approach to people...I've learnt to compromise...We do a lot more communicating before we make decisions and everyone get's there sort of say and if there's no answer there's generally an agreement to disagree*, and then out of the blue, whether it be two hours or two days later, there will be some sort of *compromise made" (David).*

"There's been *a change in the way we relate* you know. We're still not living together no more but *we're getting on better*. I make more of an effort and so does she..*I listen more too, try to understand what she's saying* cause that's something we talked about a lot on the course. *Her rights to think differently from me about things" (Carl).*

"Nowadays *I can accept someone else's opinion* even if it is a bit different from mine...that's the biggest thing, *we talk about things now, discuss things, total*, we would never have done that before. We didn't do that before, I've never done it with anybody, I just did my thing...I used to just take what I wanted and that was the end of it" (Andrew).

"Now it's more likely to be *discussed between us*...Just to be *able to communicate* and not go overboard without fear of repercussion. I can look at myself and share this with Jody. I think *it's helped both of us*...I think it's more equal now" (Aaron).

Some of these men also indicated that changes were occurring in their relationships at other levels. For example with children. A few of the men spoke of such changes in their family orientation.

"Yeah, I mean *I go and take the kids out now*. We went fishing on Saturday. *Different, things changed*. I'm *doing all sorts of queer things now*, well not queer things, I call them *queer things because before hand I wouldn't have worried about it*, I mean I brought him a fishing rod last Christmas and I never took him fishing, ever, and he's seven and I thought what the hell's the use of buying him a fishing rod for Christmas altogether and that and I've never taken him fishing, what a bloody waste of bloody time...*I went down on Saturday and I said, you wanna come fishing*. Oh Christ, he thought it was Christmas. So I thought about it afterwards and thought what a bloody dork, fancy buying him a fishing rod and never taking him fishing, crazy. Things like that. Heaps of things like that. Might seem silly to you but to me it's made a hell of a difference...*just funny little things like that that I'd never have done before...slowed down total and got involved with the kids and the family*, instead of just going and doing what I thought had to be done and you know they were there cause they were there sort of style" (Andrew).

"I make *more of an effort* to be less demanding with *the children* these days. You know *they are people* to and *I try to listen and be more patient* with the boy especially, you know, give him more of a chance than I used to, not treat him like he's some sort of enemy anyway. I try to have fun with him and that seems to help. *I'm less stressed by him these days and we get on better so that's definitely improving*" (David).

Some of these converts had been, or were in the process of, making role changes within the home also.

"*I never used to cook anything, but I quite often now*, peel the spuds, turn the bloody stew on or something, or yeah, cook a roast the other night. *I'd have never have done that before, never*, strange you should bring that up actually cause I wasn't going to say anything really cause I sort of feel like I'm you know, well I'm not embarrassed about doing it but *it's something I would never have done because I don't see why I should have, or I didn't see why I should*

have, cause it wasn't my portfolio, if you want...I've done a hell of a lot of that lately and I never did none of it before" (Andrew).

"In the past I haven't helped out around the house as much as I should, so she says, and I believe her, cause I'm a bit lazy like that so I'm trying to change that, for her sake, cause otherwise she's gonna get very sick of doing it, doing everything, fair enough too, that's not fair and is probably a bit sexist on my part, leaving it to her. So I'm starting to pick up my end a bit, making an effort round the home, like with the vacuuming yesterday" (Paul).

When asked how these men felt about these recent lifestyle changes, the overwhelming response was one of positivity, with changes occurring simultaneously in personal and/or relationship tension.

"I've learnt to compromise. I think she enjoys that...I feel the same way, um, I feel like, less stressed by it when I can share it, the responsibility I mean" (David).

"I'm happy with them. Shit yeah, yeah, no it's a lot better, um, yeah, things have flown and are working out and things are going a hell of a lot better in all facets of everything...I'm much more relaxed and easy going with most things now" (Andrew).

"Well I'm happy with the way the relationship is at the moment, like as in roles type thing...I feel like it's the right thing to be doing you know, right by her anyway. And she appreciates that and we're getting on better so it's all working out in a way" (Paul).

"There's been a change in the way we relate you know...we still have our ups and downs. I can see where she's coming from a bit more now. And I can hear what she's saying and she will listen to my points too. Um. So yeah we talk through things and decide on what to do and that makes life a lot easier let me tell you" (Carl).

When asked if the course had prompted the men to think about what it meant 'to be a man', the men provided a variety of responses. Some of the men, as the group typically did prior to the course, rejected the use of a gender exclusive category, preferring instead to employ a non-gendered 'person' identity.

"No. As I said last time, I don't think there is any difference between men and women. So if I think of myself as a man then I am assuming a difference I think, but there is no difference" (Robert).

"So long as I'm a good person, I don't really care about, I'm not a man, or you know, I've never looked at it as though I'm a man, you're a woman sort of thing. It's just I'm a person, you're a person, opposite sex, you're good, I'm

bad, you're bad, I'm good, we're both good, *that's all that counts*...I've pretty much only explored what to me, what pertains to me. Am I good. If I continue to be violent am I good? Does that make me a better man? Does that make me a worse man? If I cry, does that make me a wimp or does that make me more of a man? Or does that make me *human*? Um, yeah, just as pertains to me" (Peter).

The vast majority of the men however indicated that the course had prompted them to think about their 'manhood' in a different way. Some of the men, for example, indicated that narrow stereotypes and expectations of male toughness were not appropriate for them, opting instead for a new form of 'manhood', one which was less concerned with being 'macho' in a traditional sense. Instead these men considered 'manhood' to lie in the greater 'challenge'; to resist conventional cultural constraints. In effect a different kind of 'strength' was required of these men: The strength to break social stereotypes and pressure, through such means as displaying emotions or walking away.

"Um, it's sort of *made me realise* that um, that I had a problem and um, it's not, you're *not such a wuss just walking away* from a heated situation. It's probably made me *a bit more of a man* than being a coward anyway...*Man enough to make the harder choice*, the one that counts...sometimes *it takes more of a man to walk away*. Not stay just to make a point" (John).

"Yeah, you're *more of a man to walk away from stuff like that*...anybody can get into a fight and lose their cool and get into a fight and be violent and that, but if you can stop and think about what you're doing and say, na, I don't want any piece of this, that makes you a man...it may look like you're backing down but you're still more of a man to walk away. To leave all those things behind...*You don't have to have that macho attitude you know*" (Chris).

"Um, well *it's prompted me to think sort of what society expects of a man*, as in sort of *a big staunch tough guy* that doesn't show any emotion and in that sense, yeah you sort of think about it, I mean that is *the way society works* isn't it? And the good news from all that is that *I don't have to go along with it at all*" (Paul).

"*To be honest with myself and to know my limits*. You know, like *emotionally to be aware* of where I'm at and *not, like most guys, stuffing it in* anymore. *Trying to look tough* and what have you, I don't feel anything, you know, and feeling like shit. *It has made me determined not to worry about stuff like that anymore and to do something about it*, like tell Jane when I'm feeling trapped or vulnerable" (Aaron).

Some of the men talked about and retained traditionally 'masculine' characteristics within their definition of being a 'man', such as being a 'provider'. The men typically expanded this

definition however to incorporate new, traditionally feminine behaviours, such as family 'caregiving', into their manhood constructions.

"What it means to be a man? Well, yeah, yeah, yeah, yep, yeah, yep, it can be anything really, it can be anybody, yeah, it's not, yeah, it can be anybody, um, a man, I think, I don't know, a man to me would be *a good provider* and is *good with his family*, um, gives them time and *loving*, it doesn't have to be anything special, *a big hero* or anything. He doesn't have to be black or white, he doesn't have to be rich or poor, he doesn't have to be *strong or weak* you know. I've only, I mean that's what a man is, um, I believe...All this *macho bullshit* doesn't do anyone any good" (Sean).

"I know I've got a lot of *responsibilities*, like with *family and work* and that. Well yes. I suppose in a way yeah. When you look at it like that yeah. Just to *be more responsible*. Like when years ago when I first met her I was probably out of town drinking all the time or something. I sort of realised if you're out there all the time, you're not going to last in a relationship, so yeah knock that on the head. Start *growing up and take responsibility for things*. Yeah. Be more *there for the family you know*" (George).

"Yeah, I suppose in some way, it's *changed the ideals* that I've had, about what *a male and a father's meant to be*, yeah, but only around the edges I think, I still believe what I believe, yeah...I believe a man's meant to be straight, *hardworking* and a father's meant to be *caring and strong, understanding* and that...Oh, I think before I was just as *strong and determined before* that, but there was *a lack of caring and understanding* I think, trying to get to the goal without going round all the curves first. Yeah I'm *more sensitive now* to other people and other people's feelings. The great statement that Jane makes is that if you get there without having fun along the way it's not worth getting there" (David).

In response to this query of 'being a man', some of the men reflected on their past, indicating that they now identified their previous behaviour as inappropriate and unfair. These men constructed themselves as more 'aware' and 'equal' now.

"Men are supposed to be, I don't know, so much *superior*. I *used to think* I was too, cause I *earned more and would run the household*. I suppose it's a big part of the violence that goes on out there eh. Men being *all dominant yeah, power*, and just being the ones in control full time. *I learned a lot* about what *I didn't want to be* when we talked about those things" (Paul).

"Yeah well, *I always thought* I was, like that was the end of it. *I was the man and she was the woman and that was the end of it* and *the man was the right* and the woman was there because they were women they were there, um, yeah, that's not right at all, you can't have one without the other, you've gotta have both, but before as I said before, it was me and whatever I did, they didn't like or didn't agree with or didn't go along with or whatever, then it was too bad because I just did it, cause I thought *I was right, and I wouldn't have thought*

about asking or, I'd just deal to it, whatever, this, that, or do or deal or whatever, but wear it on your head, because, as I said, it's fifty fifty, down the middle and that's the difference now, but it wouldn't have been before, well it wasn't before...we're a family and I'm the Dad and she's the mum, whereas before I was the boss, so that was the end of it...It's meant a big change in the way I see things and go about things. Just because I'm a man or the breadwinner doesn't give me the right to be the boss you know" (Andrew).

"Well, I am one aren't I? That much is obvious (laughs). Yeah, *it did make me think about it for a bit. Um, Mr bossy coming home and expecting the world to fit round him. Like in the video and I could see myself in there doing that sort of thing and I thought shit is that me? Then we talked about it and I thought 'No way am I doing that again'" (Carl).*

When asked about their 'ideal relationships', the men converged upon several constructions. Firstly, the men wanted communication and mutual decision making discussions in their relationships.

"More *communication*, before we set our relationship up, and as an ongoing tool. So we're both clear about what's going on. Um, yeah, *making decisions together" (Sean).*

"It'd be *equal*. We'd *discuss things* first before one does any action that might effect the other...We'd *communicate" (Robert).*

"we are *communicating* much more nowadays and *I'd like to see that improve more. Sharing ideas and working out stuff together" (Aaron).*

"I want to be *equals*...we're *communicating much better* these days, *talking about stuff we never would have, making decisions* on stuff. We're *listening and compromising* much more these days...We've just got to *keep our communication lines going*, you know talk about stuff when they come up and that" (Chris).

The men further sought a quality relationship with their partners. One that was not only equal but featured reciprocal nurturing and caring.

"Um, it's hard to say really isn't it, sort of *getting on with each other, caring and caring for each other*, a bit of give and take, yeah, I suppose that would be about it, yeah" (John).

"My ideal relationship would be *based on respect* and *involve lots of nurturing and support" (Robert).*

"I don't, um, no one's perfect and, um, *you've got to hold on to what's strong between you's, what attracts you to each other* and accept faults and failures and sort of *nurture the good things*, yeah it's way from perfect but *it's*

good...we get on well, we talk, we have common interests, common desires and goals yeah" (David).

"a loving place" (Sean).

"I've got the *ideal relationship* now. I just don't wanna stuff things up. She's *my best friend*, she's my girlfriend too. I think she thinks the same thing about me you know, we were best friends, well not best friends, but we were good friends before we started going out together and you know, we get on good ninety five percent of the times" (Chris).

Some of the men were enthusiastic about being actively involved in the caregiving of their children.

"Uh. *I'd like to spend more time with the kids* and the family, you know *doing things together*, like we have been, *which we hadn't done before*...I enjoy it and everyone else does as well. Things are going much better these days" (Andrew).

"I've got *no problems staying at home and being a house husband*...as far as *bringing up kids* ok, I haven't done that before, that would be a challenge, and a learning curve" (Peter).

"We've always sort of *shared that responsibility*, you know, *have turns looking after the kids* so that *won't change*" (John).

Others emphasised 'support' for their partners working outside the home and of sharing of housework between them.

"I'm prepared to *put my own goals* or my own dreams as far as family and stuff like that go, *on a backburner* so that *she get's the chance to make her career*...*she wants a career* so simple solution, we won't have children for the time being, you know so...as far as something like that *I've got no problem bringing up kids and letting Jackie go out to work*" (Peter).

"probably *both working*, I don't know, *it doesn't really bother me* if she doesn't work, I work, or the other way round, I think she feels the same way to" (John).

"*She's happy* doing her polytech studies, *getting ready to go and use it in a job*, and I'm happy at work..*I'm starting to pick up my end a bit, making an effort around the home, like with the vacuuming*" (Paul).

"Everything would be *50/50*. *Me cleaning the toilets only half the time*. Jane the other half. Within reason of course. We both have jobs we hate like she likes gardening, but not *vacuuming*, so *I can do that*, and her that. But definitely it would be discussed and any job that neither of us liked it would be *50/50 or sort some exchange or bata system*" (Aaron).

"I'm cooking more and that these days and want to keep that up, cause it's good" (Andrew).

"We'd share our work and our or some of our hobbies. Both of us would be working and both doing our fair share around the home" (Robert).

In general the men reported, once more, 'liberal' attitudes towards women in their relationships. Some of the men indicated that they had changed their sexist ways to become more 'equal', whilst others, as had been maintained in the pre-course interviews, were always egalitarian and non-sexist. For those who had been enlightened by this new 'awareness' many lifestyle changes were reported, such as greater communication and compromise within the relationship and greater involvement in childcare and housework. These shifts were reported as being very positive for the men, helping to reduce their overall tension.

The men typically reported changing their sense of 'manhood'. Whilst a small minority continued to see themselves as 'persons' first, the majority identified with being a 'man' and re-constructed their manhood. The men typically rejected some of the cultural constraints surrounding masculinity, such as being macho, whilst retaining others, such as being strong or a provider, and expanded this by adding traditionally feminine virtues to their definitions of 'what it means to be a man', such as being nurturing and caring. Ideally the men typically wanted 'non sexist', 'egalitarian' relationships which were loving, caring and nurturing and in which the woman was supported for working outside the home, and housework and childcare shared.

CHAPTER TWELVE

POST-COURSE DISCURSIVE RESOURCES

As with the pre-course interviews, the second wave of interviews, once themes in the men's talk were identified, were analyzed for the discursive resources employed. Here recurring constructions are located within discourse and the effects of these post-programme accounting devices are explored. As with the pre-course interviews, a summary of the themes and underlying discursive resources employed by the men can be located at the end of the chapter. These summaries can be used as a basic reference point for the reader during the pre and post group 'comparative analysis'; a higher order analysis of discursive dynamics and trends occurring as a consequence of the men's participation in the programme, reported in the following fifth and final chapter surrounding this study (Chapter 13).

Section (a): The MMAV Stopping Violence programme

Employing a Liberal humanist discourse many of the men felt 'woken up' and 'enlightened' by MMAV's course content. Their 'consciousness' was expanded placing a new 'light' on things.

"it enlightened me to a lot of different ways of thinking" (David).

The distinction between violence and anger was a new construction which emerged out of this new 'consciousness'. These were re-constituted as separate entities; no longer synonymous with one another. Violence was constructed as a decision and anger as a feeling. This freshly taken position for the men implicitly contrasts itself with a model of violence in which 'anger' or 'inner tension' is assumed to be causal and 'essentially' linked to violence, as in the Romantic 'inner tension' model, a model which was found to be highly prevalent in the pre-programme interviews. The 'natural' relationship between the two is now, in light of the course, questioned and to a degree severed, indicating perhaps a shift away from such a 'determinist' position on violence. This 'severing' effect, with a whole host of implications for how the men construct violence, is found off and on throughout the men's talk.

*"You can decide to do something with it (anger), something that's *not* impulsive or violent"* (John).

The Romantic 'expressive tension' account remained as a powerful and prevalent resource for the men however. While 'anger' and 'inner tension' were reconstructed as not 'essentially' connected to violence, the 'tension model' with the various associated strategies for monitoring and managing 'anger', was consistently the most valued resource acquired in the course.

"The biggest thing I got out of it I think was that I was probably sitting on a thing where I was probably about *seven on their scale*...I'm convinced now that *that is the reason why I was flying off my handle*" (Andrew).

The 'tension management' tools enabled through the Romantic 'expressive tension' account on violence were understandably appreciated by the men given the dominance of this account in the pre-programme interviews and in the MMAV course itself. These tools enabled an overarching strategy which is consistent with the men's own experience; 'inner tension' overwhelming them. Such an intervention strategy simultaneously co-articulates a Liberal humanist position, through constructing and enabling the men to engage in the 'intentional' 'management' of their 'inner tension'. The appreciation of this co-articulation and the tools afforded through this appreciation harmonises with the men's shift to 'separate' any 'essential' link between anger and violence, demonstrating a movement away from an exclusively Romantic account, and is indicative of other shifts to come.

The men reported that the course had enabled them to take 'personal responsibility' for their 'choices' in behaviour. In 'owning' their 'choices of behaviour' the men appear to be moving towards and taking up the Liberal humanist position offered in the programme.

