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Men Reinventing Themselves: Recovery from Hegemonic Masculinity

*Non Violent Pathways of Change for Men who use Violent, Abusive or
Controlling Behaviours in their Family Relationships*

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I INTRODUCTION

Tom's endeavour is to engage in a lifelong struggle against a culture embracing war, machismo and violence. With a background in street violence and drug culture he has developed his own incisive analysis of hegemonic masculinity:

“this man, hard as nails, bullshit thing took me away from being able to feel; the more I can't let go of that, the more of a hold up it is for me to grow spiritually, to grow, to grow up, to mature...

I suppose to encourage us to fight wars, I suppose they encouraged us to do this manly thing and it's not working in society anymore...

Governments and societies pumped men up to be like this, now it's got to the stage where it's a problem in society.

I just think that's pretty obvious, it sticks out like dog's balls. It's not that I'm blaming authority, I think that men have the ability to change if they want to, the key is want to.

I've had my own private war and a lot of that is self inflicted. Men are starting to look at themselves and what that macho thing is doing to them – it'll take years to turn it around,

*My endeavour, my life, is to get as much shit like that out of my life and try for it not to carry on through my son...
It's been hard to let go of them [violent practices] because they've been such good survival skills over the years.*

Am I really benefiting from those survival skills or are they holding me back? Fear, yeah. I suppose that's it in a word, I'm scared of letting go of some things, that's all it is, just fear.

That's a hard thing to deal with. What I do is talk about it, bring it out in the open so I'm aware of it – the more I'm aware of it, the more I can overcome it. There's not many men you can talk to about these things except counsellors who have to do it – it's their job.”

In 1997 two final year social work students - Helen Kelly and I - conducted a research project in a male family violence prevention programme in outer suburban Melbourne. The idea was to inform training modules for men who use violence after addressing the basic of issue of stopping their violence - in this case a module on stress management. After ten years of work with hundreds of men, Dale Hurst, founder of the programme and research supervisor, concluded:

“We must pay the greatest attention to the violence and neglect men subject themselves to as a gender. This is absolutely critical in enhancing the safety of women and children...addressing their self abuse and neglect, as part of a process of developing a sustainable non violent lifestyle...If men who are violent do not become engaged in a change process, they...go on to form other abusive relationships...to traumatise and neglect another generation of children” (Hurst, 1998, 2-3).

The programme modules referred to above were part of Hurst’s notion of creating “pathways” for men as part of a comprehensive change process. After analysing the data from the eleven in-depth interviews which comprised the research, Hurst concludes that the men who embraced the foundational and morally grounding principle of the programme - that of accepting full responsibility for one’s behaviour - had made significant advances on their own comprehensive pathways of change which resulted in a non-violent lifestyle. In contrast, those who still blamed others for their behaviour or had just begun to struggle with notions of responsibility, were at a corresponding level of nil or limited change on these pathways.

I believe this research describes and envisions a process for men of reinventing or reconstructing themselves away from violent dominant masculinities based on a “power over” others, patriarchal paradigm - reflected in the “global dominance of men over women” (Connell, 1995, 123) - to a “power with” and “power within” (Starhawk, 1987, 9) non-violence paradigm.

This paper begins with a description of the broader practice and public policy contexts within which the programme operates and the conceptual frameworks which underpin this research. This is followed by the findings, which include a “continuum of change” – an adaptation of Gondolf’s model (1987) - that sets out the various “pathways.” Before concluding I draw out some practice and policy implications.

II CONTEXT OF THE RESEARCH

1. Public Policy

In 2000, the Men’s Family Violence Prevention work in Victoria, Australia formed one part of an overall State Government “Strategy to End Violence Against Women.”

This is the result of a grassroots (as opposed to top down) public policy process driven over a ten to fifteen year period by service providers, and men and women in the community. They created their own peak body in 1990 now named – “No To Violence – the Male Family Violence Prevention Association” (NTV), which created a set of standards for men’s programmes based on men’s accountability for creating safety for women and children. They define family violence as “the use of power and control in the context of male dominance” (Younger, 1995, 7). The State Government now only funds programmes that adhere to these guidelines. NTV strategies reflect a gender alliance comprising programmes with male and female co-facilitators, a telephone ‘help line’ and referral service for men, a self help book for men (Frances, 1994), and accredited counsellor and facilitator training courses.

