

Will they do again?: Predicting and assessing risk in men who are domestically violent.

Ken McMaster, New Zealand

Predicting and managing risk in men who are domestically violent is difficult for any of us working in the field. With different types of offending behaviour, common sense approaches in managing situations of high risk would focus on avoidance of situations that pose the greatest risk. The key criteria for increased risk are multiple, but suffice to say that access to potential victims is one key indicator. In situations of domestic violence access to victims is commonplace in that the couple are often cohabiting or at times involved in shared custody of children. A number of trends make the need for risk assessment and management all the more important for correctional staff. For example with a move towards home detention as a sentence to reduce prison numbers, restorative justice conferencing prior to sentencing, and the need to notice the overlap in generally violent offenders with private violence, probation officers are often faced with difficult decisions.

This workshop will explore with participants the idea that risk is not constant, but variable in terms of both internal factors to the man being abusive and contextually in terms of the relationship dynamics and history of previous violence and abuse. It is also a product of external safety measures. One way to identify and manage risk with domestically violent offenders is to bring these themes together in such a way that the correctional officer can use this information for developing interventions that can minimise the potential for further abusive behaviour and promote safety. The workshop will also consider the idea that there exists a diversity of pathways for men who are abusive, which provides one direction of possible solution to the vexing question of, "Will he do it again?"

Ken McMaster, B.S.W., M.S.W. (Hons.), CQSW, M.A.N.Z.A.S.W.

Ken has a twenty-five year history working at the cutting edge of intervention work with men who are violent and who sexually abuse. He is known for his innovative practice ideas and the ability to translate theory into practice. He has held positions as a member and Chair of the Family Violence Advisory Committee/ Te Rangai Whiriwhiri Tukinotanga a-Whanau. This committee was established to provide the Minister of Social Services and Employment with independent policy advice on matters related to government initiatives within the family violence arena. He was also a founding member of the National Network of Stopping Violence Services/Te Kupenga Whakaoti Mahi Putanga and is a past chair. Ken was responsible for the writing of the Respondent Programme Regulation for the Domestic Violence Act (1995). In addition, he has worked as a part-time lecturer in Social Work at Canterbury University and is now involved full-time with HMA as manager, writer of materials and principal trainer.

Ken McMaster has published two books on Domestic Violence (*A Private Affair*, 1989, GP Books, Wellington and *Feeling Angry, Playing Fair*, Reed, 1998, Auckland). He has also co-edited a new book titled *Innovative Approaches to Stopping Family Violence*, (2003) Steele Roberts: Wellington. He has recently co-edited with Leon Bakker, *Will they do it again? Assessing and managing risk*, HMA Books.

Ken regularly undertakes conference presentations and is well known in criminal justice circles both in Australia and New Zealand. He has had involvement in training

probation officers dating back to 1985 and been involved in a number of aspects of IOM project initiatives.

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Workshop presentation – presentation, discussion, interaction