"I learnt heaps, um, basically briefly, um, firstly that *I'm responsible for my own actions*. I'm not responsible for how other people react to what I do, um, but *I am responsible for how I react to what they do*. At the end of the day *the choice is mine* as to whether I'm violent or not" (Peter).

Furthermore men speaking from this position frequently included constructs emerging from the Romantic world view. The 'management' model, co-articulating these discourses, appeared to offer a subject position for the men which many took up and spoke from.

"I learned to *take responsibility for myself*. Um. The way stress and that builds up. *To read the signs and to do something about it before I lose my cool*. Yeah. *It's up to me to do that*" (David).

The men also spoke of learning to be more sensitive with other people as a consequence of

the course and to respect their opinions and rights to be different. The adoption of a Liberal humanist discourse constructing 'individual' 'rights' and 'differences' appeared to underlie this shift in 'sensitivity'.

"I think I've thought *most about rights* more than anything. Um. I've never sort of taken much to, well *I've always sort of thought that I was right*, and I never sort of thought about any sense of anybody else's, you know. Nowadays *I can accept some one else's opinion even if it is a bit different from mine*" (Andrew).

From a Liberal humanist position the acquisition of communication skills was also constructed as a valuable resource. These 'skills', along with the new 'respectful sensitivity' occurring the men's relationships, were typically appreciated for improving the quality of the men's relationships. From a Romantic 'expressive tension' position, the new Liberal humanist informed 'relationship skills' were constructed furthermore as providing the men with an additional resource for reducing their tension, and thus their violence.

"We learned talking stuff too. Like *how to say things* you don't like *without getting all uptight about it*. Yeah. *Listening*" (Carl).

There seemed to be a distinct interplay between these discourses at times. Co-articulations were employed both ways. While sometimes Liberal humanist implications were experienced as reducing tension, at others tension was experienced as 'manageable' through Liberal humanist constructions.

Some of the men spoke of learning about the social construction and constraints surrounding men, macho-ness and masculinity. These men took up a Structuralist 'social systemic' position as they constructed these 'norms' as constraints and rejected them because of their problematic implications for violence. The men's new 'big picture' thus appeared to be informed by the social systemic construction of gender structures, and the men's 'illumination' thus involves 'consciousness raising', a Liberal humanist - 'social systemic' co-articulation.

"All this *macho bullshit* doesn't do anyone any good" (Sean).

Interestingly while the dominant account constructed the course as excellent and highly recommendable to others, another story constructed the course as inadequate and incomplete. This account, a minor theme only, emerged out of 'pathological' discursive resources, constructing the men's 'anger problem' as intact. Management skills did not reduce the men's

'anger'. These men were seeking 'cure' and relief from their 'intense feelings' or 'symptoms', not 'coping' strategies. They still felt 'angry' and this concerned them.

"I still get angry though. The course hasn't really helped in that respect. I still get angry quick, just now I know when I am heading that way. I'd like to know why I get angry and to do something about that, which the course hasn't really helped with...My foul temper. Why have I got it? I want to find out, from a counsellor I hope. Get at the problem that way" (George).

Section (b): Accounts of 'family violence' as a community problem

When asked to define violence, the vast majority of participants defined violence as a broad set of behaviours, encompassing the physical, verbal and beyond. The prevalence of this broad definition demonstrates a shift in the way in which the men are constructing violence. The men, following the MMAV programme, have moved away from a physical 'assault' orientation and appear to encompass other non-physically violent strategies within their definition. This indicates a shift in the men's accounting practices towards a Liberal humanist 'violation' account.

"Violence is the whole range of forms of abuse; verbal, physical, emotional, sexual. There's many different forms out there. Different people do it differently" (Robert).

Some of the men didn't necessarily agree with this orientation, considering violence to be 'physical' while the other forms constituted the distinct category of 'abuse'. This less frequently employed account has the effect of constructing physical violence as intrinsically separate from each of the 'other' forms. Whilst the 'other' forms carry Liberal humanist baggage such as 'intent', physical violence, when constructed as a separate category, omits such connotations, implying a Romantic account in which inner tension is narrowly and unintentionally expressed. This resonates with the men's pre-course accounts, indicating that whilst some of the men, roughly half, have shifted towards constructing violence through a Liberal humanist discourse, several have not.

"There's violence and abuse as I see it...Abuse is something that is not physical. It's a form of attack that is not physical...Violence to me is not isolation. Silent treatment is not violence. I didn't agree with that. The degrees are well, financial violence that's a load of bollocks. That's just abuse" (David).

In constructing violence one of two criteria were typically employed to define an event as violent or not. Some of the men, the men most likely to construct 'violence' and 'abuse' as

separate phenomena, considered 'harm' and 'hurt' to be the defining feature of what constitutes a violent incident. The second construction employed was the Liberal humanist 'violation' account as seen in the feminist 'power and control' model employed by MMAV. In this story a violent incident was constructed as 'controlling' someone and imposing upon their 'will'. These two accounts were employed with equal prevalence. The second is clearly informed by the Liberal humanist 'instrumental' account and, related to the broad category definition described above, supports the interpretation of a shift in this direction.

The traditional 'harm' criteria however, is ambiguously constructed. Implicitly it supports the Romantic 'physical' assault account, but because it is not limited to this and because the construction does occur on occasion with constructs of 'intentionality', as demonstrated in the men's transcripts, it is not necessarily informed by a Romantic account. It's discursive foundations are difficult to determine.

"Violence is any form of attack that *hurts* the other person, such as physical, emotional, sarcasm sort of thing...the physical *pain that you inflict*...the *emotional hurt* of it all" (David).

"Violence is anything that *intentionally hurts* the other person. Causes them harm" (George).

In constructing 'domestic violence' the men were, following the course, predominantly more likely to employ a 'social systemic' account and define the issue as a gendered problem. This supports the interpretation that some form of gender consciousness raising had occurred since the previous interviews. This 'shift' was not universal as many of the men still accounted for the problem through gender free Liberal humanist constructs. From a pro-feminist position this is an interesting transformation and is representative of other 'social systemic' constructs found within the men's post-course transcripts.

"It's us *guys* who are doing the damage...*men* are just so used to getting their own way full stop" (Sean).

In accounting for men's domestic violence in the community the participants drew and converged upon several cultural resources. The most frequently employed of which, as with the pre-course interviews, was the Romantic 'expressive tension' account in which the constructions of 'anger', 'stress' and 'tempers' were typically cited by each participant as causal agents in men's violence. The men were constructed as becoming 'strung' inside, like

a 'spring' waiting to explode. Conflict and money hassles were cited as bringing on this process.

"*stress and anger...Violence is just a release of tension, I think. It comes around in a cycle, violence. It builds up and builds up and then you have to lash out*" (Chris).

In contrast to the pre-group interviews, the men constructed underlying emotions as playing an important part in the development of men's anger. This development in accounting practice implies greater attention being paid by the men to 'primary' emotional processes. In being more emotionally articulate the men appear to be shifting towards an emotionally sensitive world view. A Romantic view which, from a 'social systemic' position, subverts traditional constraints of (non-emotive) masculinity. This is interesting new talk, articulating new sensitivities.

"the reason is *fear...it's its own trigger...They race up the anger scale*" (Peter).

This shift in the men's talk is endorsed from a 'social systemic'-'expressive tension' co-articulation of violence such as that found in the 'male emotional funnel system' theory (Gondolf, 1985b). In this theory men are constructed as emotionally inarticulate and thus predisposed to anger. This co-articulation is apparent in the men's talk when men's 'sex role socialisation' is constructed as causing men to be 'emotionally inarticulate'.

"it would be mostly the way *men* at least, have been *taught to handle their emotions*" (Aaron).

This construction of 'male socialisation' was employed by the men in another account also; this time through a co-articulation of 'social systemic' and Liberal humanist discursive resources. In this story men's 'sexist' expectations of dominance and control were identified as a causal factor.

"I think history as a whole, *man has always been superior. Man is the breadwinner*" (Peter).

Following the course the men were thus more likely to employ a feminist 'social systemic' discourse in their talk. This gendered consciousness has emerged in a number of ways thus far and can be traced back to the 'enlightening' 'big picture' imparted to the men, as found in section (a). The employment of this 'social systemic' resource suggests that the men are

more 'aware' of their gendered identities, an observation strengthened by accounts in the men's talk on relationships (section d).

Another discursive resource commonly employed by the men to explain other men's violence, one that in contrast to the feminist position is not new to the men but rather has been retained from the pre-course interviews, is 'pathology' and in particular the construction of a 'pathological' historical background for the protagonist. This account positions the perpetrator's violence as a reflection/symptom of a 'pathological' background.

"Background, what was happening, like in your past sort of thing" (Paul).

This explanation affords an account in which the man's violence is seen as a 'symptom' of biographical history. Interestingly, in contrast to the pre-group interviews, the men were unlikely to extend this discourse and construct the woman as a 'pathological' precipitator of her abuse. Rather, by co-articulating this 'pathological' account with a Romantic 'expressive tension' discourse the men were more likely, following the course, to construct the woman as an 'innocent' 'scapegoat' through which aggression and 'inner tension' is inappropriately released. Interestingly, instances of 'victim blaming' are reduced as feminist 'social systemic' constructions are more frequently employed.

"a chain reaction in which you take the anger out on the wife or the children might happen" (David).

Another 'pathological' account, constructing alcohol as a causal factor, was also frequently employed and retained by the men. This account explains men's violence through temporarily 'abnormal' circumstances. Co-articulated with an 'inner tension' account, the men's 'anger' is constructed as becoming dis-inhibited.

"Alcohol's a big cause too, probably the biggest cause. It sets people right off" (Robert).

These accounts of domestic violence and men's violence in the community were used by the men to inform several forms of intervention. The two most common suggestions called for an increase in the availability of MMAV Stopping Violence educational programmes and an endorsement of the present publicity campaigns occurring on TV, in newspapers and on billboards. The support for the MMAV programmes appeared to reflect a concern for anger 'problems' and can thus be seen to be operating from a mixed bag of Liberal humanist,

'expressive tension', 'pathological' and 'learning' discursive resources, in which 'inner tension' is constructed as the underlying problem and the imparting of 'anger management' or 'symptom nursing' skills the solution.

"I think the opportunity to, more outlets for *dealing with it, our anger*, like *Manline*" (David).

The vast majority of participants similarly endorsed 'public awareness' campaigns as another means to confronting the issue in the community. This educational approach, employing the Liberal humanist constructs of 'awareness' and 'choice' was seen as empowering individuals to recognise and to act on the problem in a constructive manner.

"I think that is a good idea yeah, *cause people see things and makes them think* and you know if *it wakes them up to what they're doing*, if it wakes one person up it's worth having" (Andrew).

From a Structuralist 'social systemic' discursive standpoint, such an intervention involves the breaking down of 'cultural norms' surrounding 'privacy in the home', and this particular construction can also be seen in the men's talk, suggesting that the men are employing this resource.

"*making more people aware and bringing it out into the open*, it's no longer something that's *behind closed doors*...If it's *brought to the surface* and society as a whole is made *aware* of it, then there's *less chance that it's gonna survive*" (Peter).

Using a Liberal humanist position further several participants pointed to the individual as an important source of change, claiming it was his 'choice' and 'responsibility' for coming forward and asking for help. In the absence of such initiatives the man was defined as a 'criminal' and legal interventions were advocated. This time no-one disputed the practice of legal intervention, indicating that a Liberal humanist position had been adopted by the men to the detriment of a Medical 'pathological' account.

"The *law's involvement* has been good. At first I didn't think it was such a good idea. *Police stopping violent guys* and saying come on or else you'll be *locked up* is a powerful way of *confronting the problem*" (Carl).

Others looked to the future and emphasised change in the population through 'social systemic' and 'learning' discursive resources, constructing a need for preventative education. In particular this education should confront the way males are taught to deal with their emotions.

"A *manline course* would be really good if it was *adjusted* and taken into the *schools* for an hour a week or so...*it's OK to express your emotions for boys. That violence is not an acceptable solution*" (Aaron).

Section (c): The men's accounts of their violence to their partners

Two discourses dominated the men's accounts of their own violence. The first way of speaking, that of 'expressive tension', involved once more the employment of the Romantic construction of 'forces from within' 'driving' the person's aggressive behaviour. In this way the men were able to once more construct themselves as temporarily 'out of control' of their violence.

"I was *pumped up*...you *just break* you know. Just *tense you up, tense you up*, whammo. You've got to *lash out*" (Chris).

"Well when you get into a *rage*...I just get a *feeling inside of me that there's no stopping me eh*" (John).

The source of this 'overpowering' 'inner tension' was attributed to factors such as escalating conflict and the frustrating behaviour of the partner.

It just wasn't right to my way of thinking, not a grown up attitude" (Carl).

"after a while that brought a bit of *conflict* up...it started off you know, talking, and it sort of *built up* and got quite *tense* and one thing lead to another, yeah" (John).

Some of the men employed the 'pathological' construct of alcohol as a reason for their violence. As with those constructions discussed above this account was most typically couched within a Romantic discursive context. Here alcohol was constructed as a mediator of 'inner tension' and a 'disinhibitor' of control and 'rationality'. Through the co-articulation of these resources, these men constructed themselves as temporarily out of control.

"It's mostly been *alcohol related*, but um, yeah, everything seems to come out when you have been *drinking*, you know, the way you feel or your insecurities" (Chris).

The second type of account present in the men's talk was one of 'instrumental' violence; an account constructed through Liberal humanist discursive resources. This was also a dominant story and one which, unlike the Romantic account, had been absent from the men's pre course stories. Here violence was identified by the men as an 'intentional' strategy towards a higher goal.

I'll *smash this cup* and um, you know this should *bring your attention to this little matter*" (Sean).

Frequently the men accounted for their 'intentional' 'acts of control' through reference to their underlying 'emotional condition', which was constructed as a force, causing overwhelming distress. In this way the men, when employing a Liberal humanist position to account for their 'intentional' violence, typically incorporated a Romantic 'inner passions' model into their account. This form of talk indicates a new subject position being taken up by the men, one in which they construct themselves as 'emotionally vulnerable' agents, subject to the influence of 'primary' emotions, as distinct from the Romantic position of unintentional blind rage. These 'primary emotions' were constructed as guiding 'intentional' acts of violence, to reduce emotional distress. The man's 'rationality' was thus constructed as being constrained by 'irrational' inner passions; a Liberal humanist - Romantic co-articulation.

"I was feeling *hurt, jealous, scared, yeah pretty uptight...I tried to make her feel worthless so she wouldn't go...sort of forced her down on the couch and wouldn't let her go*" (Paul).

Similarly, 'primary' emotions were constructed in the straight Romantic 'inner tension' account, growing into 'overwhelming rage' from which violence 'erupted'. In this way sometimes both these accounts, 'intentionality' and 'overwhelming forces from within', were apparent in the same man's explanations. This was a new feature in the men's talk, not apparent in the pre-programme interviews.

"Oh, you just break you know...she's said or done something and that *hurts you* and *you think you have to hurt her back...you've got tunnel vision, you just wanna, you know, it comes down to that win-lose thing* I suppose. You just want to *make sure you come out on top*" (Chris).

"I was so *angry* at being walked away on eh, that I just *lost it...feeling unimportant*, you know...I guess in some ways *I wanted to say hey, you can't do this to me*" (Carl).

On the whole the men took 'personal responsibility' for their behaviour, constructing this through Liberal humanistic constructs such as 'awareness', 'choice' and 'responsibility'. This was the case even when they explained their violence through 'overwhelming' Romantic constructs.

"I wouldn't say it induced me to hit her, because nothing induces me to hit her, it wasn't induced by that. No, that's wrong to say that because that's putting the blame outside...*I choose how I react...At the end of the day the decision's mine*" (Peter).

This style of co-articulating Liberal humanist and Romantic accounts was common. For example many of the men wished, in hindsight, they had monitored their tension or had implemented a time out.

"I should have been *a bit more on to it* than that eh. You know, I guess *I knew I was getting pissed off* but *I didn't do anything about it until it was to late*" (Carl).

A similar story emerged in which the men wished they had prevented the build-up of conflict and tension through behaving more appropriately; By not instigating an unnecessarily stressful situation and acting calmly and rationally once it had started.

"I think I could have handled it a lot better by *being clear from the start, just talking about it before we left*" (Aaron).

At times some of the men explicitly realised this Liberal humanist standpoint of 'accountable' violence.

"*I do take full blame for the violence* and that, that was *my choice* if you like...I mean it was *totally wrong*" (Sean).

There is a clear trend to the men's accounts. In contrast to the pre-group 'pathological' - 'expressive tension' co-articulated stories, the men tend to account for their violence through an 'expressive tension' - 'instrumental' model. They are positioning themselves as rational agents with 'choices' who are paradoxically subject to 'irrational' inner forces. When the men are violent, they typically take 'responsibility' for their actions, either by constructing their 'failure' to monitor, manage and prevent the build up of their underlying tension effectively or through constructing themselves as 'successful' in implementing these strategies.

"*I've got to the stage* where I, like I just said, I walk away, *just take time out and go*" (Andrew).

Although the men most typically took up this responsible Liberal humanist - Romantic position a few of the men in contrast, through employment of the 'pathological other' - 'inner tension' co-articulated account, managed to place at least some blame upon their partners,

thus, as the men typically did prior to the course, excusing their violence and justifying their 'failure' to contain their tension..

"I think she had her wires a bit crossed there and only time for her will make her realise that...to me Haley has brought a lot of her shit over and she's just living the same pattern again and it just so happened you know, that I was in the middle of it and it exposed my weakness and it exposed me to be violent" (Sean).

When considering the future the men expressed both unconfidence and confidence through constructs informed by the Romantic 'expressive tension' account. The men's fears centred around the unpredictable nature of inner feelings, yet they felt reasonably confident of maintaining a non-violent lifestyle because they now had the tools to monitor and to intervene in their 'inner tension'. This Romantic discourse has been consistently present throughout the men's talk.