It is worth noting, particularly in the context of this paper, that the standards also consciously use the phrase “men who use violence” as opposed to “perpetrators” or “violent men.” This avoids the problems of labelling which tend to negate possibilities for change by implying that violent behaviours are a fixed characteristic - and indeed a person’s main characteristic - rather than a matter of choice and thus a personal responsibility.

2. Conceptual Frameworks

Starhawk (1987, 9) sees patriarchy as the primary foundation of the “power over” paradigm in our culture in contrast with the “power with” and “power within” paradigms. Under the broad umbrella of the philosophy of non-violence, these reflect non-violent life affirming practices of collective social action and spiritual connectedness.

The researchers were inspired by and interested in how notions of masculinity - in particular for the working class men who constituted 80% of the programme (Hurst, 1998, 4) - impacted on their experience particularly in the light of Connell’s (1995) work on “Masculinities.” They embraced the contradictions observed by Hurst and Connell that these working class men “have lost most of the patriarchal dividend” (Connell, 1995, 116).

Our research uses Alan Jenkins' approach of working with men who use violence (1993). Jenkins resolves the conundrum between personal responsibility for behaviour and the shaping of behaviour by social and cultural influences by proposing a theory of restraint. In this process, responsibility for the abuse is placed firmly on the men by inviting them to consider the traditions, habits and beliefs internalised from culture and society that are restraining them from relating respectfully to women and children.

Jenkins' approach can be augmented by Gondolf's notion that men who use violence can be located along a continuum of change according to their level of moral development. This begins from self-centredness, with the motivation to change deriving only from fear of criminal justice system intervention, progressing to empathy for partners and children and culminating in a desire to work for social change.

III OUR FINDINGS: NON VIOLENT PATHWAYS FOR MEN: A CONTINUUM OF CHANGE

1. Overarching themes

We found that the men in our survey experienced "stress" in relation to two main contexts - work and relationships. Given our interest in the meanings the men placed on their experiences we didn't define "stress" but rather asked them to tell stories about their experience of it - Hurst's intention was that our research inform the development of a stress management module. From the men's stories an overarching theme emerged which we named lack of "connection." Connection to *self* - body, mind, feelings, spirit - and *others* - partners, children, family of origin, and other men. These notions of connection correspond with Starhawk's conceptions of non-violent empowerment; "power *within*" (connection to self) and "power *with*" (connection to others) - absent in the lives of men at lower stages of change. Violent, abusive or controlling, "disconnected" forms of "power over" were their ways of being in relation to both others and self. The patriarchal social structure of gender internalised as a tough, "blokey" (i.e. common notion of manly - being a bloke), work hard and invulnerable masculinity and the realities of workplace oppression of blue collar men

in our capitalist system, seemed to collude neatly to give these men a life of hard work and lost and broken family relationships (Hurst, 1998, 10).

Talking to these men about their lives was like looking into ‘the belly of the beast’ of an ugly system. This image seems uncannily illustrated in a story told by Adrian who worked distributing refinery products for a multinational oil company. A workmate climbed down the ladder into one of the big empty storage tanks to perform a task he became overwhelmed by fumes in the cavernous tank and died. Official denial surrounded this fact: “one or two a year get killed, but technically these don’t get into the statistics, it’s a sham.”

Table 1 incorporates the overarching themes that emerged and the specific findings of this research into a conceptual framework that develops and builds on existing theory. In the main this table is inspired by, and builds on, Gondolf’s developmental model (1987) but incorporates Starhawk’s notions of power and the related overarching theme of connectedness. We also add the broader theme of “Responsibility / Self-Esteem”, clarifying the connection between these two themes which emerged from the research. Men who took responsibility for their violent behaviour indeed built their own self-esteem and sense of self in the process of embracing what became a liberating journey towards non-violence. Table 3 further illustrates this connecting self-esteem to men’s reinvention of their own masculine identity.

The bottom half of Table 1 relates to the more specific findings of this research that identify pathways of change towards non-violence that I discuss in detail in the next section. Each pathway progresses from left to right and parallels the other pathways as part of an integrated non-violent change process. This progression illustrates what I regard the single most important finding of this research - that men who embrace responsibility for their use of violent and controlling behaviours actually take responsibility for personal change across the range of non-violent pathways set out in the table.

Please note that the pathway “Attitudes to Women” which progresses to “*Active Partnership*”, is in italics because the men who had reached advanced stages of change said little of their relationships with their partners and perhaps unfortunately the researchers did not explore this with them, neither did we contact the partners necessary to confirm this. I believe this is an important avenue for further research.

Table 1

Pathways Of Change Towards A Non Violent Life Style: For men who use violent, abusive or controlling behaviours in their family relationships

| Moral Development | 1 Denial | | 2 Behavioural Change (crisis) | | 3 Personal Transformation | |
|-------------------------------------|---|--------------------|--------------------------------------|--|---|---------------|
| Change Stage | Defiance | Self Justification | Self Change | Relationship Building | Community Service | Social Action |
| Power Paradigm | Power over | | | | Power with and power within | |
| Connectedness | Disconnection from self and others | | | | Connected to self and others | |
| Self Esteem / Responsibility | Blame others | | Blame self | | Affirm self | |
| Masculine Identity | Defend masculinity | | Doubt masculinity | Struggle with masculinity | Masculinity reconceived | |
| Attitudes to Women | Women as danger | Resentment | | Empathy | <i>Active partnership</i> | |
| Dealing with Feelings | Impulsive behaviour | | Push feelings away | Manage anger well and express creatively | Can sit with and express creatively | |
| Ability to Recreate | “Can’t relax” - blame external factors for not having leisure | | Some self care | | Range of recreational activities | |
| Work Life | Excessive over work | | Disillusionment with work life | | Work life reconceived | |
| Meaning in Life | Expressed as material goals | | | | Has a personal philosophy or spirituality | |

Moral Development & Change Stage from Gondolf 1987

Power Paradigm from Starhawk 1987

2. Non-violent Pathways of Change

In this section I will present the specific findings of the research i.e. the non-violent pathways that emerged as set out in Table 1. Table 2 (see below) indicates where I believe the various men in the research could be located according to the developmental model proposed by Gondolf that forms the basis of Table 1.

Table 2 Developmental stages of change of the men in this study

| Moral Development | 1 Denial | | 2 Behavioural Change (crisis) | | 3 Personal Transformation | |
|-------------------|----------|--------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------|---------------|
| Change Stage | Defiance | Self Justification | Self Change | Relationship Building | Community Service | Social Action |
| | Julian | Gavan Jamie George | Mark Dominic David | Rob | Tom Adrian Hal | |

a. Ability to recreate - having one's own space and leisure activities

Two of the men at advanced stages of change, Adrian and Rob, had similar recreational practices of creating their own space or solitude. Like most men, Adrian and Rob have to struggle with whether or not their personal practices conform to the yardstick defined by dominant notions of manhood in our culture. Both men seemed aware though that their practices of “connecting to self” placed them at risk of not conforming to dominant models of masculinity, despite sneaking doubts about the legitimacy of these masculinities. Adrian appeared to be defending his blokey self-image, while Rob struggled with the fact that owning his “feminine qualities” and sensitive personal style placed him in defiance of traditional notions of manhood. Adrian could be described as a traditional, working class blue collar “bloke” - for example he reports his sense of maleness is discomfited by expressions of warmth and sensitivity when, for example, group leader Dale Hurst congratulates a man in the group on an improvement. This is what he told us about his practice,

“I go into the lounge room, I just sit there and think about nothing... I learnt that fishing up in the bush one day – I just sat down on a tuft of grass...twenty minutes went by... I was really relaxed. I looked at stuff I hadn’t looked at for twenty five years... no noise, no

pressure... me and nature, I revelled in it... I'll never forget this twenty minutes as long as I live."