"I can say one thing and next minute turn around, but as long as I keep trying to look at the scale when I'm starting to get angry, yeah, should be alright. I hope so anyway" (John).

Several interviewees indicated that they felt more confident in general because they personally were, following the course, less tense or because they were better able to deal with conflict through communication, thereby keeping tension levels to a minimum. These men, employing a Romantic account once more, were able to feel safe at a more primary level, without recourse to tension 'management'.

"I've wound down a bit, well I have, I've wound down, yeah...We talk about things now, discuss things total. We would never have done that before. We didn't do that before. I've never done that with anybody. I just did my thing" (Andrew).

Section (d): The men's talk surrounding their gendered relationships

When asked to comment on the course's emphasis on equal power sharing in relationships the men unanimously agreed with this Liberal humanist position. While some constructed themselves as having been this 'liberal' since before the course, others had shifted to this position and typically described their shift through constructing themselves prior to the course as 'old fashioned' and 'dominant'. These men had been 'enlightened' by the course in this respect.

"I've always been into equal power sharing. Cooking, I love it and cleaning and housework. I've always done it" (Robert).

"I brought the dollars in so *I was the boss*, um, that might be a horrible thing to say but *I'd never really thought about it* but that's *the way I always acted*" (Andrew).

Using a structuralist account some of these men explained their prior 'unequal' behaviour as being constructed through a gender specific criteria.

"It was a hard one for me because *I was very dominant, old fashioned values. The man works and keeps*. But um, the *enlightening* of it all and the accepting of it all was quite easy for me" (David).

"*Men* are supposed to be, I don't know, so much *superior*. I used to think I was to...that's not fair and is probably a bit *sexist* on my part" (Paul).

These men spoke of shifts occurring in their relationships as a consequence of this 'enlightenment' to be equal. These included greater diplomacy and communication with their partners, increases in their input into housework and putting more effort into their children. These changes were reported as being very positive for the men and a reduction in stress and tension was also reported.

"There's been *a change in the way we relate* you know...And *I can hear* what she's saying and *she will listen* to my points too. Um. So yeah we talk through things and decide on what to do and *that makes life a lot easier let me tell you*" (Carl).

This reduction in tension, associated with the various 'shifts' towards an egalitarian life style and Liberal humanist subject position, is, from a Romantic 'expressive tension' discursive position, a very positive (side) effect, helping to reduce the men's violence. From this position, Liberal humanist interventions of equality are positive to the extent that they reduce 'inner tension', the hypothetical cause of men's violence.

"I feel like, *less stressed* by it when I can *share* it, the *responsibility* I mean" (David).

Some of the men maintained employing a Liberal humanist world view when asked what it meant 'to be a man', rejecting the use of a gendered identity as they the group typically did prior to the course.

"So long as I'm a good person, I don't really care about, I'm not a man, or you know, I've never looked at it as though I'm a man, you're a woman sort of thing. It's just I'm a person" (Peter).

The vast majority of the men however indicated that the course had prompted them to think about their 'manhood' in a different way. Typically these men employed a feminist informed 'social systemic' account alongside Liberal humanist resources when doing so, constructing conventional stereotypes and cultural expectations as being dangerous and 'choosing' to behave outside of these constraints. Traditional masculine traits, such as being 'tough' and 'macho', were rejected from the men's accounts while traditionally feminine characteristics, such as 'caregiving', were incorporated into their constructions. The men had thus become 'aware' of their masculinity as it is socially constructed and have consciously decided to reconstruct this in an unconventional manner when forging their (new) identities as men.

"it's changed the *ideals* that I've had, about what a *male and a father's meant to be*" (David).

"a man to me...is good with his *family*, um, gives them *time and loving*. It doesn't have to be anything special, *a big hero* or anything...All this *macho bullshit* doesn't do anyone any good" (Sean).

The advent of a gendered consciousness in the group with respect to personal identity represents a transformation in the men's positioning. From a pro-feminist position this is a positive shift. The men are more likely, following the course, to see themselves and their behaviour as constructed through 'social systemic' forces and to resist these constructions.

Two conventional masculine traits were retained by members of the group however, indicating that despite the 'gender consciousness' enabled through the employment of 'social systemic' and Liberal humanist linguistic resources, the men were employing conventional constructions within their accounts of 'manhood'. These traditional constructs, represented in a minor theme only, equate 'manhood' with being a 'provider' and being 'strong'.

"a father's meant to be caring and *strong*, understanding and that...Oh, I think before I was just as *strong and determined* before that, but there was a lack of caring and understanding" (David).

"a man to me would be a *good provider*" (Sean).

In general the men displayed, once more, 'liberal' attitudes towards women in their relationships. Some of the men indicated that they had changed their sexist ways to become 'equal', whilst others, as had been maintained in the pre-course interviews, were always egalitarian and non-sexist. As with the pre-course interviews however there was some evidence of gender specific criteria in the men's talk, although this was noticeably lesser in prevalence.

When asked about their 'ideal relationships', the men once more took up a Liberal humanist position and constructed their ideals as 'egalitarian', 'communicative', 'caring' and 'supportive'.

"My ideal relationship would be *based on respect and involve lots of nurturing and support*" (Robert).

"Everything would be *50/50. Me cleaning the toilets only half the time. Jane the other half. Within reason of course. We both have jobs we hate like she likes gardening, but not vacuuming, so I can do that, and her that. But definitely it would be discussed and any job that neither of us liked it would be 50/50 or sort some exchange or bata system*" (Aaron).

Summaries of the analysis:

Section (a): The MMAV Stopping Violence programme

When asked what they thought of the MMAV course the men were extremely positive about it, claiming to have enjoyed it and to have learnt a lot about stopping violence from it. They reported that the approach and skills of the facilitators were excellent and the group format helpful. They typically talked about and valued the skills they had learned through the 'expressive tension' model of violence such as the self monitoring and time out procedures. They reported, through a Liberal humanist account, being 'enlightened' to the broader definitions of violence as a 'violation', distinguishable from anger, encroaching on the rights of another person to define their own autonomy. They also talked about shifts in their personal relationships which had occurred as a consequence of their 'enlightenment'. Such changes included a greater willingness and ability to 'listen' to their partners and to 'communicate' with them in a respectful manner. This Liberal humanist shift reportedly helped the men, through a Romantic account, to reduce their 'inner tension'.

Several of the men further mentioned that they had taken from the course a greater 'awareness' and sense of 'ownership' of their role in their violence, with violence being used

in a broad non-physical sense (Liberal humanism). They had learned to take ‘responsibility’ for their violence and for making the ‘decision’ to behave in a non-violent way. Some of the men reported learning about sex role stereotypes from the course and spoke of rejecting the constraints of the normative ‘social system’ surrounding their masculinity, helping them to walk away and to make that non-violent decision. All the men recommended the course to others although a small minority, speaking from a Romantic-‘pathological’ position felt that they needed something more from the course, something to address and alleviate their underlying tension more specifically.

Section (b): Accounts of men’s domestic violence in the community

In defining violence following the course the majority of men employed a broad Liberal humanist definition of violence, encompassing physical and non-physical acts such as verbal put downs. Some of the men did not agree with this distinction and instead saw violence as being the physical (Romantic) and abuse, such as emotional manipulation and financial control, representing the non-physical (Liberal humanist). Paralleling this distinction was another in terms of the defining characteristics of violence. Half of the men defined violence and abuse in terms of the degree of harm induced while the other half of the group, the half most likely to define violence broadly, employed the Liberal humanist notion of control as a defining feature. This indicated that many of the men had, as a general but not universal tendency, shifted from a Romantic account towards adopting a Liberal humanist position when defining violence.

In terms of explaining men’s violence to their partners the ‘expressive tension’ model of violence was by far the dominant discourse employed. Here bad tempers, stress (particularly financial stress), conflict, frustration and underlying primary feelings were all identified by the men as inducing inner tension and anger and consequently, in severe magnitudes, violent eruptions. The men’s articulation of ‘underlying feelings’ demonstrated a new ‘expressive tension’ awareness of the men, a shift endorsed from a Structuralist perspective. Alcohol and drugs were also identified as enhancing the extremities of this tension release process, inducing a temporarily ‘pathological’ state. ‘Pathology’, in terms of a traumatic bibliographic background, was also employed in conjunction with the ‘expressive tension’ model. In this account women were constructed as the unfortunate scape goats of a difficult personal history which has left the person with an unresolved ‘anger’. This ‘pathological’ discourse was

notably employed less frequently by the men in the post-course interviews as compared to its strong popularity in the pre-course interviews however. Victim blaming 'pathological' accounts, for example, were not present.

The Structuralist 'social systemic' account was also employed by some of the men. Here, in this new account employed by several of the men, men were constructed as being 'socialised' to be 'emotionally numb' and to be lacking in the ability to adequately deal with their emotions early on, before they became 'anger'. Furthermore their 'sexist expectations' were constructed as leading the men to intentionally and 'instrumentally' control their partners; a Structuralist - Liberal humanist co-articulation. This moderate shift towards an employment of 'social systemic' discursive resources in explaining other men's violence may help to explain the relative waning of 'pathological' explanations.

Violence was considered to be unacceptable by the men and this was demonstrated in their unanimous plans to intervene in the scenario of a man physically restraining and verbally abusing his partner. In terms of solutions to the problem the men offered several. Reflecting a blend of Liberal humanist, 'learning', 'pathological' and 'expressive tension' accounts more educational programmes along the lines as MMAV's were advocated as a means to solving men's existing problems with anger and violence. Awareness raising campaigns, such as those on TV, and preventative education for boys at school, reflecting Liberal humanist and 'social systemic' concerns were also advocated as an important means to addressing and preventing the problem. Employing a Liberal humanist standpoint specifically, knowledge and an individual willingness to change was considered a pre-requisite for stopping violence and active police intervention in the absence of this willingness was advocated. There was no dispute for this from 'pathological' quarters this time reflecting perhaps the reduction in calls for 'counselling'.

In short the men are talking about violence in general and other men's violence with new linguistic tools. Whilst the Romantic 'expressive tension' model remains central and widely prevalent, employment of the 'pathological' discourse on violence has been reduced and this presumably is due to the increased availability and employment of the 'social systemic' and Liberal humanist accounts.

Section (c): The men's accounts of their own violence

Two discourses dominated the men's accounts of their own violence. Firstly, the 'expressive tension' account, constructed a variety of causes of an overwhelming 'inner pressure' and 'tension', including injustice, stress, pathological others, conflict and frustration. As with the pre-group interviews, pathological co-articulations such as alcohol and temper dispositions were also postulated as facilitating this process. Secondly, the men recounted their experiences through a Liberal humanist 'instrumental' position, citing 'intentions' to their acts such as to win, get even or to get one's way. This explanation demonstrated a shift in the men's accounting procedures. In both types of accounts, Romantic and Liberal humanist, men referred to underlying emotional forces causing them distress or tension. These were postulated as either motivating them to control their partners (instrumental) or involuntarily culminating in an explosive rage (expressive tension) or both. The 'emotional sensitivity' present in this construction represents another new subject position being taken up by the men, one which subverts traditional constructs of masculinity and which employs an 'expressive tension' awareness.

The men most typically assumed responsibility for their violence. They wished they had, and thought they should have, acted differently, more appropriately and responsibly (Liberal humanism); by choosing to prevent, monitor and/or manage the build up of tension more closely or by taking a time out at the critical moment (Romantic). Through Liberal humanist constructions they saw the violence as their own choice and their own responsibility. This account was typically co-articulated with an 'expressive tension' discourse. This method of taking responsibility for their behaviour stood in contrast to the pre group 'symptom' blaming method.

Some of the men also wished that they had not started the arguments which ultimately lead to their violence. In hindsight this was their fault. Others wished, once the argument had started, that they had talked calmly and rationally with their partners in the form of a discussion to work things out, rather than 'overreacting'. A few of the men, in contrast to the majority of accounts, laid at least some blame on the 'pathologically' provocative behaviour of their partners, demonstrating a decline in this accounting practice. Overall the men were reasonably confident that they could maintain a non-violent life style in the future. The men's fears and improved confidence were typically articulated through the 'management' Romantic

‘expressive tension’ - Liberal humanist co-articulation. Their fears being unpredictable ‘inner tension’ and their confidence most typically related to the learning of ‘monitoring skills’ and the ‘time out’ strategy. Some of the men considered this to be a long hard road while others felt completely safe. Many of the men claimed, furthermore, to be more relaxed in general through better communication patterns and through the awareness and respect for other people’s rights; a Liberal humanist shift bearing Romantic ‘expressive-tension’ rewards.

Section (d): The men’s talk surrounding their gendered relationships

In the follow up interview the men typically, as they did prior to the course, took up a Liberal humanist position of equality whilst demonstrating a feminist informed ‘social systemic’ awareness of gender issues in relationships. Some of the men, roughly half, claimed they had always been ‘non sexist’ and ‘egalitarian’ whilst others constructed themselves as having taken up this position since participation in the programme. These men typically acknowledged that prior to the course they had been unfair and unequal in their relationships, with some constructing the employment of a gendered criteria during this time. They reported being pleased with this new ‘social systemic’ awareness and shift towards a more equal (Liberal humanist) relationship.

The taking up of this position for the men had facilitated communication and compromise in the men’s relationships and they had found themselves more likely to be involved in childcare and housework - traditionally women’s domain. Such shifts were reported as being very positive for the men, helping to reduce their overall tension. From a Romantic ‘expressive tension’ position this is positive in itself. From a pro-feminist position such an awareness and self positioning too is most positive; for reducing men’s ‘intentionally’ ‘sexist’ and ‘culturally legitimated’ abusive behaviour.

The men’s sense of their masculinity too had changed, indicating that the men were looking at themselves from a fresh perspective. Whilst a small minority continued to see themselves as ‘persons’ first, the majority of men shifted from this position, to some degree at least, to see themselves from a feminist Structuralist ‘social systemic’ perspective, exhibiting ‘gender consciousness’ and actively redefining their manhood. The men typically rejected some of the cultural constraints surrounding masculinity whilst retaining others and expanding this by

adding traditional feminine virtues to their definitions of 'what it means to be a man'. Some of the men's constructions of masculinity were quite traditional, for example being a provider.

Ideally, taking up a liberal humanist position once more, the men typically wanted 'egalitarian' relationships which were loving, caring and nurturing, in which the woman was supported for working outside the home and housework and childcare were shared.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN
A POST-STRUCTURALIST COMMENTARY ON THE MEN'S PRE AND POST
PROGRAMME TALK

Having explored, identified and analyzed the salient themes, constructions and variations in the men's talk, both prior to and following participation in a MMAV stopping violence programme, I will now take the post-structural analysis of the interview material one step further to address more broadly the key questions posed earlier in the research programme; How does participation in a MMAV Stopping Violence programme change violent men? What, if any, changes have taken place in their talk? What remains constant?

Working from a Foucauldian post-structuralist position, I am particularly interested in documenting the different discursive resources being employed by the men at each interview stage and thereby producing an account of the shifts and continuities in the men's accounting practices and subjectivities over the period of the course. Questions to be considered include; What are the discursive dynamics of these changes? How do they relate to the existing MMAV discourses as identified in the participant observation exercise? Which MMAV discourses are being adopted by the men and which are being resisted? What discourses are brought to the course by the men and are retained throughout the entire programme? Which ones are abandoned or modified? Which new subject positions are being constructed by the men in this process? How do the men integrate the various discourses available? Perhaps most importantly of all; What are the consequences of these shifts?

Recap: Where we are and where we have come from

Stepping back from the analysis for a moment and reflecting upon what has come already in this research programme, an appreciation of the material at hand may be enhanced. In the first study a discursive review of the theoretical literature surrounding wife abuse identified five distinct historically accessible and culturally legitimated discourses to be constructing the 'scientific' field as we know it. These accounts of violence; the Liberal humanist 'instrumental' position, the Romantic 'expressive tension' position, Tabula rasa 'learning' theory, Medical 'pathology' and the Structuralist 'social systemic' account, each posit distinct

causes and solutions to the problem of wife abuse through the employment of distinct constructions and systems of meaning. Different theories, it was noted, draw upon and realise different discourses in varying forms and combinations, thereby collectively providing a diverse and conflicting array of theoretical approaches and solutions to the problem.

In the second study a participant observation strategy was employed to explore how one grass roots organisation, in the face of this diverse and conflicting field, worked to stop men's violence in the community. Questions as to which discourses were employed by this group and how these were being integrated became highly pertinent. Through this exercise and subsequent discourse analysis it was found that the Manawatu Men Against Violence collective employed four of the five discourses from the scientific literature and omitted one - 'pathology'. This was a strategic move on MMAV's part, given the centrality of their 'instrumental' and 'feminist' position on violence. Grounded in a Liberal humanist framework MMAV could give no credence to the abundance of 'excuses' afforded through 'pathological' accounts of the perpetrator, the relationship or the victim. The men were held to be one hundred percent responsible for their 'choices' in behaviour.

The remaining three discourses were couched around and subsumed within this position. The practices associated with the Romantic 'expressive tension' discourse, such as self rating and time outs, were integrated within this framework through messages such as; "It's up to you to not let this cup overflow, to the point where tension becomes (uncontrollable) rage. You do have a choice". The 'learning' discourse emphasised that this was an educational course, not therapy, and provided the rationale for teaching new behaviours to the men, thereby increasing their repertoire of responses or, as the Liberal humanist position defined it, increasing their range of 'choices'. The Structuralist 'social systemic' discourse was apparent in the intervention strategies which sought to increase the men's 'awareness' of the various social forces, such as norms of masculinity and sex role stereotypes, existing beyond the individual yet constructing and constricting his behaviour towards violence, directed at his partner. Once again this position was integrated into the Liberal humanist account through the concepts of 'awareness', 'choice' and 'responsibility', and likewise are highly incongruent with constructions and implications of the 'pathological' position.