Despite practicing this form of meditation or contemplation Adrian has to deny that it defies dominant masculinities even stating that he is not into "sitting in a chair, listening to music and all that stuff", however elsewhere in the interview he acknowledges how fear of "the poofta stuff" (a reference to "homosexuality") stops men from talking to each other. Similarly Rob practices meditation, yet in contrast struggles openly with his sense that this aspect of his personal style is in inherent defiance of hegemonic models of masculinity. He reports rainforest music and fragrant candles as being good for "meditation." Obviously dominant masculinities have become a hurdle for men in developing connection to self or power within.

For men at earlier stages of change having one's own space reflected themes of their disconnection from, and dependency on, partners, rather than connection with self. A period of separation from his partner was for Dominic enforced solitude - an "expensive exercise" and a source of anxiety "a time to worry, read and sleep." Similarly time in his shed for David occurs after a fight with his partner while Mark used to "live in his shed." For George time away at the men's programme became partly defined by the resentment he felt towards his partner as a place that was just his and not hers.

Men at earlier stages of change contrasted with the more advanced men in their inability to engage in a range of leisure activities. Jamie, George and Dominic all reported being unable to "relax." Jamie sometimes drove his car massive distances to relieve stress while George plans to simply get in his car and "drive" if his partner asks him to leave. Julian reports having no leisure activities at all and never dealing with the issue, "it's always been a problem", while Gavan blames external circumstances for preventing him from recreating. These responses to difficult situations seem to reflect a common theme of escape, resentment and blame as opposed to responsibility. In contrast the more advanced men have a range of leisure activities. Hal does oil painting and creative writing; Tom tends his animals, reads, goes fishing and plays chess and scrabble with friends; Adrian enjoys fishing, guitar playing and meditating and Rob, music and meditation.

b. Dealing with Feelings

“To feel is to leave yourself open” - Tom

Connecting with oneself or with others by acknowledging feelings or emotions is another point at which men experience a risk to their masculinity, to the manly identification with being in control, and with maintaining power over others. Tom’s story illustrates how coming to terms with the world of one’s feelings is integral to the process of letting go of power over others as his quote above indicates. To undertake such a process of vulnerability involves stripping off the dominant image of masculinity; his “manly self talk”, “my bullshit mask”, “this man hard as nails bullshit thing” that “took me away from being able to feel.” A further aspect of the problematic nature of this process for men Connell reminds us that men have traditionally defined themselves as ‘not women’ and of course women are defined as emotional, and men rational (Connell, 1995, 164). Tom can now tell his son that “it’s OK to cry,” in contrast George reports - although he acknowledges, “it’s wrong” - saying to his crying son “don’t cry, be a *man* about it.”

Men’s use of violent and controlling behaviour can indicate a lack of empathy for the feelings of others and, as this study highlights, they often have a disconnection from their own emotional processes. As the men in the programme are challenged to make a distinction between feelings of anger, resentment etc. and the behavioural choice to engage in violence and abuse, they start to control their often impulsive behaviour. At this point they seem to develop a variety of rationalisations for the difficult emotions they continue to experience but can’t justify through physical violence. It is common knowledge that men often move to non-physical forms of emotional or psychological abuse at this point. Going into this “headspace” as opposed to learning to negotiate the world of their feelings leads to a lot of confused thinking for them and reflects the prevailing themes of disconnectedness and power over others.

David reports a first step of having overcome impulsiveness, “I get angry but I don’t fire back”, but also states that he is “not sure which way to go now, everything is strange, I’m unsure at times.” Feelings still would not appear to be a key to understanding self or partner but are understood via a kind of container theory, a filling and emptying process;

in relation to his partner's anger, he states patronisingly "once she gets it all out she'll be right." It's obvious who's still in control and would indicate David remains at Gondolf's 'Change Stage 2' of self-justification.

In relation to his family's anger towards him, Mark appears to be developing some empathy - "I'm getting my own back." Like David, Mark has made progress in controlling his impulsive behaviour, but now tries to deal with family problems via a process of emotional distancing - "I'm trying to distance myself from all the problems." However this is a very uncomfortable place for him to be - he's losing control over his family - a difficult reality to face for a traditional man - but at the same time his sentiment contains the seed of a desire to embrace further responsibility in his family life - "I *should* be able to deal with family conflicts in a firm and constructive way." This indicates to me Mark is at what I would call the crisis stages 3 & 4 (see table 2) unlike Gavan who simply walks away from arguments, which further enrages his partner and allows him to continue his justification and denial of all responsibility. Of course pointing to one's partner's feelings of anger as opposed to acknowledging one's own places Gavan firmly at Gondolf's level 1 of moral development - denial.

In contrast, Tom - as part of his pathway of personal change - reports two key ways he has found to deal with his feelings. Firstly self-disclosure, talking about his feelings, in particular his feelings of fear, through the counselling associated with the programme. Secondly he has learnt - as part of this process - to be able to "sit with his feelings" and thus accept and acknowledge them rather than be driven by them.

c. Masculine Identity – sense of manhood or self-image as a man

Interestingly the men's capacity to successfully negotiate the world of their feelings parallels the degree to which they have developed a positive, affirming self-image as a man.

We found that Tom, Hal, Rob and Adrian (all at advanced stages of accepting responsibility, see table 2), were all able to self-affirm as men. This was in stark contrast

to a defensive “fortress mentality” we found with men in less advanced stages of change. Andy’s statement as follows, like Julian’s quote in table 3 below, generated the image of men needing to protect their fortress – “women are eroding the bastion.” Statements by Andy above (“who knows *these* days”) and Gavan, “men don’t understand what their position is today”, reflect the crisis of legitimacy faced by patriarchy observed by Connell and also earlier by researchers (Connell, 1995, 225).

Hal and Steve’s stories mirrored Tom’s ability to affirm himself as a man (see Tom’s quote table 3), although Rob still felt the pressure of a personal struggle against cultural oppression in this regard. None of these men needed to define themselves in opposition to women (Goldner, 1990, 348).

Table 3. Masculine Identity (in response to the question “What’s a real man?”)

| 1 Denial | 2 Behavioural Change (crisis) | 3 Personal Transformation |
|---|--|---|
| <p><i>“We are going to be dominated by women... we are going to lose our rolesour identities”</i></p> <p>Julian</p> | <p><i>“Who knows <u>these</u> days”</i></p> <p>George & Gavan</p> | <p><i>“A real man has feelings and is able to express them, especially love; has stability...deals with hardships in a responsible way...I’m a man like that”</i></p> <p>Tom</p> |

Tom’s story of being in the grip of an all encompassing, tough, invulnerable, ‘no fear’, hegemonic masculinity is a classic portrayal of the way in which social structures (like gender) become internalised as part of our psychological makeup (Fook, 1993, 22), and further illustrate the role gender plays in disconnecting or splitting men from themselves;

“I even had to keep the act up for me, it became me... in the end I was only what was expected of me, in the end I lost me.”

Like Tom, Adrian has relied heavily in the past on projecting the image of “hegemonic masculinity.” Or as Connell would put it - using the notion of “project” after Satre - (Connell, 1995, 39), Adrian has heavily engaged in the “project” of hegemonic masculinity. I must note now that both appear to be engaged in a project of community service or Gondolf’s Change Stage 5. One is a community leader in the men’s programme and another plays a leadership role in Alcoholics Anonymous. Both come from a training ground in street violence, both were trained to fight by their fathers and both report having deliberately induced a lot of fear in others. However it would appear that for Adrian the process of personal transformation (Gondolf, 1987 - Level 3 of Moral Development) is less complete; the doubts about conventional masculine ways of operating and growing self awareness are there (as we saw in the section on ‘Ability to recreate’), but he’s yet to make his way through the jungle. He fears simply “letting someone know I’m vulnerable” and says this is the main reason why “I don’t communicate.” The image he projects as a man remains a source of confusion for him. He believes he continues to project his old tough bloke image which disconcerts him because this is the person he was, but with whom he no longer identifies;

“If we just had a light chat you could get the wrong impression...people get the wrong image of me.”