Through the omission of the 'pathological' account MMAV were thus able to employ and integrate many of the ideas and strategies afforded in the social science literature into a distinct and reasonably coherent intervention programme. It appeared that this integration articulated well with an underlying feminist position. The structure to this programme however, whilst appearing internally consistent in many ways, demonstrated on closer analysis some discursive tension, most notably in the integration between the Liberal humanist and Romantic 'expressive tension' accounts which together simultaneously constructed the 'intentional' 'free willed' agent as being subject to 'overwhelming forces from within' such as an 'uncontrollable' rage. The couching of this model within the established and official 'personal responsibility' position however, at a superficial level at least, appeared to smooth over this fundamental conflict of meaning.

This post-structuralist account of the MMAV course provides us with a useful backdrop to understanding and appreciating the kinds of shifts that might be taking place in the men's constructions of subjects, objects and events. The reason for making this claim is simple; Discourses can be adopted when, and only when, they are in circulation (Weedon, 1987). The taking up of a new subject position, in relation to new constructions of events and objects, requires at the very least exposure to constructions and practices of the new discourse. The MMAV course can be seen from a post-structuralist perspective then as a text which realizes selected cultural meanings, of which some may be new to the men or arrive in new forms and combinations of constructions, of which some may be incompatible or complimentary to the men's pre-existing subject positions and discursive resources. The possibilities of change from this perspective are numerous and depend not only on the discursive resources presented and exposed through the MMAV programme but also upon the discursive resources brought to the course by the men.

In the first series of interviews the men's understandings of events prior to the course were explored and it is through these transcripts that we have developed an appreciation of the discursive resources accessed and employed by the men, prior to the course, by which they accounted for and constructed their violence, their partners, their relationships and the violence of others. From this starting point, interesting in it's own right as a realisation of the more accessible and employable cultural resources available in our society for men who are violent to their partners, we can trace the subsequent shifts and developments in the men's subject

positionings and constructions of events. Furthermore, we can also explore the implications of these shifts for their violence and relationships and thereby assess their value.

Assessing the value of these shifts, as an intervention strategy, requires serious consideration of the possible effects that these will have on the men's behaviour and relationships (Gavey, 1989; Weedon, 1987). The shifts identified in the men's talk, of course, may be interpreted as positive or negative in implication depending upon the position of the evaluator. To give a most comprehensive commentary of these shifts then it will be necessary to provide an account based on each of the possible discursive positions available, including combinations of discourses such as that of the feminist position. The feminist position, it will be recalled, is a significant component of the MMAV philosophy and features as a fundamental integrating feature of the programme structure. It is also a guiding discourse in this research programme as we seek to discover changes which are most likely to reduce "men's violence against women" specifically.

A Post Structuralist Commentary: Shifts, slippings and continuities

In the first interview, prior to the beginning of the MMAV programme, the men talked about their violence most typically and almost exclusively in terms of a combination of 'expressive-tension' and 'pathological' discourses. Their violence was constructed as a manifestation of 'inner tension' with which they could not cope. They would 'black out' and become violent, remembering very little of the event, or would 'impulsively' become violent, without any willed intent. They felt out of control during these episodes and these were described as times in which they were not their 'normal' selves. The construction of this temporary 'abnormality', in times of great stress and tension, allowed the men to be excused of responsibility for their behaviour. These men thought they had a problem of some sort, that something was wrong with them and that they needed help through some sort of therapy so that this 'inner tension' could be harnessed, redirected or released. Whilst the men acknowledged that they had a problem, they, through the particular constructions employed, could not take full responsibility for the symptoms of their 'temper' problem. They needed help with this problem first and foremost and this is what they hoped MMAV could help them with.

In the second series of interviews, following up on the course some six to eight weeks after it was completed, the 'expressive-tension' model of violence was retained as a most common

account of the men's violence. Bad tempers, stress, conflict and frustration were all constructed as causal agents in the 'build up' to the 'explosion' of violence. Given the discursive employment of this discourse within the MMAV programme the retainment of this account is no great surprise. Existing alongside this account however lay another. One that had been missing from, if not overtly denied in, the earlier interviews.

Many of the men were more likely now to recount their violence through a Liberal humanist 'instrumental' position, citing 'intentions' of their behaviour, such as to win, to hurt, to get even or to get their way. Such intentions were attributed, more often than not however, not so much to 'rational' goals, as we would expect from a Liberal humanist position, but to Romantic 'inner emotional states' such as that of distress. This shift in subject position, from predominantly 'pathological' and 'expressive tension' centred accounts to more 'expressive tension' and 'instrumental' explanations, and the difference in implication for all concerned was profound. The men appeared to be taking much more 'responsibility' for their actions, seeing themselves as less powerless to inner forces as they had previously and 'owning' their violence as their mistake, a bad 'choice' of behaviour and 'failure' to implement their safety plans. The men appeared to embrace the 'management' concept enabled through a co-articulation of Romantic and Liberal humanist discourses.

The shift to this position from one of blind 'uncontrollable' 'rage explosions' or 'black outs' in the men would appear to be a positive one from a Liberal humanist perspective. Here the men acknowledge the intent of their behaviour and this opens up the possibility of doing something differently. The men have indicated through their talk about violence that they are acknowledging more 'choices' in behaviour, thus opening up new possibilities for alternative courses of action; some of which have been presented in the course and commented favourably on by the men, such as the time outs and communication strategies. Similarly men who claimed to be 'innocent' prior to the course were more likely to acknowledge their behaviour as a perpetration of violence.

The advent of this Liberal humanist subject position in the men's talk appears to have been employed to some degree at the expense of the personal 'pathological' discourse, in which the men constructed themselves as having an 'abnormal' 'temper problem'. This account was notably employed less as a discursive resource by the second series of interviews, becoming

a minor theme retained by fewer of the men. Other minor themes involving 'pathological' constructions, such as 'abnormal others' and the 'disinhibiting effects' of drugs and alcohol, found to be employed within the overarching 'expressive tension' discursive account in the pre-course interviews, were still to be found however in the post course interviews, indicating that this organisation of discourses had been retained, albeit to a lesser extent, by the men throughout the course. The relative reduction in the employment of this discursive account is a positive one from a Liberal humanist position. The 'excuses' for violence afforded through this most prevalent and legitimated cultural resource provided a potential thorn in the side to MMAV's central 'intentional' account. The reduction in its employment suggests that the subversive potential this model has for the dominant account in the programme was not being fully realised. Less optimistically, from a Liberal humanist position, the course did not remove this account completely from the men's accounting repertoire, thereby leaving the men with a series of legitimated explanations and justifications for their violence, to be used perhaps in more acceptable circumstances.

From a 'pathological' position, such as that proposed by (some) therapists, such a shift is not necessarily a beneficial step towards stopping violence. If we accept the assumption that something may indeed be wrong with these men then this course is unlikely to reduce their violence. Healing, such as solving the unresolved anger in their lives, rather than extra responsibility, is what the men really need.

The shift in the men's talk towards accounting for their violence through an intentional framework, as well as an 'expressive tension' one, was paralleled by another shift; the way in which the men defined violence. The vast majority of the men in the first interview defined violence as predominantly a physical assault causing harm to another person. The follow-up interviews indicated that many of the men now defined violence more broadly than that of 'physical assault' and included verbal and emotional elements to their constructions, sometimes preferring to call this non-physical form 'abuse'. Despite this resistance in terminology, violence was now seen, by at least half the men, as a 'controlling' 'strategy'.

This shift in defining violence and the various behaviours associated with, and constituting, it indicates a shift in the way in which the men are construing of violence. Many of the men appear to now be constructing it as an intentional strategy or a means to an end; a Liberal

humanist position. This re-definition was not only apparent in many of the men's definitions of violence but also in the men's accounts of their violent behaviour, as discussed above. Such a definition and account of violence reflects perhaps a move away from traditional physical assault definitions of violence which lend themselves towards a Romantic rage orientated 'unintentional' and 'unaccountable' approach to the issue. An 'intentional' account implies several means towards an end and consequently several forms of violence. The consistency of this double shift for many of the men supports the idea of a Liberal humanist shift taking place for the men in their employment of discursive resources constructing violence. In support of this interpretation it is interesting to note that this discursive feature emerged in the men's feedback reports on what they had learnt from the course. Here, at the onset of the second interview, a strong theme emerged in which it was reported that violence and anger were no longer construed as being synonymous. Anger, it was reported, is different from and does not necessarily lead to violence.

Besides a shift towards a more Liberal humanist account of their violence, the men were noticeably more emotionally expressive during the second series of interviews. This more articulate 'emotional' talk constitutes a further significant shift in the men's speaking position. The men appear to have moved from a position of passive victimisation by overwhelming tension to an awareness of more subtle emotional states; what Dutton (1988) and Gondolf (1985b) call 'primary emotions'. From a Romantic 'expressive-tension' perspective, these emotions, if left unattended, become the 'inner tension' associated with anger and 'uncontrollable rage'. The shift in the men's emotional articulation, to a more subtle and sensitive world view, would appear to be informed by the MMAV practice of encouraging the men to state their underlying feelings in the 'now', a practice supported by the 'social systemic' intervention philosophy of breaking down rigid sex role stereotypes, such as an inexpressive masculinity. It would appear that through exposure to the co-articulated concern of these discourses the traditional cool, hardened unemotional male has taken up a more sensitive subject position, a position which, from a Romantic 'expressive-tension' perspective, would have beneficial side effects such as a reduction in 'inner tension' and associated predisposition to rage, if attended to appropriately.

From a 'social systemic' position this shift in the men's talk demonstrates greater emotional articulateness, reflecting a move away from traditional masculine stereotypes. Such a shift, if

only at an individual level, subverts cultural norms surrounding masculinity and this may have positive ramifications beyond the individual in terms of setting up and reinforcing emotionally articulate male 'subcultures'. Whilst the dominant culture may find such men repulsive in that they are not 'real men'; they are 'blouses' and 'wimps', individuals exposed to this practice and supporting ideology may also be transformed. This may have further implications for the 'social system' as we know it as new definitions and practices become more commonplace and acceptable.

This increase in sensitivity is used in an interesting way by the men. More 'primary' emotions are constructed and employed by the men to account for both their 'overwhelming rage', as in the Romantic 'expressive-tension' discourse on their violence, and also for their motivations to engage in the 'intentional' acts of violence, as described by the Liberal humanist 'instrumental' position. As has been discussed above both are uniquely apparent in the men's post course explanations for their violence. Interestingly, these discourses were frequently combined in the same piece of text through this shared construction. Here distress and tension could be used interchangeably, with 'tension' leading to rage and 'distress' leading to calculated strategies of control, presumably to alleviate the distress. The men thus combined the two discourses in a novel way, creating a new subject position - that of the emotionally vulnerable yet strategic goal orientated actor; a Romantic - Liberal humanist co-articulation. In this account, the agent's 'intentions' are subject to his 'irrational' needs from within. Violence was thus reportedly used 'intentionally' to reduce tension/distress. Consistent with this Liberal humanist 'packaging' of 'inner tension', this 'choice' in behaviours to deal with their emotions was regretted and other more appropriate ways of dealing with the situation were retrospectively advocated, such as time outs and communication. The Liberal humanist - Romantic 'expressive tension' 'management' model was thus once more constructed as an appropriate course of action and this was supported through the availability of new behaviour repertoires (learning).

When asked what they most valued about the course the 'monitoring' and 'time out' strategies were rated very highly by all the participants. It was a hit among the men, not surprisingly since this was the kind of knowledge they were seeking, as indicated in the first interviews. When asked how they would have liked to have handled the situation in which they were violent, a unanimous response was one of greater 'self monitoring' and taking a 'time out'.

The men indicated it was through their lack of vigilance or lack of practice and preparation, as well as the pressure from inner tension/distress, that they were not able to or did not engage in these alternatives. Because of this the violence was acknowledged as their own fault and responsibility, not through an immutable 'pathological' response to stress and tension, as had been advocated in the earlier interviews, but through lack of 'intentionally' implementing the 'tension management' strategies provided by MMAV. As epitomised by Carl; "I should have been a bit more onto it than that". The time out strategy wasn't the only skill regretfully not employed by the men in this respect. Communication skills were also greatly appreciated skills, by at least some of the men, regretfully not employed prior to and during the conflict and building of frustration and tension which preceded their acts of violence. Thus a combination of the Liberal humanist and Romantic 'expressive tension' discursive resources were used once more to reformulate responsibility and solutions to the problem, supported by new 'learning' repertoires.

The interplay between these two discourses is an overarching theme which occurs throughout the second interview. For instance this combination can be found once more in the men's talk about the future. When asked in the second interviews about the likelihood of violence occurring again, most of the men responded with a mixture of Romantic and Liberal humanist constructions and subject positions. Typically it was hard to predict the future because of the volatile nature of 'inner forces', but the men in general felt relatively safer through the 'management' skills learnt in the course (learning), such as the time out and monitoring strategies. Both this formulation (inner tension) and solution (anger management) are informed primarily through a Romantic discursive account. Furthermore, the men felt confident because they were more 'relaxed' in general, a situation claimed by the men to be less amenable to tension driven outbursts of violence. How is it that they were more relaxed? The answer to this question, as demonstrated in the men's talk, is through the adoption of a Liberal humanist world view. Because the men were more respectful and tolerant of, and were better equipped (learning) to listen to and to communicate with, their partners, they were reportedly more relaxed in general and less likely to become 'tense' in particular during conflicts of interest. In these situations, it was proposed, they were able to discuss things less heatedly and more diplomatically. Furthermore, due to this new Liberal humanist awareness the men did not want to 'intentionally' 'violate' their partners. This would have been unacceptable to many of them. They expressed a strong willingness to 'choose' non-violent responses such as those enabled

through the 'learning' and Romantic discourses. Thus separately and through a co-articulation of these discourses the men were enabled to feel more confident about maintaining a non-violent life style.

This reported shift in orientation towards a more diplomatic, sensitive and 'liberally humanistic' world view, a perspective less inclined towards tension and more inclined towards awareness and choice, is paralleled in the men's talk when the interviews move on to discussing relationships specifically. Such consistency in the employment of these discursive resources affirms the 'shift' identified in the men's approach to their violence and relationships. In the initial interviews the men, in general, are quick to point out that they live in egalitarian relationships with their partners. They claim that they are aware of the 'sexism' in the wider community (social system discourse) and are quick to distance themselves from this. The position they take up is automatically one of Liberal humanism. They are non-sexist and 'liberal' in regards to decision making and sex roles in their relationships. Some have not always been, but all are now. Yet within their talk, when talking about their partners and their relationships, many of these men simultaneously demonstrate what might be called from a feminist orientated 'social systemic' discursive position, 'sexist' assumptions. Such assumptions, when combined with other discursive positions, become particularly dangerous with regards to violence. From a Romantic 'expressive-tension' perspective unmet expectations may lead to frustration, leading to anger, which leads to explosive violence towards the woman. From a more 'intentional' feminist informed (Liberal humanist - social systemic) position, unmet sexist expectations, such as that of dominance, can lead to intentional and perceivably justifiable use of violence, such as to teach the woman a lesson in respect.

At the stage of the second interview however the story had changed somewhat. Not so much with the men taking up new positions, as with the men reflecting upon where they had been and where they had come from and talking about this and their relationships in a more consistent way discursively. Half of the men reported that the course had changed the way that they related to their partners. Using a 'social systemic' account once more, they identified themselves as having been sexist both in their expectations and ways of relating to their partners. They reported that they were more 'aware' of such issues for their relationships and, employing a Liberal humanist position once more, talked about improved diplomacy, communication patterns and role changes in their relationships, leading to more satisfying

relationships and, in accordance with the men's talk on violence discussed above, reductions in personal and relationship tension levels. From a Romantic 'expressive tension' position this latter point is a good prognosis for the future likelihood of violence; a point which was made by many of the men. The men's talk, furthermore, upon closer analysis, was more consistent with these statements than had been with the pre-course interviews. The men's ideals for the future further reiterated these concerns. In short the men wanted equal, caring relationships with ongoing communication.

The men's turn to a more consistent feminist 'social systemic' 'enlightened' world view can be further witnessed in the men's responses to the question of what it means to be a man. In the first series of interviews the men predominantly had little to say on this subject, taking the Liberal humanist position that men and women are equal and 'essentially' the same. Following the course, whilst some of the men retained this position, as they did with regards to their initial egalitarianism as discussed above, the majority of the group moved on from this common sense Liberal humanist position towards a more 'social systemically' informed account of themselves. These men typically espoused an awareness of contemporary cultural constraints when discussing 'manhood' and would reject components of this and/or expand their constructions to include more feminine qualities, thereby diminishing the cultural constraints surrounding masculinity. This shift is a positive move from several discursive positions, most notably the Romantic world view from which masculine stereotypes are considered dangerous emotionally, and also for the 'learning' and 'social systemic' world views, in which men's behaviour can be seen as models for other men and boys and thereby mediators and subverters of old and new cultural norms surrounding masculinity.

Given the positive expansions to the meaning of being a man however, some traditional elements remained which might also be considered dangerous from a feminist 'social systemic' perspective. Most notably the retaining of particular male stereotypes, expressed by a minority of the men, such as those of being 'strong' and being a 'provider'. These age old stereotypes are dangerous in the sense that, not only do they capture characteristics and norms traditionally associated with the legitimisation and acceptance of male dominance in the home, they position the man as a subject who is very similar to that of the 'protector'; the essential patriarch under whose care, and possibly jurisdiction, his women and children are dependent. So whilst the rejection of some masculine stereotypes and the expansion of the cultural

constraints surrounding masculinity to include traditionally feminine qualities are welcomed as positive changes for these men and the women in their lives, the intact survival of these two particular male stereotypes may be a cause for concern. The course may not have been 'radical' enough in this respect or simply may not have been long enough for such a complete shift to occur. The implication of this minor theme for the Romantic, 'learning' and 'social systemic' accounts with regards to stopping violence casts a shadow of darkness upon what appears to be otherwise a very positive broader development.

Overall however the men, throughout their post course interviews, do utilise a feminist informed 'social systemic' discourse and appear to utilise this cultural resource in a way which is consistent and, from a feminist 'instrumental' - 'social systemic' perspective, is positive. As with discussing their relationships, when reflecting upon other men's violence to their partners, the men frequently employ features of this discursive account. For instance, the men were more likely, following the course, to see 'domestic violence' in the community as primarily men's violence and to account for this through constructions such as 'sex role socialisation'. Many men became violent to their partners, it was proposed, through their inability to deal with their emotions adequately, before they became 'angry'. Sexist expectations were also highlighted as leading to anger, rage and violence. The men thus combined this 'social systemic' 'awareness' with the Romantic 'expressive tension' world view. They also combined the 'social system' account with the Liberal humanist position to construct the man as 'intentionally' and 'instrumentally' controlling his partner and to feel justified in doing this.

This was an interesting shift in the men's subjectivity, demonstrating the development of a 'social systemic' consciousness and this being actively co-articulated by the men with the more familiar Romantic and Liberal humanist accounts to create new explanations for men's violence to their partners. Such accounts were entirely absent from pre course interviews. The men who employed this discourse, although comprising only half the group, also suggested community intervention strategies which were consistent with this, such as preventative education for boys, in terms of emotional awareness and alternatives to violence, and awareness raising for the community, in terms of women not accepting this behaviour and men knowing where to get help.

Although a minor theme only, this did demonstrate a distinct shift in some of the men's subjectivity. Once again it is interesting that more people did not pick up and employ this discourse. Was it not strongly or consistently advocated? Perhaps the course was not long enough? Perhaps an exploration of the other discourses employed by the men, in explaining other men's violence to their partners, may provide us with an appreciation of this phenomenon. In this context the majority of men continued to employ the robust and near universal Romantic 'expressive-tension' account. As with the men's accounts of their own violence this explanation for events was widely apparent in both the pre and post course interviews. Because this account was a prevalent discourse among the men prior to the course and because it formed an integral part of the MMAV programme, it makes a lot of sense that this account was retained throughout. This was the dominant theme for the men's talk about their own and the violence of others both prior to and following the course. It is a very powerful, robust and prevalent discourse.

Another discourse apparent in the men's talk concerning the violence of others, found in their pre and post course interviews, is the 'pathological' account of violence. As with the men's talk concerning their own violence once more however, there was a reduction in employment of this discourse following the course. Constructions such as the men's 'background' and use of 'drugs and alcohol' were used to explain men's domestic violence by a minority of men. As with accounts of their own violence this was frequently couched within the Romantic expressive tension account. Reflecting perhaps the employment of a Liberal humanist framework, the 'pathological' other/victim blaming account was all but absent by the second interview. The decline in use of the 'pathological' account, paralleled in the men's talk on their own violence, may be related to the relative increase in the employment of the 'social systemic' and 'instrumental' accounts.

Other implications for intervention suggested by the men for the community with regards to stopping violence reflected these discursive shifts and consistencies. From the Liberal humanist, 'learning', Romantic and 'pathological' accounts came the call for more programmes such as MMAV's for help with anger or violence problems. Such a programme from these discursive positions would be a useful means to stopping immediate violence through 'teaching' violent men non-violent alternatives to living their lives. From a 'pathological' perspective this may not be an entire solution but would be an excellent forte

for learning 'coping' skills for dealing with or 'nursing' one's symptoms. Reflecting the overall reduction in the employment of 'pathological' accounts however and the relative increase in employment of the Liberal humanist position, policing was much more emphatically endorsed in the post course interviews whilst counselling and therapy were not specifically advocated, as they had been in the earlier interviews. Perpetrators were likewise held to be more responsible for their actions and, as with victims, were expected to find help themselves when they needed it. Awareness raising media campaigns were endorsed in this respect as a means to creating more choices of action for both victims and perpetrators. The somewhat ambiguous pre-course preventative education interventions, derived initially from a preventative 'learning' position, had developed over the course and were more likely in the follow-up interview to be expressed in similar discursive terms, combined however with constructs from a 'social systemic' discourse, such as men's 'emotional development'. This latter strategy having additional positive ramifications for both the normative 'social system' and the individual agent's 'inner tension'.

Summary and conclusions

To the post-structuralist this pattern of shifts and continuities in the men's talk demonstrates the flavour and extent of impact that the MMAV programme is having upon the men's subjectivities. In general it appears that the men are taking up, retaining and abandoning a variety of subject positions as a consequence of participation in the course. The new subject positions being taken up, as evidenced in their talk, are the Liberal humanist and 'social systemic' positions. As a general tendency the men are taking greater responsibility for their 'intentional' 'choices' in behaviour and to a lesser extent demonstrate a gender 'aware' 'consciousness', of the woman's rights and cultural constraints on their own masculinity, when discussing their relationships and their violence. These shifts in relating are reported as impacting upon and reducing their 'tension' levels in a variety of ways, making violence, as described through an 'expressive tension' account less likely. This account, the Romantic 'expressive-tension' discourse on violence, is the dominant discourse employed by the men throughout the programme. The way in which this discourse interweaves and functions with other discourses however has developed. Emerging from a position of passive helplessness to the 'overpowering' effects of inner tension and rage, to which the men were unable to contain and thereby constructed themselves as not responsible for their actions, the men shifted, whilst acknowledging the powerful effects of tension, towards a position of 'intent' and 'choice'.

The subject position moved away from by the men, although retained to a lesser degree throughout the course, is the 'pathological' position. Combined with the Romantic account prior to the course this had previously allowed the men to avoid taking personal responsibility for their actions. They would 'black out'. By the end of this course the degree to which this account was being employed was significantly reduced, in effect being replaced by the relative increase in the employment of its incongruent discursive opponents, the Liberal humanist and 'social systemic' positions.

The discourses employed by the men both prior to and following the course were weaved together in an interesting way, demonstrating the men's ability to create meaning networks from more than one cultural resource. The dominant combination in the earlier interviews used by the men to explain their violence was that of 'pathology' and 'expressive tension'. In the latter ones chiefly these existed between the Romantic and Liberal humanist positions, combined at times with the 'social systemic' account and glued cohesively through implications of the 'learning' position. For example a common story converged on by the men prior to the course was that 'inner tension' overwhelmed them to the point where they would become temporarily 'out of control'. In the follow up interviews the story was more likely to be expressed in terms of taking 'personal responsibility' for 'managing' their 'inner tension', a Liberal humanist - Romantic 'expressive tension' co-articulation. This task was reportedly made easier through the new Liberal humanist - 'social systemic' informed awareness and sensitivity and the greater repertoire of behaviours open to them (learning).

It is important to note at this point however that these identified 'shifts' in subject position in the men's talk are tendencies only and are not universal. Whilst most of the men's talk has followed these identified patterns many, in some instances at least, do not. These are general trends only. Frequently the older discourses are retained and these constitute a cause for concern in their own right. Two particular instances stand out in this respect. Firstly, a minor theme in the second wave of interviews, where most of the men have shifted from a 'pathological' - 'expressive tension' account of their own violence towards a Liberal humanist - 'expressive tension' account, is presented in which a few of the men complain that the course did not help them reduce their anger, leaving them fearful for their safeness. These men felt they had to go elsewhere to solve this problem, such as to a therapist or a different course, and felt let down by the MMAV programme in this respect. These men were seeking 'cures'

for their underlying 'pathology'. A second minor theme of concern is, as the majority of men develop their sense of manhood, the prevalence of particularly dangerous patriarchal stereotypes.

The general tendency in the development of the men's talk over the period of the course however is an encouraging one from a variety of discursive positions although from a 'pathological' perspective this is clearly not the case. From a Romantic position the men have learnt several non-violent alternatives for dealing with the problem of their 'inner tension', such as the monitoring, time out and communication strategies. From a Liberal humanist perspective, in which the problem of men's violence is constructed as being their 'goals' and 'choices' in behaviour as a means to achieve these ends, the course has furnished the men with an increase in sensitivity to the rights of others to respect, autonomy and difference whilst imparting an increased sense of personal responsibility for the 'management' of tension and 'choices' in behaviour.

From a 'learning' perspective new 'behaviours' and 'cognitions' have been imparted to the men, giving them greater response repertoires and these appear to be having a variety of impacts upon the men. Most typically these are not referred to by the men in 'learning' terms or constructs and thus the benefits afforded through this discourse are more evident in the shifts and implications of other discourses. A good example, from a social learning perspective, is the increased sensitivity in the men's talk, as a consequence of new learning and breaking down sex role stereotypes (learning and social systemic discourses) and this appears to have as one implication a reduction in 'inner tension' (Romantic discourse) (Dutton, 1988; Ganley, 1981a).

From a 'social systemic' discursive position the problem of men's violence is accounted for in terms of the cultural norms existing in our society and the course has subverted many of these in a number of ways as evidenced in the men's redefining of masculinity, increased awareness of personal and social sexism and advocacy of violence as a public issue. What is missing from the men's talk, from this broader perspective, is evidence of a political commitment, beyond personal 'consciousness raising', to challenging 'social systemic' structures such as institutionalised sexism and normative stereotypes.

The only discursive position from which these shifts would be overtly criticized is that of the 'pathological' position. The men have, from this perspective, moved away from an appropriate analysis of their predicament and consequently from the solutions to their problem, namely 'therapy'. Less likely to see their violence and rage attacks as 'symptomatic' now, the men rather saw these as bad choices and failures. From this Medical standpoint this is a dangerous shift, constructing the men a false sense of reality whilst affording no real cure or solution to the problem. It is not all doom and gloom from this perspective however. The course, at the very least, seems to have imparted to the men, through 'learning' and Liberal humanist discursive positions, some specific skills which could serve as 'coping' strategies in 'symptom management'. Not an ideal solution, but as the medical metaphor surrounding this discourse goes, a plaster is better than an open wound.

From a feminist perspective, in which the problem is hailed as one of 'intentional' 'normative' control by men over their women partners, these changes are generally recognised as being positive. There has been a reduction in the employment of 'pathological' 'excuses' and an increase in the taking of responsibility for ones actions. There has also been a shift towards a more 'social systemic' 'enlightened' 'awareness'. Not all the men made these shifts however, to the extent where some of the shifts taking place could be considered inadequate, and thus a cause for serious concern. The 'pathological' account, for example, though experiencing a reduction in employment, is still in circulation. The Romantic 'expressive tension' account, a most dominant discourse, is also in circulation. It's shift towards a Liberal humanist blending is a positive shift as is also the 'social systemic' blending and consequent reduction in tension, yet it being retained is also a cause for worry in the sense that this discourse affords many powerful and legitimate 'excuses'. Some 'profeminist' theorists working from other discourses would argue however that the shifts surrounding the employment of the Romantic 'expressive-tension' have indeed been very positive, making the men 'safer' for women (e.g. Dutton, 1988; Gondolf, 1985b; Pence and Paymar, 1993). A further concern for the feminist position is that not all the men displayed evidence of taking up a 'social systemic' discourse in a consistent manner.

Perhaps further reductions in 'pathological' accounts and increases in Liberal humanist and 'social systemic' accounts would have occurred if the course had been longer, thereby providing the men with more opportunity to experience and employ the new discourses and

to be challenged on the 'pathological'. Alternatively perhaps the 'pathological' account is ingrained in our society to such an extent that it is very difficult to remove and no matter how long the course it would never quite be shaken given the cultural context at large. If this was the case the changes in the men's subjectivity in this respect are commendable indeed. In considering the issue of why more men did not take up a more consistent 'feminist' position in their accounts of themselves, their relationships and the violence of others, one feature of the programme stands out, one that would appear to be an essential theoretical link.

While the MMAV course, as observed in the participant observation study, appears to be a feminist based programme in that it defines violence broadly as a series of controlling strategies and draws the men's attention to the 'social system' of patriarchy as a historical and cultural force which leads men to 'control' women both publicly and historically, it does not explicitly link these two concepts together. Rather it explicitly makes each of these assertions, leaving it up to the men to make this link. Such a link is regarded as an essential one by pro-feminist theorists working in the field; "By linking a wide definition of what men's violence entails with an analysis of the structures that support and condone its continuation, we can go some distance in finally putting a stop to men's violence to women" (McMaster and Swain, 1989, p34). Whilst it appears that some of the men had made this link others provide no evidence of this, instead offering pieces of this pie with contradictions inherent in their talk. An example of this can be found in the expansion of 'masculinity' evident in the second wave of interviews, where feminine characteristics were incorporated alongside some traditional patriarchal values, for some of the men. Perhaps a stronger advocacy of broader political actions throughout the MMAV course, beyond individual 'consciousness raising' and personal 'liberation', would have strengthened this link. Overall however there did appear to be a significant reduction in 'sexist' assumptions, combined with an increase in the awareness of the men's own sexism, a commitment to egalitarian relationships and confidence in maintaining a non-violent lifestyle. This is positive from a feminist perspective.

Given this broad analysis of the kinds of shifts taking place in the men's talk as a consequence of their participation in a MMAV stopping violence programme it is now appropriate to compare these findings with the aims of the MMAV programme and MMAV itself. MMAV's overall mission statement is "to help reduce all forms of violence and abuse and promote healthier lifestyles and relationships by providing services to men within an

individual, family/whanau and community context" (MMAV, 1994, p1). Two features of this mission statement stand out with respect to the MMAV stopping violence service and these can be reformulated as questions which, through the data collected in these interviews, we are in a good position to provide at least some answers.

The first question then is does the course help to "reduce all forms of violence and abuse"? Although a more behavioural and statistically orientated approach would provide a more simplistic and 'credible' answer to this question we can at least formulate a few hypotheses and predictions based upon our discoveries. For a start the course certainly makes the men more aware of a broader array of strategies constituting violence and abuse. As many of the men stated in the follow-up interview they didn't realise just how violent they had been. Many came to realise that they were being violent in a number of ways, coming under several different categories. The broader definition of violence employed and imparted by MMAV can be seen as an important pre-requisite to this goal of 'all forms' being reduced. It is perhaps a necessary but not sufficient condition however, as some researchers have claimed that some 'controlling' men will tactfully use this knowledge to become violent to their partners in non-physical and less overt forms (Dobash and Dobash, 1992).

As reported by the men it is their 'inner tension' and the way they 'choose' to respond to this that is their problem. In terms of serving the men's own construction of needs the course has been successful to this end. The men, in general, have learnt various strategies for reducing their tension and for managing it in a non-violent manner, giving them greater choice in their behavioural outcomes. It would appear however that more practice would be a beneficial exercise in this respect given that a few of the men 'failed' in this sense. Furthermore the men have come away from the course with an increased sense of personal responsibility for their actions. Prior to the course the extent of accountability the men took for their actions was significantly lower because of the temporary 'pathology' of their behaviour. They have thus, in general, emerged from the course with more awareness of violence, of non violent alternatives and a subject position more amenable to their employment, an encouraging outcome in this respect.

Less encouraging however was one of the minor themes, a retained discourse still apparent in a few of the men's talk. These men continued to employ a 'pathological'- 'expressive

tension' account of their violence, reporting that following the course they were still feeling overwhelmed by their 'inner tension'. The course had not helped to reduce this as they hoped. These men consequently continued to feel that they were a potential source of danger to the women in their lives. They would attempt to cope with these symptoms as best they could but felt relatively unconfident. From a therapeutic position, a discourse typically retained by these men, these men needed some form of therapy to help them deal with their 'anger' and charactered 'readiness to aggress'. The course had not met these reported needs nor altered the way these men constructed or experienced their lives.

On the positive side once more are the violence reducing consequences of the 'social systemic' consciousness raising in terms of the more diplomatic, respectful and egalitarian relationships, apparently less conducive to violence, and for the reduced relationship and personal tension which such 'awareness' seems to be providing for the men. The men in the feedback session in the second interview reported 'enlightening' shifts in their ways of relating and also feeling more 'relaxed' these days. More relaxed due to a new Liberal humanist philosophy of egalitarianism, informed by a 'social systemic' awareness of gender constraints, new skills such as communication, and also possibly because of increased emotional sensitivity, as further evidenced in the men's talk.

The course would appear then provide necessary preconditions for a 'reduction' in "all forms of violence" to occur. It has imparted particular discourses and associated strategies and subject positions which may enable this 'reduction'. The men are aware of more forms of violence, they construct the problem and violence differently and they have access to and employ new strategies to deal with the problem. Furthermore they are more diplomatic in attitude and skill, such as communication, and are committed to an egalitarian lifestyle; a lifestyle less conducive, it is reported, to stress and tension. Because not all the men make these noticeable and notable 'shifts' between interviews "*to reduce*" is a more likely outcome than "*to stop*" the men's violence. Some of the men have emerged from the course still very 'angry' and 'tense', reportedly feeling relatively helpless in the face of this. Others feel more able to cope constructively yet need to practice implementing their strategies more readily.

Intricately related to any conclusion on this issue however is the second question of concern; Does the course promote healthier lifestyles and relationships? Of course how one interprets

the construct of a 'healthy lifestyle' and a 'healthy relationship' will influence any answers to this question. Given the feminist orientation to the course we might assume that 'social systemic' and Liberal humanist constructs such as 'a gendered awareness', 'egalitarianism', 'non-sexism', 'broadened masculinity', 'personal responsibility', 'personal autonomy', 'non-hierarchy' and 'non-violence' may be hallmarks of such a relationship and lifestyle. This (liberal) feminist interpretation is a reasonable one to make given MMAV's commitment to addressing "the problem of male violence in the community" through a "predominantly profeminist analysis" (Tisdall, 1993, p1).