Rob is likewise engaged in a project of reinventing himself struggling with the same oppressions of dominant masculinities. Rob was in his early 20’s unlike our other respondents whose age was 35 to 55. In comparing Rob’s story with Adrian and Tom’s, I am reminded that these masculinities are not just an influence within a violent subculture, but rather a global expectation of all men in the culture regardless of their background. This assertion reflects a theme from feminist analysis discussed by Connell (1995, 41) that violent ways of being for men are not an aberration within the society but simply consistent with the reality of patriarchy. Rob’s struggle is different but still problematic because his self-image is “feminine” and “sensitive”(the opposite of Adrian’s self image). Rob’s work life is different, he has studied hospitality, and his family background is different with strong expectations that he will marry within his ethnic milieu. He says of his sensitive quality that at times “I hate it within myself” because “too much sensitivity

can hurt you.” Fortunately he does not go as far as Tom went, splitting from himself, rather, he defends his qualities, defiant and resisting in the face of the pressures of hegemonic masculinity - “if people don’t like the way I am then *bugger* ‘em.” Steve’s story also illustrates how transformation of masculinities ‘trickles’ upwards not just down through the generations. He reports that his (very traditional) father now accepts the idea of men performing non-traditional roles.

d. Meaning in Life - direction, vision, spirituality

As part of the ‘reflexive’ process of research with earlier data influencing themes to be explored in latter work, we introduced the “what’s it all about?” question for the last five interviews. This was because we began to wonder what role a sense of meaning in life might play for the men as a pathway of change towards non-violence. George never embraced responsibility for nurturing his family relationships, rather as part of the hegemonic masculinity project of excessive overwork typical of our respondents (see section on work) which dovetailed neatly with the capitalist project of over consumption, he expressed his meaning in life as a materialistic goal - “to a pay off my mortgage by the age of 36.” This is what he made sacred; this was thus the altar on which he sacrificed his family. In an expression of profound disillusionment, reflecting the patriarchal notion of ownership of wife and children, he groups his wife and relationship along with his other chattels, commodifying them by employing the commonly used commercial metaphor of the package deal. The attractiveness they had brings to mind the perfect family life image of a colour television finance advertisement. However it has all disintegrated, he states,

“The whole ‘package’ is shot to pieces...house, cars, wife, relationship.”

After the interview he invites me out to the car park to admire his newest car. Despite his reflections, the car - possibly the last part of the package he can possess in the light of imminent family breakdown - still seems to contain the promise of freedom. As mentioned in the section “Ability to recreate” he plans to just “drive” when his wife asks him to leave.

Mark falters at the 'meaning' question responding that he has "no idea." He is now "sort of driven by his family," which, like George, he is about to lose. He says that "never let a chance go by" has been his guiding philosophy, which we can see also informs his excessive overwork. George seems on the verge of entering Level 2 Behavioural Change or "Crisis" - Mark is already there.

In stark contrast Adrian, Hal and Tom (Level 3 Personal Transformation), all responded positively to the "What's it all about?" question as part of their forging a pathway of non-violent change.

For Adrian the question poses no problem - he is content to have come up with no answer. He says that "what's happening at the moment" is important. This view seems consistent with his self-taught (Buddhist?) style of meditation I discussed earlier - interestingly in the context of this discussion he refers to the role the anti-depressant Prozac played in ending his panic attacks which regularly inspired fear of illness and death.

For Hal taking responsibility itself is what life is all about (see 3rd point in next section "Work"), he has let go of his addiction to excessive overwork and material possessions (see 1st point in "Work" below). Subsequent to his father's death which forced him to "face my stuff", he developed his own philosophy. Happiness for him is three things - "Be happy with what you've got; happiness is under your nose; you have choices in life."

Tom was the only respondent who used the word "spirituality." He says being bankrupt of it helped him "go off the rails" into a culture of violence and drug abuse. He appears to have been influenced by the Alcoholics Anonymous spirituality. For him it is "not religion", it is "the good in someone", the "conscientious part of you", a "fellowship" based on thoughtfulness and acknowledging a "higher power type of thing." He reports having peace of mind now without drugs and alcohol - Adrian also said "I'm at peace now." As can be seen in the quote from Tom that begins this paper, dispensing with

dominant forms of masculinity has been integral to his pathway towards non-violence and developing meaning in life.

e. Work

Three themes emerged from the work and stress stories of our respondents:

- Men choosing excessive overwork by prioritising involvement with the over-consumption/production project of hegemonic masculinity above the project of connecting with, and being able to share power with, women and children.
- The oppressive nature of workplaces for working class men particularly in a climate of labour market deregulation.
- Men's bodies injured and broken on the twin altars of hegemonic masculinity and capitalism by their failure to take personal responsibility and/or their structural inability to make more responsible or healthy choices (also Connell, 1995, 36).