Given this interpretation of criteria, the shifts in the men's talk indicate that the men have moved towards "healthier lifestyles and relationships". The men typically express far greater 'gender consciousness' at the point of the second interview. They reflect heavily, in a 'social systemically' conscious manner, upon their manhood and the meaning of being a man, a phenomenon absent from the earlier interviews. This new consciousness affords many new behaviours for the men, behaviours which through a feminist analysis we would consider 'healthy'. The men report feeling more able to 'back down', not having to stay to 'win' so as to be seen as 'tough' or 'macho'. The men have become more emotionally articulate, thereby subverting cultural stereotypes and understanding more sensitively their personal feelings and the emotional causes of their anger, giving them room for new options and outcomes. The men are also more likely to reflect upon what they once considered to be equal relationships as 'sexist' and 'unfair', taking up new behaviours such as cooking and compromising and projecting for the future new possibilities such as communication and being a child care giver.

Not all the men made these shifts. Whilst most of the men over the period of the course revised and expanded their self concepts as men to include 'feminine traits' and used this 'social systemic' account to look at the behaviour of themselves and/or others, some of these men did so in a manner which must be questioned. In particular a small minority clung onto to particular traditionally masculine stereotypes, stereotypes commonly associated with violence and patriarchy; male protectiveness and breadwinning. These can be seen as manifestations of 'male possessiveness' and 'ownership' (McMaster and Swain, 1989). In this light the men's 'shift' towards more 'healthy lifestyles and relationships' is not complete.

Elements of an old 'unhealthy' lifestyle, from a feminist perspective, are present within this 'shift'.

From other discursive positions however other features of the men's talk become important with regards to what is 'healthy'. Most explicitly, given the medical discursive background to the concept 'health', the reduced presence of 'pathology' in the men's talk. As has been discussed, both personal 'pathology' and the 'pathological other' constructions are employed less frequently throughout the men's post-course talk, indicating perhaps that the men are more recently seeing themselves and their relationships as something other than 'unhealthy' or 'sick'. This may reflect an improvement in general wellbeing and functioning or merely the exposure to and employment of a new discourse other than a medical one. As discussed some of the men retain a sense of personal 'pathology', indicating that these men perhaps have not improved at all in terms of their perceptions of their general well being. This would suggest that lifestyles and relationships, for these men, would continue to suffer as a result of this ongoing sense of 'pathology'. These men, despite what other discursive positions might identify as 'healthy' shifts, are restricted in reaching their potential of wellbeing and appear to require further assistance. In all fairness to MMAV, the facilitators have typically recommended these people to seek some form of 'therapy' following the course.

From a Romantic 'expressive tension' position a reduction in tension would be considered to be a 'healthy' change, given that 'inner tension' is the problem. This appears to have occurred for many, but not all, of the men. The reductions in tension have been associated theoretically with an increase in emotional awareness and articulation (Dutton, 1988; Gondolf, 1985b) and with consciousness raising of sex role stereotyping and expectations (Edleson and Tolman, 1992; Ganley, 1981a). Both of these are features of the MMAV programme as has been discussed in the participant observation section.

The men's own reports indicate that the men are becoming 'less stressed' through adopting a 'social systemically' informed Liberal humanism, through which the men renounce any inclinations or tendencies towards controlling their partners. Accepting the other's difference and autonomy appears to help reduce the build up of tension within the context of the relationship. Such a 'life style' shift in 'relating' would be considered 'healthy' from this perspective and thus shares much in common with the feminist position. New skills such as

assertion and communication too appear to help in this respect. What is missing from this discursive standpoint however are skills and strategies which more immediately reduce this tension before and during its build up, such as meditation and autogenic training, to be applied perhaps during a 'time out' or anytime. Whilst the yoga exercise may fulfil this purpose it was not mentioned by the men at any stage of the interviews. The rating scales and the timeout technique can be considered healthy to the extent that they help manage the men's symptoms; a tertiary level of intervention only.

From a Liberal humanist position such a respectful approach to the intrinsic 'rights' of other people, along with gender consciousness and emotional awareness, combined with the skills of assertion, communication and self responsibility, can all be seen to be very 'healthy' shifts in the person's subjectivity, developing his 'awareness' and 'self concept', thereby improving his lifestyle and relationships (Rogers, 1951). Such a position however, whilst encouraging, supportive and, lest we forget, constructive of the MMAV programme, demonstrates, when contrasted with other perspectives such as that of the Maori people of New Zealand/Aotearoa, the difficulties and implicit theory involved in defining exactly what a 'healthy' improvement in lifestyle or relationship is. Such a definition, as always, is dependent upon the discursive context from which the construct is employed. Stepping outside the legitimated social science discourses demonstrates the difficulties and diversity of ways in defining what exactly is 'healthy' or for that matter 'unhealthy'. Out here, contrasting opinions abound.

From a Maori perspective such a shift towards personal autonomy and responsibility is considered to be 'individualistic' and thereby, at least for Maori people, questionable in terms of its health value (Jackson, 1988; MacKay, 1985; NZ Health Dpt, 1984). A Maori perspective suggests that "anti social behaviour results from an imbalance in the spiritual, emotional, physical and social wellbeing of an individual" (Jackson, 1988, p39), meaning that, in contrast to the Liberal humanist world view, for a healthier lifestyle to occur, spiritual transgressions must be addressed and a sense of community interdependence and traditional spirituality fostered. In a Maori world view personal well being cannot be separated from the whanau, "the network of people who are linked by blood and the wider community within which the family group function" (MacKay, 1985, p36). Mental and cultural wellbeing, including Maori values that relate to land, language, the family and other customs, come from the spiritual realm. "A spiritual substance exists in man which he cannot live without - the

breath of life (hau), and the spiritual dimension of a person (wairua) through which thoughts, values and actions are manifested" (MacKay, 1985, p32). In short from a Maori perspective "there is no health without spiritual and mental wellbeing" (Tapsell, in O'Regan, 1983, p24) and programmes aimed at improving personal and relationship wellbeing ought to bear these constructions in mind and include practices which support these values.

Christian Scientists, similarly representing a marginal discourse which contrasts with the dominant Liberal humanist position of the programme, construct people as spiritual beings, perfect as we are with no need for improvements in relationships or lifestyle. All is healthy and good and all other interpretations are an illusion (Giddens, 1989). Other groups in Western society maintain that it is 'normal' and 'healthy' for a man to beat his wife, to keep her in line and thus hold her respect. This is a must for an adequate, healthy, red blooded, macho male (Bowker, 1984; Smith, 1991; Thorne-Finch, 1992). In other cultures 'ill-health', including behavioural problems, is constructed as the work of evil spells and spirits, leaving the only means to improving wellbeing as witchcraft and spirit de-possession, such as through the aid of a witch doctor or shaman (e.g. Brown, 1989; Evans-Pritchard, 1950; Handelman, 1967). Still, other cultures such as those practising Hindu, Buddhist or Jainist religions, employ the construct of 'Karma', a concept which can be used to interpret actions, such as a man's violence against his wife, as the 'just' "result of actions in this life or a previous one" (Zaehner, 1971, p233) in which the victim's "plight is seen as an unfortunate natural result of having acted unwholesomely in the past" (Harvey, 1994, p14). The wider discursive context thus has an enormous and diverse impact upon how behaviours such as violence and health are constructed.

This brief excursion beyond the discursive parameters of our 'scientific' world opens up all sorts of possibilities for what is 'good' and what is a 'healthy' relationship. These are discursively laden constructs. Perhaps discourses other than those employed by MMAV and the social science community at large will afford new definitions, goals and intervention strategies appropriate to and supportive of the goals listed for the MMAV programme. This is an issue which certainly warrants further consideration. Given the vast diversity of meaning systems throughout the universe however, such an exploration is beyond the bounds of this research. The point however is a pertinent one, worthy of serious critical consideration.

In general however, given the frames of reference employed within the social sciences, it appears then that the course has had a positive effect on the men's wellbeing in terms of lifestyle and relationships and this can help inform our answer to the first question posed through MMAV's mission statement; Does the course help to reduce all forms of abuse? It would appear to provide some important pre-conditions, from a number of discursive positions. Some directly, in terms of violence, and others indirectly, in terms of shifting relationship and lifestyle parameters. The lifestyle and relationship changes in general are 'healthy' ones from a number of interrelating perspectives and these compliment the kinds of shifts taking place in the men with respect to their subject positions and constructions of violence. Whilst this overall pattern appears to be a positive one it must be remembered that these 'shifts' are general ones only and there exists among this pattern some minor trends which are disturbing in that they are not necessarily or particularly conducive to 'healthier lifestyles and relationships'.

Reflexivity

Looking back over the process of this research it is interesting to see where I have come from and possibly where I am going in terms of my own personal understanding and orientation towards men's violence against women. When I first began this research project I was firmly positioned within the feminist 'instrumental' - 'social system' model in which men were constructed as intentional perpetrators of violence who felt justified in their actions because of their traditional higher status position in society and in the family. I saw these violent men as 'cold', 'sexist', 'controlling' and 'ignorant'. I did not like or respect these men at all. This position was retained throughout the literature review where I was exposed to a myriad of conflicting and alternative perspectives.

After meeting and spending quality time with some of these men however, as I did through the participant observation exercise, my views began to change. I found myself feeling sorry for these men as much as I was angry at them, seeing them as highly strung and emotionally overwhelmed people who found it very difficult to cope with their lives and relationships. This tension and distress experienced by the men was all too easily converted into rage and aggression. I saw these men less as cold hearted patriarchs (instrumental - social system account) and more as culturally duped emotionally inept victims (Structuralist - Romantic account). I had moved toward a position in which I was constructing the men as being

extremely tense and emotionally inept at dealing with this because of their 'sex role socialisation'. I saw the problem more as a product of narrow masculinity constraints with implications for excessive and overwhelming tension culminating in violence than such behaviour being 'intentional'.

Interviewing the men was a very interesting process both academically and personally. The first series of interviews elicited from the men strong themes of anger and 'overwhelming' rage with their partners. Not long after these interviews I began to find myself thinking that I was a lot like these men in that I was in a relationship and I was finding myself getting tense all too easily with my partner also. I was finding that my partner would easily frustrate me and I was feeling a general sense of 'inner tension' and claustrophobia. In this way I felt similar to the men I was interviewing, I was getting angry over things I normally would not have.

Reflecting on this at the time in my journal, I was not sure if this new experience was due to the discursive exposure to this way of thinking from the men or if it was a new stage in the course of my relationship that would have happened anyway. To this day I cannot answer this question but am inclined to see it as a mixture of the two. As a western man in a heterosexual relationship in the late twentieth century it would not be too unlikely that I would share similar experiences with other men in the same situation, such as those men I was interviewing. These men, aside from their violence, seemed to me to be very normal. At the same time the discursive resources imparted to me by these men would surely have at least some impact upon the way in which I 'experience' and 'construct' reality.

Whilst I shared much in common with these men I also felt different in that I do not become violent with my partner when I am feeling particularly tense. I asked myself; "What is this difference?". The conclusion I reached was multifaceted, emerging primarily out of Romantic, Liberal humanist and 'learning' constructed accounts. These were as follows. Firstly I am not living with, married to, bringing up children or paying off mortgages with my partner, like many of the men, and so I am not as 'trapped' in the situation. I can leave a situation to spend hours, days or weeks, on my own with less responsibilities. In this way I can reduce and avoid claustrophobic feelings. Secondly I am able to articulate my feelings reasonably well. I am more self aware emotionally and know what I need to reduce this tension. Thirdly, I can

communicate my needs assertively. Fourthly, I have no violence repertoire. It is not a familiar response for me as it is for many of the men. It's not in my family background. If violence was a familiar response to me and I lacked the freedom to leave or the skills to enable me to communicate feelings and assertively protect myself, I shudder to think how I would respond in the face of tension and anger.

Such a revelation shocked me and this once more altered the way I construed of the men. At this point several questions stood out as particularly significant. Why was I, along with these other men, becoming so readily tense with my partner? Is this a common occurrence for men in relationships? We still loved our partners yet we were easily frustrated and annoyed with them. Is this a common occurrence for women also? Or is there something gender specific going on?

If this 'tension' is normal for men and women in intimate relationships then this, it seemed to me, shifts the focus of enquiry on men's violence in the home towards addressing how is it that men have come to 'respond differently' to this (gender universal) tension. If in fact the quality of this tension is gender specific then research could and should explore why this is the case. Several possible explanations emerged from these reflections for me.

In response to the possibility that men are more likely to respond to a general state of tension with violence I agree most strongly with social learning and male socialisation accounts which construct men's violence as a side effect of a narrow masculinity existing in a culture which, in part at least, condones male violence, represses male sensitivity and encourages male selfishness and dominance. I am not convinced however that this 'learning' - 'social systemic' account is the complete story however. Although I think it accounts for much of men's violence I have a strong hunch that men's 'inner tension' in their relationships is, to some degree, gender specific.

Entertaining this possibility, of men experiencing gender specific tension within the context of a relationship, I came up with a few possible explanations for this which seem plausible to men given my recent experiences interviewing and observing violent men. Firstly socio-biological models, which propose that men have an 'innately' stronger 'inner tension' or 'drive to aggress', intuitively made a lot of sense (e.g. S. Goldberg, 1979; Maccoby and Jacklin,

1975). I knew this position was a 'cop out' from a feminist perspective, but for the first time in my life it seemed plausible, particularly in light of the men's difficulty in coping with their 'inner tension' rationally.

Secondly, and more readily acceptable to me, I consider men to experience distinct 'inner tension' as a consequence of their 'socialisation'. Because masculinity constrains emotional sensitivity, emotional expression and emotional support in men, men's emotionality is repressed. As a side effect of the men being socialised to be 'tough', 'independent' 'cool', 'calm' males then, 'inner tension' builds up in men, leaving many men in a constant state of tension and 'secondary' anger (e.g. Dutton, 1988; Gondolf, 1985b; Marriot, 1988).

Thirdly it seems to me that a feminist informed 'social systemic' - 'inner tension' co-articulated account of men's violence, as an 'explosive' product of frustrated sex role expectations, also has much explanatory power in terms of accounting for men's (possibly higher) tension in their relationships. This account means in effect that I am sexist, which is probably true to some degree given my subject position and socialisation as a man. Personally, being pro-feminist, I prefer to think of myself as not being 'sexist', which ironically is exactly what the men in the interviews were saying amidst their sexist assertions.

Reflecting further upon this latter possibility I drew upon a marginalised feminist account of anger employed in the consciousness raising period associated with the 'women's liberation movement' in the 1970s (Lyman, 1981). This account proposes that personal 'anger' and other negative emotions, such as depression and anxiety, are a manifestation of conflicts and pressures amidst broader social structures. In this theory 'anger' and 'depression' are constructed as an insightful medium through which life's contradictions and structural tensions manifest (McKendy, 1992). This led me to consider that possibility that men's subject positions represent sites of 'institutional conflict' which individual subjects never 'see'. If this is the case this 'manifestation' and structural 'underlying source of tension' warrants serious exploration.

One source of 'men's' 'inner tension' which stands out I think, which could play a part in this mess, is 'Masculine Gender Role Stress' or MGRS (Eisler, 1995; Eisler and Skidmore, 1987; Eisler, Skidmore and Ward, 1988); the stress that results from a man's fear that he is not

meeting societal expectations for his masculinity. He is not a real man, a real contributor, an important person. This stress is allegedly a chief "hazard of being male" (Goldberg, 1976; McCreary et al., 1996) leading men to having disproportionately higher rates of accidents, alcoholism, crime, disease and suicide (Farrell, 1994; Lemli and Mishkind, 1989; United States Public Health Service, 1990). Many men feel far from powerful and important, as history and custom would have it, feeling instead like an expendable wallet, inadequate in many ways and not a master of their home at all, but rather a slave to work and a mortgage (Farrell, 1994).

This 'structural' contradiction, I think, can give rise both to (a) the 'instrumental' 'patriarchal' violence as feminist theory proposes to account for male violence and/or to (b) the Romantic feminist account discussed above in which violence can emerge 'spontaneously' out of frustration and anger. The men may be frustrated at and angry about not being real (cool, calm, successful, masterful) men. I suspect both possibilities play a part in men's violence. When I think about it in these terms it dawns upon me that I am most tense with my partner when my feelings of self importance are reduced through her behaviour.

Over the process of interviewing the men and being in the unique position of being able to ask the men in depth about various facets of their violence and relationships I have thus developed my approach once more. It is my personal belief now that many men who are violent to their partners do experience a gender specific 'inner tension' within the context of a relationship and generally lack the 'tension reducing' 'non-violent' skills to deal with this. Regardless of whether or not men experience gender specific 'inner tension', their socialisation, including their 'masculinization', has constrained their options in dealing with and preventing their anger from becoming violence. I suspect furthermore that men do in fact experience a gender specific 'inner tension' and that this too is a problem which needs addressing. Whilst this may be biological, I contend that this is, at least in part, due to the social structure at large, which conditions men to be emotionally inept and to hold sexist expectations, not only of their partners but also of themselves. This sets up fragmentary and contradictory lives for the men, of which many are not aware, leaving them angry, vulnerable, lonely and confused.

Cumulatively these two issues; (a) possessing greater 'inner tension' and (b) lacking non-violent skills for relieving this tension, help explain, I think, the violent men's reported

'problem'; 'anger' and 'violence'. Given this personal account of the men's tension, the MMAV course has been impressive for me in having dealt with each of these issues in such a short period of time. This personal position however does not explain why it is that only a minority of men are violent towards their partners and thus this account is incomplete, pointing towards perhaps individual biographies and situational factors as further sources for explaining men's violence to their partners. I am very aware that I am quickly becoming 'eclectic' in my orientation.

I am grateful to these men for sharing their stories with me. I sense that life is not easy for these men. I acknowledge and admire their intentions for taking charge of their violence and maintaining egalitarian relationships and wish them well on this journey, this journey fraught with many possible slippings and slidings.

CONCLUSION

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

CONCLUSION

Through a post-structuralist analysis the current research project sought to explore and document the science and process by which the Manawatu Men Against Violence collective's (MMAV) Stopping Violence programme works to stop men's violence to their partners and to describe some of the changes in agency which occur as a result of participation in this unique grass-roots programme. It was hoped that such an investigation would enable the identification of particular meaning systems which could be beneficial within the broader population in terms of reducing violence to women. An overall goal of the current project was thus to identify the particular discourses that this grass roots, alternative and potentially subversive collective is employing and deploying, to gauge their effects and to relate these meanings to wider societal institutional implications. When I began this research project my approach was distinctly a feminist post-structuralist one (Weedon, 1987). My concerns about men's violence towards women motivated this research and I sought to discover the most appropriate mean(ing)s for stopping this widespread problem.

First, I explored the scientific field surrounding men's violence. Five discourses were found to be informing this, affording a diverse array of theories and intervention strategies. Each of these discourses, it was noted, have distinct constructions and implications. Sometimes these discourses are co-articulated in creative combinations to create new theories. Frequently however these are incommensurable with those of others, causing conflict and tension within the field. The discourses identified were the Liberal humanist 'instrumental' account, the Romantic 'expressive tension' account, Tabula rasa 'learning' theory, the Structuralist 'social system' position and the Medical 'pathological' account. This account of the field of wife abuse proved to be a useful means to understanding the area, in particular the conflicts and controversies surrounding it.

Through a participant observation study of the MMAV Stopping Violence programme itself four of the five discourses identified in the scientific literature were observed to be present. The absence of 'pathology' and the related dominance of the official Liberal humanist position heralded a distinct 'eclectic' approach which enabled a specific message and a particular series

of subject positions to be imparted to the men. Messages of personal responsibility and choice provided a hub around which discourses of 'inner tension' and 'social systemic' awareness were couched. Learning theory provided the glue which enabled this distinct package to work. Although there was some tension inherent in this discursive arrangement, it was an impressive programme selectively integrating many of the practices afforded through the social sciences.

In the third and final stage of this research a pre-course post-course interview analysis was employed to gauge the kinds of effects this programme was having upon the men who participated in it. Several shifts, as well as continuities, in subject position were identified as occurring. The men's sense of agency had indeed changed as a consequence of their participation in and exposure to the distinct discursive arrangement of the course. The particular shifts in agency appear on the whole to be most useful for stopping the men's violence in that, relative to the men's pre-course talk, the men demonstrate an enhanced self and social awareness whilst exhibiting a greater sense of self determination and control. The following changes, emerging out of the interview data, are indicative of the kind of impact that the MMAV course is having upon its participants.

- (1) Men attending the MMAV course learn to see their violence as a choice and to take greater personal responsibility for their behaviour, including violence.
- (2) 'Inner tension' is constructed as a causal agent in violence both prior to and following participation in the programme. The men are more likely however, following the course, to distinguish between anger and violence; to separate the two and posit 'choice' as a mediating variable.
- (3) Men who have completed the course are less likely to blame their violence on the victim's behaviour or an underlying dispositional problem.
- (4) Men attending the course are more likely to define violence broadly, as a series of physical and extra-physical behaviours.

(5) These men furthermore are more likely to define violence as an intentional violation or power and control strategy.

(6) The men report greater options and alternative behaviours to engage in when feeling angry and potentially violent, such as communication and time out strategies.

(7) The men, following the course, are more able to express and articulate their emotions, helping to reduce the build-up of tension.

(8) This 'emotional awareness' has provided the men with an insight into their anger and their 'intentional' motivations for reducing this tension through violence.

(9) The men report being more respectful and diplomatic in their relationships. This is further reported as being a positive event, helping to reduce their inner tension and tension in the home.

(10) The men demonstrate greater awareness of sexism and sex-role socialisation effects in society.

(11) The men seek to expand traditional notions of masculinity for themselves; to include feminine characteristics such as nurturing and caregiving and to exclude 'tough' and 'controlling' masculine ones.

Overall the central Liberal humanist position adopted by MMAV appears to have afforded many non-violent options to the men. They are now tending towards constructing violence as a 'choice'. Such agency is less conducive to violence, one would suspect, than the 'symptomatic' determinism the men brought to the course initially. Liberal humanism as a discourse on violence would thus appear to be a meaning system highly useful for helping men to stop their abuse and for preventing the initiation of such behaviour. Furthermore this discourse is readily co-articulated with other accounts, enabling further possibilities.

Liberal humanist constructions appear to be taken up more readily when co-articulated with the Romantic 'expressive tension' account and the options afforded through this particular construction of events. This co-articulation positions the men as active agents with a sense of control over their inner tension, a co-articulation, whilst drawing upon constructs from the men's own meaning system, which affords a most positive shift in accounting practice.

Similarly the co-articulations of the 'social systemic' and Liberal humanist world views are reported as bearing positive effects, in particular for reducing 'inner tension'. The choices open to the men for thinking about and behaving within the context of a relationship with their partner are expanded through the 'consciousness raising' imparted in the programme. This 'awareness' of socio-cultural constraints, such as sexism and masculinity, along with Liberal humanist constructs such as autonomy and equality, is reported by the men as helping to reduce relationship and inner tension, making it less likely that the men will need to 'manage' their inner tension.

Given the meaning systems employed by the men to account for their violence prior to their participation in the MMAV programme, primarily 'expressive tension' and 'pathological' discourses, we might assume that these resources reflect the dominant meaning systems available in the community for accounting for men's violence to their partners. Certainly this would be an interesting and relevant area to explore further. A post-structuralist study of society's accounting devices, other than in science, for example in institutions such as the media, schools or religion, could check this possibility. If Liberal humanism is relatively absent from other institutional accounts and thus 'common sense' articulations then this is a meaning system which could and, from what this research indicates, should be more readily accessible. A primary implication of the present research is that the ideology of Liberal humanism should be dispersed more widely in accounts of and interventions concerning violence. The simple message that violence is a decision, as distinct from a reaction, would appear to have many positive implications for reducing men's violence to their partners.

Stopping violence campaigns could focus on this 'choice' construct whilst highlighting the consequences, both short-term positive and negative, of violence. Police interventions, already employing this discourse, support this ideological manoeuvre and this connection could be exploited to facilitate the adoption of such an account. Alternative 'choices' could be listed

and an educational campaign sharing these, which would include anger management skills, could be imparted. Schools and the media may prove to be an effective means to this end.

‘Social systemic’ consciousness raising within this context too would be highly valuable, both for raising awareness of options and for reducing personal and relationship tension. This subversive account of society may be difficult to impart, but given the men’s readiness to present themselves as ‘non-sexist’ prior to the course, there would appear to be some discursive resources already in existence in the community which may support such a meaning system being employed and deployed for wider intervention. The implications of this discourse for reducing tension should not be ignored.

MMAV has thus demonstrated a useful discursive arrangement for intervening in and preventing men’s violence to their partners. The implication of extending this distinct organisation’s discursive structure to the broader community is strongly supported by the shifts in agency identified in the current research.

These positive implications of the Liberal humanist discourse however should be appreciated cautiously. As a post-structuralist pro-feminist I am concerned about the assumptions this account constructs in daily life. Whilst Liberal feminist thought shares much in common with this account, feminist post-structuralist thought would have some reservations about the ‘gender neutral’ and ‘egalitarian’ world this discourse constructs. The ‘individualising’ of the context of the men’s violence is problematic (Hollway, 1984) particularly when other accounts, constructing contexts beyond the individual, are available and quite possibly pragmatically useful. These should not be ignored because, at face value, Liberal humanism appears to provide options for non-violence. Such an account sustains existing gender and social relations. Furthermore Liberal humanism can be criticised for its overattribution of agency and, as has been discussed, constructing ‘failures’ to make a non-violent choice as ‘failures of personhood’.

The effects of the MMAV course however, whilst impressive at a ‘liberal’ ‘individual’ level, are not ideal within these constraints either. Two minor themes inherent in the men’s post-course subjectivity were cause for particular concern.

(12) Masculine stereotypes of being the 'provider' and being 'strong' were retained by a minority of the men.

(13) A minority of the men maintained that they had underlying personal (anger) problems following the course, that the course did not address. These men wanted a 'cure', not 'management skills'. These men consequently felt unsafe, requiring 'therapy' from beyond the MMAV course.

These features of the men's post-course talk indicate perhaps the accounts of violence and masculinity ingrained in the broader society. Again, the value of a post-structuralist analysis of the discursive forms inhabiting various social institutions would be of great value. These resistant to change accounts, for a minority of men only, may be resistant for the very reason that they are dominant in other institutional settings. Post-structuralist accounts of how other social institutions such as schools or the media construct violence and gender and how these are organised within that setting is an important project for further research. Certainly there is much evidence to suggest that sexist discourses, constructing masculinity in traditionally constrained ways, dominate both schools (Ramsay, 1989; Sadker and Sadker, 1986; Spender, 1982) and the media (Birns, Cascardi and Meyer, 1994; Meltzoff, 1988). An exploration of ways to subvert the processes by which these discourses are legitimated and deployed within particular institutions and society in general are a further implication for future research in this vein. Similarly, discourses found to be operating in such institutions may be quite different from those operating within the social sciences and these may be of interest in their own right, bearing distinct constructs and implications of their own, of which some may be particularly useful for stopping men's violence. As discussed within the text (Chapter 11), non-scientific discourses in circulation may hold many possibilities for intervention presently unfathomed by scientists. Observing, exploring and scientifically legitimating such discourses may form an important step along the road to non-violence. These may or may not be congruent with a Liberal humanist account.

Stepping outside of the shoes of the post-structuralist for the moment there is another area of future research that this project lends itself towards. This concern, as discussed in the text (Chapter 11), reflects the changes in subjectivity which have occurred in this researcher over

the process of this study. It involves advocating the exploration of a particular construct; 'inner tension'.

Inner tension appears to be a major problem for the men who attend these courses and I personally would like to see this construct being explored further. I'd like to see research being conducted which is concerned with whether or not men's 'inner tension' is of a different quality and/or quantity to women's. If so, why? Is it induced by sexist expectations, societal constraints of masculinity or biological differences in hormones? If not, why is it that men respond differently? Do they lack alternative coping behaviours? Do societal constraints inhibit such responses by supporting violent ones? I do not advocate reductionism. I see the context for such tension to be needing scientific exploration also.

One feature of the current research project which stands out for me is that research into men's domestic violence is a very time consuming and difficult task. This research report thus needs to be viewed within the context of several constraints. Firstly, this research does not attempt to explore changes in all the men who attend Stopping Violence programmes. The men who participated in this research are unique in that they are volunteers. They may be more motivated to participate and interact with the course content and are thus less 'resistant' (Edleson and Tolman, 1992) than the average attendant. Our sample of attendants may not represent a cross-section of abusive men in general. These men seemed genuinely remorseful about their actions but, as is indicated in the literature, not all batterers are like this (e.g. Stanko, 1985). It has been possible however to present a detailed account of the discourses employed by a particular group of violent men prior to and following their participation in a MMAV programme. Whether other, less remorseful, violent men present similar discursive resources prior to intervention could form an interesting focus for further study also.

A second point for consideration is that these men may have been presenting themselves in a favourable way in front of the researcher. Because this researcher identified himself in association with MMAV and the participant's knew their behaviour was being recorded, it could be that actors in both the participant observation and interview data collection exercises altered what was presented to the recorder in light of his presence (May, 1993).

Thirdly, longitudinal research is required before we can make any definitive conclusions about the effects the course is having upon the men. This issue concerns the stability or maintenance of the changes and shifts in subject position identified. Questions need to be asked such as; Do the men make lasting shifts in subjectivity or do they tend to slide back, over a period of time, to pre-existing accounts of events? A limitation of this study is the limited period of time between completion of the course and the follow-up interviews. Ongoing follow-up interviews would help us gauge the longer term effects of participation in the MMAV programme; an important concern unfortunately omitted due to time constraints from this research. We cannot know within the scope of this research what the future will hold for these men's subjectivities.

Ongoing research following up on the men would be most useful. It may be that such shifts are temporary and that the men return to their pre-existing explanations of events. Other institution's discursive accounts of violence may provide a useful backdrop for understanding any such slippage. It may be that the men's pre-course accounts of violence, where unaccountable 'pathological' and 'expressive tension' constructions reigned supreme, are systematically related to discourses surrounding wife abuse in the wider community. This further affirms the need to pursue additional post-structural critiques of the various institutional settings and the discursive fields through which men's violence is constructed in the community.

Additional research which would further compliment the findings from this study would include an exploration of the discursive shifts taking place in violent men following other forms of intervention such as therapy, imprisonment, mass education or even religious conversion. What kinds of accounts and shifts in subjectivity do these knowledge regimes produce? How do these compare with the findings of this study? Such studies could provide a useful means of comparison as we seek to choose the shifts in agency which are most likely to stop men's violence towards women.

In summary, this research project has achieved a great deal. It has answered several questions and posited several more. The scientific field surrounding wife abuse has been critiqued in a fresh and informative way, an innovative programme has been explored and the impact this course has upon its participant's has been gauged. The implications of this impact have been

explored and recommendations based upon this have been made. It has been a most interesting, fruitful and challenging personal experience. This research however, whilst interesting and valuable in its own right, is incomplete and is best perceived to be operating within a broader context of community research. Within a community of research this research contributes observations and formulations which may readily be built upon, developed and integrated into a broader social picture. Such a picture may ultimately account for how particular discourses in society construct and enable violence towards women whilst identifying non-violent alternatives. At present Liberal humanism appears to promote, relative to other prevalent and legitimated discourses on violence such as Romanticism and 'pathology', a positive agency in this respect, affording awareness, choice and self-determinism.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1

MMAV Research Proposal

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Project Title: Men Against Violence: A qualitative exploration of the Stopping Violence programme for men who are violent towards women.

DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT

(a) Justification

The high prevalence and location of sexual and domestic violence in our society renders the home to be a most vulnerable place for women. Roughly a quarter of violent crimes in our society are perpetrated by men against women in either the victim's or the assailant's home where the man and woman typically know each other. Media, judicial and social scientific attention however tends to focus on other "more public" forms of violence in our society. Although Psychology has produced several theories which may account for some of the violence occurring in thousands of homes in our country, such theory has typically been inadequate for putting a stop to this phenomenon. Feminist theory provides a most comprehensive and holistic perspective in this respect.

"When Feminists suggest that mens violence against women is neither about sick psyches or sick relationships, they are stressing the need for a psychology that analyses wife beating in its proper context, accounts for power differentials, and asks why women have been brutalized. Rather than label battering as pathology or a family systems failure it is more conceptually accurate to assume that violence against women is behaviour approved of and sanctioned in many parts of the culture."

(Susan Schechter, *Women and Male Violence*, p215).

Feminist theory suggests that mens violence to women is a product of the sexist discourses and gendered role expectations and power differentials prevalent in our society at present. It thus places men's violence within a context of male dominance and thus encourages men to take responsibility for putting a stop to it. At a grass roots level many men throughout New Zealand have attempted to put a stop to men's violence to women. An example of this is the Stopping Violence programme run by the Manawatu Men Against Violence collective. This is an local psychotherapeutic-educational programme for violent men and is designed to reduce their violence to women. It is, in part, based upon the feminist informed power and control model (Tisdall, 1993). This project aims to explore and document the processes by which the Manawatu Men Against Violence (MMAV) Stopping Violence group is produced and to describe some of the psycho-social changes which may occur as a result of participation in this programme. Some of these "psycho-social" changes may be resistant discourses as they are called in feminist post-structuralism (Weedon, 1987), and as such may be of great benefit

to the wider population as we seek to eliminate violence and the fear of violence from women's and men's lives.

(b) Objectives

The goals of this study are (1) to describe the philosophy, processes and goals of the Men Against Violence collective which provides this service. (2) To describe the Stopping Violence programme from an insider's point of view. (3) To identify the alternative ideologies that the programme is producing and to relate these to wider societal institutional implications. (4) To evaluate these in terms of their likelihood to be less conducive to violence.

(c) Methodology

The first two goals of the study, an ethnography in essence, will be achieved through a participant observation procedure. This observation technique has long been recognized as being a most useful strategy in the exploration of distinct social situations. By immersing oneself in the processes and practices of a social scene one can unobtrusively gather data which may otherwise be inaccessible (Barnard, 1993). This includes both experientially derived knowledge (doing the culture) and observationally based descriptions (standing back and watching).

In immersing myself within the Stopping Violence programme I will be making some specific as well as general observations. Some questions used to guide my focus would include:

- What are the components or different facets to the programme? Are there any common activities? (e.g. discussion times). What happens during these?
- What is the linear sequence to the programme and where do these components and any specific experiences/observations fit into this?
- How does the imparting of knowledge take place? How do the clients respond? as a group and individual variations. How does this change over time?
- How do these men deal with challenges to their sexism?
- In the course of events, what attributions are made for their violence? Is there support amongst each other for this? e.g. victim blaming. Does this change over time?

Participant observation is a research strategy which requires distinct ethical consideration. The most appropriate approach to dealing with these pertaining issues in this situation is to be completely open about the intentions of the research with the men involved in it. An informed consent would need to be obtained from the men participating in the study before any data gathering begins and a guarantee of confidentiality for all concerned will be part of the conditions of the research.