Julian starkly states how men's choice to prioritise involvement in the workplace can be directly connected to maintaining power over women- if more women worked,

“[they] would get together and hammer the nails in deeper.”

George and Mark both around the Crisis stage of disillusionment are experiencing periods of a complete halt from work and the tensions of being at home more with embittered partners. (Julian and George both report having used work to avoid family problems). Rather than take responsibility for his overwork of past years George prefers to blame his partner for not sharing the burden,

“I've had the misconception over the years that I had to earn the money... women don't know about the stresses of work, it's a burden that should be shared.”

However when his partner did work he saw it not as an opportunity for her but rather as a dint in his earning capacity; “I had a huge income – what she earned I'd lose” (i.e. the increased tax burden cancelled her additional earnings). Similar themes of resentment and blame characterise Mark - also yet to develop the empathy of Level 2 - whose partner is demanding he pull his weight at home now. He makes an odious comparison illustrating

how men can expect their wives to do for them what their mothers did; he complains; “*my* mother was a giver and a doer.”

In contrast Hal and Adrian have given up their alcoholism and the addiction to overwork by responsibly choosing to leave stressful workplaces. Adrian needs to remain a bit longer with his oppressive employer to qualify for a payout but unlike men at earlier change stages he is aware of the impact - “the family comes second at [employer].” His behaviour change process is playing a key role in helping him cope non-violently at work.

III CONCLUSIONS

1. Public Policy Implications

(1) The importance of *voluntary*, as opposed to mandated, men’s violence prevention programmes as facilitating leading edge, comprehensive and sustainable, non-violent social change for men. The importance of *long-term* safety for women and children - as opposed to very necessary but short term, punitive, criminal justice system based interventions.

(2) An approach to men’s family relationship issues (eg. family court child access and residency issues) founded on principles of responsibility and accountability - as opposed to men’s rights or ‘treating’ men separately from women - empowers men while at the same time empowering women.

(3) Responsibility (rather than rights) approaches also create potential for a constructive conception of men’s issues (eg. men’s health and men’s family relationships). Issues not as oppositional to women’s but as building alliances with women in questioning the role played by social structures of patriarchy and hegemonic masculinity in preventing women and men - as its’ primary victims - from experiencing peaceful lives.

(4) Education and Training courses that prepare community sector undergraduates to work with men seeking help, need to be informed by a gender aware empowerment approach that is based on responsibility and accountability to women.

2. Final Conclusion

In theorising the change process for men who use violence Gondolf employs the notion of moral development, Jenkins the notion of overcoming gender based restraints; this paper proposes we also conceive the process as one of recovery from hegemonic masculinity, a term developed by Connell. Men who work to develop relationships with women and children based on notions of accepting full responsibility and being accountable for behaviour, reinvent themselves via non-violent pathways of change. Each reflects a life affirming, non-violent paradigm of empowerment and connection with others (“power with”), and oneself (“power within”), as opposed to the disconnection of “power over” based on controlling others. In this process men reclaim their lives from hegemonic masculinity through which they define their sense of self (1) in opposition to women, (2) in terms of the capitalist project of over production/consumption. This project translated into; (1) abuse and neglect of women and children; (2) overwork and (3) meaning in life either ignored or defined by material goals. This way of being denied responsibility is not only for abusive behaviour, but also for being aware of one’s feelings and recreating oneself. In contrast men who had progressed towards responsibility redefined their masculinity, including, developing a life-affirming sense of meaning, reinventing their attitudes to women and their conception of work and developed the ability to recreate and to deal with their feelings. Finally the addiction to hegemonic masculinity for over-production/consumption emerged, pointing to the positive links between environmental sustainability and a future where men define themselves by peaceful relationships based on gender justice. I believe more research is needed to describe such relationships and how they are achieved.

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