The third and fourth goals of the study will involve qualitative research and a discourse analysis. Clients of the programme itself will be interviewed, some before and some after participation, and transcripts of the interviews will be subjected to a discourse analysis. The particular form of discourse analysis used here, influenced by feminist post-structuralist theory, involves identifying the language processes people use to constitute their own and others' understandings of personal and social phenomena. More specifically it involves identifying the social discourses acquired by men in our society at present. These discourses provide subject

positions, which constitute our subjectivities and reproduce, or challenge, existing gender power relations. Some discourses in society are more likely to be conducive to violence than others and an analysis of this can inform us as to which of these ideas are dominant (i.e. receive institutional support) and of those which are resistant (quiet alternative voices). It is thought that the Stopping Violence programme, by imparting ideas which are more conducive to non-violence, will be producing resistant discourses to dominant institutional discourses and practices surrounding gender relations and thus deserves recognition and warrants exploration.

The discourse analysis will operate upon transcripts of interviews which explore the "discursive field" of gender relations within the context of violence. The concept of "discursive field" is used here as part of an attempt to understand the relationship between language, social institutions, subjectivity and power (Weedon, 1987). This analysis will involve a search for the various subject positions that these men may hold for themselves and for others at various times and it will seek to identify discourses and institutional practices which are supported and those which are subverted when these discourses are used. It will also seek to identify which discourses are being acquired, retained or dismissed through participation in the programme. Which categories of persons gain and lose from the employment of the various discourses? What explanations of violence are used and what implicit discourses do these reflect? are further parts of the analysis.

Questions used to access these discourses might include:

- What happened last time you were violent? Describe the event before and after.
- How do you feel about it now?
- What caused it do you think?
- What did you get out of it?
- What was your relationship to the victim? How do you think they saw it?

Potential participants of this phase of the research will be approached by the researcher at some point before or after the programme and asked if they would be interested in participating. All participants will be volunteers and be fully informed of the research goals and methodology. Interviews will be semi-structured, recorded on tape and would last for approximately thirty minutes.

ETHICAL CONCERNS

This project will be conducted within the ethical guidelines of Massey University and the New Zealand Psychological Society.

(a) Informed consent

The Men Against Violence collective and all potential participants will be fully informed about the study and their rights, both orally and in writing, and will have the opportunity to raise questions with the researcher. This procedure will be followed for each part of the study. Consent forms would be signed by MMAV for the research programme initially (if they agree) and by the researcher and each participant for the interviews.

(b) Confidentiality

All materials produced in the course of the research (observations, questionnaires, tapes, tape transcripts) will be kept in a safe confidential place. Names will be replaced by pseudonyms. The list linking codes to real names will be stored separately from the research

materials and will again be accessible only to the researcher. Any publications arising from the study will be published in a form that precludes the identification of any particular participant.

(c) Sharing of Information

During the study each interview participant will be provided with a summary of the interview and at the end of the research a summary of the research findings. Participants would have the opportunity to discuss this with the researcher. MMAV will, along with the summary of findings, be given a series of observations and ideas for programme development which they may wish to discuss and explore with the researcher.

(d) Use of Information from the Study

Results from the study may be published in a relevant peer-review journal, and may be used to develop theory of male violence. It may also be used, in conjunction with MMAV, to develop further the Stopping Violence programme.

(e) A Quote I find inspiring:

The men who stand with women and children,
can expect to suffer,
and yet, for the earth to be saved,
this is exactly what they must do.

(Warrior Marks, p79)

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APPENDIX 2
Study Information Sheet

**MMAV "Stopping Violence Groups" Study
Information Sheet**

What is this study about?

The aim of this study is to see how the Stopping Violence programme affects the men who take part in it. I am especially interested in hearing about how the stopping violence group influences or changes the way men think and feel about their violence and their close relationships. This evaluation research is being carried out by Damian O'Neill, a member of MMAV, working from the Psychology Department at Massey University. These interviews are part of a study which is exploring the effectiveness of MMAV and the programme in reducing violence in our society. If you have participated in or are considering joining a MMAV Stopping Violence Group I would be most interested in talking to you. Your input and cooperation would be of great help to us as we seek to evaluate and explore the impact of our programme on the men who participate in it.

What would you have to do?

If you agree to take part in this study, you would be expected to take part in an informal interview that would take about forty minutes. The time and place of the interview would be up to you. We could do it at your home, at MMAV or in a cafe etc. In the interview I would like to ask you questions about your experience of violence, relationships and the programme itself. The interview would be tape recorded.

What can you expect from the researcher?

If you take part in this study, you will have the right and opportunity to:

- decline to answer any particular question, and to withdraw from the study at any particular time.
- ask any questions about the study that occur to you before or during your participation.
- provide information and ideas in response to the interview questions based on the understanding that what you say will be completely confidential. All records of the interview will be identified only by a codename and this will be seen only by the researcher. It will not be possible to identify you from any reports that are prepared from this study.
- be given a **summary** of the findings of the study when it is completed.
- respond to the findings and to give your perspective on them and for this to be taken into account in the final analysis.
- your involvement would be greatly appreciated.

If you wish you are welcome to contact me with any further enquiries you might have. I do not have a home phone number but I can often be reached at work on 3504147. Also you could leave a message with the MMAV office. I look forward to hearing from you.

Damian O'Neill

APPENDIX 3

Interviewee Consent Form**MMAV "Stopping Violence Groups" Study
Consent Form**

I have read the information sheet about this study and am interested in participating in it. I understand that I can ask further questions at any stage and that any information I share will be kept confidential. I also understand that I can pull out of the study at any stage and can decline to answer any particular questions.

I would like MMAV to get in contact with me to make a time and place where we can talk about this interview further.

Signed:

Name:

Date:

Contact number and address:

Any comments or queries?

APPENDIX 4a

Pre-group Interview Schedule

- What brings you here to MMAV? What are you here for?
- Why have you come along?

prompts:

how is the problem affecting you, your partner and/or the relationship?

do you think this is a problem?

what's going wrong?

How would you define the problem?

- Can you describe the worst time in which you were violent?
tell me about it - what happened?
- Can you describe the most recent event in which you were violent?

prompts like:

what happened next?

what did you do?

what did she do?

how were you feeling at the time?

- What do you think has led you to become (how does he describe it?) this way?
- Why does this (whatever term he uses to describe his problem) occur?

prompts:

how come you do this rather than what some other guys do

why do you do that sort of thing (behave this way)

- What do you need/want (to happen) to change in order for your violence to stop.
- What are you hoping to get from this (MMAV) programme?
Is there anything else you need/want from the programme?
- Have you seen the ads on T.V. about family violence?
- What did you think of them, how did they affect you?

do you think they're relevant to what's been happening for/to you?

- What do you think family violence is?
- What kinds of stuff goes on in families that you think is violence?

what happen's when there is family violence?

- Do you think 'family violence' is a problem in the community?
- Why do you think it happens?
- What do you think the community can do about stopping it?

should we do anything at all?
what can be done? Any ideas at all?

- How do you feel about being a man?

do you like it?
Is there anything you don't like about it?

- Do you see men and women as being different or basically similar?

in what way are they similar/different?

- How do you think of your partner/ex partner?
- How would you describe her?

- How would you describe yourself in your relationship?
- How do/did you make decisions in that relationship?

who makes what decisions?
are there some that you make, are there some that she makes?

- Who does what in your relationship?
- What sorts of practical things do you do and what sorts of jobs does your partner do?

practical things (like work, shopping, fixing stuff, looking after kids)

- If your relationship was perfect what sorts of things would your partner be doing?

- Anything you'd like to add at all?

- Thank you.

APPENDIX 4b

Post-group Interview Schedule

-What did you think of the MMAV programme?

-What did you learn from it?

-What did you like most? and least?

-Would you recommend it?

how come?

-What is violence? - definition

what does 'family' or 'domestic' violence mean to you?

-What **causes** men's violence to their partners/girlfriends/wives?

other things

anything else

-What can be done about stopping it's prevalence in the community?

-Is violence acceptable?

what are the worst things about violence?

if acceptable - when?

-Can you think of a time in which you were violent and tell me about it?

describe your last violent episode.

describe your worst violent episode.

-What **caused** these events?

-How would you have liked to have handled the situation?

-What prevented you from doing this?

-Do you think you will be violent in the future? What do you need in order for you to be non-violent?

-What would you do if you saw a friend of yours yelling at his girlfriend or partner and threatening her when she did not do what he wanted her to do?

why is that/how come?

-What have you thought about the course's emphasis on equal power sharing in relationships?

-Have you tried this out with your partners? How have you found it?

-Do you think that there was anything in particular about your relationship which made the violence more likely?

-Can you describe what you would consider an ideal relationship to be?

what roles do you see men and women having

who does the breadwinning, house keeping, childminding, financial decision making

-Has the course prompted you to think about what it means to be a man?

-Is there any thing else you would like to say that might be relevant to the course or violence in general?

-Thankyou

APPENDIX 5
Interview Follow-up

Example letter to participants

Damian O'Neill
Psychology Dept
Massey University
Private Bag 11 222
Palmerston North

10 November 1996

Aaron Kilgour
498 Featherston Street
Palmerston North

Dear Aaron

You may recall in the last eighteen months being interviewed by me both prior to and following your participation in a MMAV Stopping Violence programme. I'd like to thank you once again for your participation in the interview. It was greatly appreciated by myself and by MMAV.

Enclosed in this envelope you will find a transcript of these interviews and a summary of my interpretations of them. I'd like to check with you that the transcripts accurately represent what you said in the interviews and that my interpretations are reasonable to you. To make this as easy as possible I have further enclosed a small questionnaire of which I would greatly appreciate you filling out and sending back to me as soon as is possible, hopefully within the next week. The final results of the study will be available in the near future and there is a space on the questionnaire for you to indicate whether or not you would like to receive a copy of these results. Alternatively you could ring me to relay this information. I am available during the day on 3504147.

Once again, thank you for your participation. It was a pleasure to meet and interview you and I look forward to hearing from you in the near future.

Your's sincerely

Damian O'Neill

MMAV: STOPPING VIOLENCE INTERVIEW STUDY**Follow-up Questionnaire**

Please tick the appropriate spaces and answer the following questions. Feel free to use more paper if required.

1) Do you consider the summary of the interview to be an accurate interpretation of what was said?

Yes ... No...

If no, what would you like to add or subtract?
If yes, is there any else you would like to add further?

2) Would you like to hear back about the results of this study?

Yes ... No ...

Example Pre-Course Interview Summary

I found our pre-course interview to be along the following lines:

You came to MMAV wanting to learn a new way of dealing with frustration and stress. Rather than lashing out you were wanting to learn to respond differently to these feelings. To let these feelings and tension out another way; in a less violent manner. Furthermore you were sick of feeling stressed and frustrated and wanted for this to change also.

You came to MMAV feeling very confused and frustrated within your relationship. You reported feeling powerless and unfairly treated and indicated that your relationship with your wife had been deteriorating over the years. You thought her to be unfair and irrational at times and found yourself getting angry at her and lashing out. You felt like this every three months or so and reported how you recently picked up a chair and threw it against the wall. Another time you slammed the door and accidentally hurt you wife. This scared you and motivated you into doing something about this.

The adds on TV remind you of your own upbringing and the intergenerational abuse syndrome. You did not want to repeat violence in front of your children. You wanted to stop this full stop. You indicated a broad awareness of many different forms of violence apparent in our society, such as physical, verbal and financial. You referred to the wheel of abuse as a model with which you were aware of.

The problem of violence in the home was caused, you thought, primarily by stress. Also, a lack of communication and negotiation skills contributed to the problem, especially in men. Given this, you came up with several ideas for stopping violence in the community. You thought that letting the public, both men and women, know that there is help available was a crucial first step. Secondly financial support for community programmes which provide such help should be forthcoming, presumably from the government. Police involvement was praised by you, particularly the more recent moves which have been much tougher and serious about the problem. You also thought that education in schools, on communication skills, would be a useful longer term intervention strategy.

For you, your ideal relationship would be one of equal power and joint decision making. You would share household jobs such as childcare, cooking and cleaning and you thought that a roster would help in the smooth running of such an operation. Most people are playing out the old male - female stereotypes you thought, in which the man work and the woman does the house work. Not for you. You have changed the way you look at relationships, in part because of your wife's feminist perspective. Still, you think in your present relationship, that whilst you share the household and childcare duties you do more than your fair share and feel relatively powerless in the family decision making process. You would like to see the relationship become more equal.

Example Post-Course Interview Summary

I found our post-course interview to have been along the following lines:

You reported that you liked the MMAV programme; in particular how it increased your awareness of various factors involved in the build up to violence. This taught you that you can monitor your tension and do something about it before you reach explosion point. It was up to you, you affirmed whether you decide to be violent or not; Whether to monitor and responsibly act upon your tension levels or not. You liked the other guys from the course and also the facilitators who treated you with respect, which was a pleasant surprise. You would have liked to have spent more time on various facets of the course however.

You realised that you are responsible for your actions and that you can do things to responsibly look after and reduce your tension levels, such as being honest with yourself emotionally, communicating this, and taking a time out when you need one. You appreciated also the communication skills taught in the course.

You defined violence as 'anything you do to try to impose your will on someone else'. Violence involved physical assaults and also verbal, emotional and mental abuse. You learnt a lot about the different forms of abuse, in particular how 'mind games' can be used to impose your reality onto someone. This made you aware of how you had been doing this in your own relationship.

You postulated a few causes of men's violence to their partners. Some were those retained from the first interview, whilst some were new. Communications habits learnt as a child were considered important. Life stresses also. The way in which men have been brought up to handle their emotions was a new one. You thought men tend to stuff their unpleasant emotions in and this results in the build up of anger. You thought that this was due to men's socialisation, such as in the movies where people such as Rambo are idolized as 'real men'. Further more you posited that men have socialised further to hit. Men have been trained to accept and be violent.

In terms of intervention you thought that it was essential to get the message out that violence is unacceptable. Also that once it occurs it is important to intervene in it early. School education, not too different from a Manline stopping violence programme, was considered appropriate also, with particular emphasis of teaching boys that it is ok to express your emotions and providing the skills to enable this.

You relayed a story of your violence in which you acknowledged your intentions in altering you wife's behaviour. You were feeling tense and trapped and you sought to scare her which you succeeded in doing and this enabled you to get out of this situation. You reported that you were being intentionally threatening and that you'd made a violent decision. You wished you'd communicated more clearly from the start, monitored your tension earlier and taken a time out. You are worried about the future and your violence. You'd like to practice what you have learnt from the course. These skills make you more confident. You'd also like to undergo some counselling.

The course has not altered your ideals of an equal relationship. You still and have for a while now strived to be equal and share house work tasks. The communication skills taught have helped you to be clear and communicative with your wife and this has given you more personal power in the relationship. Prior to this you felt overpowered. Now you feel heard and that it is more equal. You have become aware of how you to have been the victim of abuse and are keen to stop this.

You claim that you don't feel particularly conscious of being a 'man', although you acknowledge that it is men who are predominantly violent. You see yourself as primarily a person and that is most important for you to, unlike most guys, be emotionally aware and authentic, rather than trying to look 'tough'. You do not want to be a man per se, and seek to move beyond it's limitations which are obviously bad for you. You'd recommend the course to ther men who were having problems with violence.

APPENDIX 6

Participant's Summary of Results

Damian O'Neill
Psychology Dept
Massey University
Private bag 11 222
Palmerston North

10 December 1996

Aaron Kilgour
498 Featherston Street
Palmerston North

Dear Aaron

I'd like to thank you once again for your participation in the MMAV 'Stopping Violence' interview study. It was greatly appreciated both by myself and by the Manawatu Men Against Violence Collective. Your input has helped us to explore the impact that the programme is having upon the men who participate in it. This is extremely useful to us as you might imagine. Such feedback helps us to develop and create the best 'stopping violence' programme possible.

Several key themes emerged from the interview data and the following changes were identified as taking place in the men who participated in the course.

- (1) Men attending courses learn to see their violence as a choice and to take greater personal responsibility for their behaviour, including violence.
- (2) 'Inner tension' is constructed as a causal agent in violence both prior to and following participation in the programme. The men are more likely however, following the course, to distinguish between anger and violence; to separate the two and posit 'choice' as a mediating variable.
- (3) Men who have completed the course are less likely to blame their violence on the victim's behaviour or their own underlying problem.
- (4) Men attending the course are more likely to define violence broadly, as a series of physical and extra-physical behaviours.
- (5) These men are furthermore are more likely to define violence as an intentional violation or power and control strategy.

(6) The men report greater options and alternative behaviours to engage in when feeling angry and potentially violent, such as communication and time out strategies.

(7) The men, following the course, are more able to express and articulate their emotions, helping to reduce the build-up of tension.

(8) This 'emotional awareness' has provided the men with an insight into their anger and their 'intentional' motivations for reducing this tension through violence.

(9) The men report being more respectful and diplomatic in their relationships. This is further reported as being a positive event, helping to reduce their inner tension and tension in the home.

(10) The men demonstrate greater awareness of sexism and sex-role socialisation effects in society.

(11) The men seek to expand traditional notions of masculinity for themselves; to include feminine characteristics such as nurturing and caregiving and to exclude 'tough' and 'controlling' masculine ones.

Two themes in the men's talk were cause for concern however. As a whole we would have preferred these themes to have been absent. These provided us with directions for the future however.

(13) Masculine stereotypes of being a 'provider' and being 'strong' were retained by a minority of the men. Some pro-feminist analysts consider such constructions to be dangerous and to encourage violence.

(14) A minority of the men maintained that they had underlying personal (anger) problems following the course, that the course did not help them with. They wanted a cure from this, not management skills. These men felt unsafe consequently and needed additional help from beyond the MMAV course.

The identification of these themes has provided us with a good insight into some of the dynamics which occur in a MMAV Stopping Violence course. A more detailed account of this research can be located at the Men Against Violence office in Square Edge. You are most welcome to come along and to read through the full research report. It will be made available to you if you wish to read it.

Once again, thank you for your participation in this study. I enjoyed meeting you and interviewing you. If you like to ask any further questions concerning the research as a whole, please feel free to contact me at the above address.

Your's sincerely

Damian O'Neill