

Subjective accounts of the turning points that facilitate desistance from intimate partner violence

Walker, K. , Bowen, E. , Brown, S.J. and Sleath, E.

Walker, K, Bowen, E, Brown, SJ & Sleath, E 2017, 'Subjective Accounts of The Turning Points that Facilitate Desistance from Intimate Partner Violence' *International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology*, vol 61, no. 4, pp. 371-396. DOI: [10.1177/0306624X15597493](https://doi.org/10.1177/0306624X15597493)

Publisher: Sage Journals

This is an Accepted Manuscript of an article published by Sage in International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology on 29th July 2015, available online: <http://www.tandfonline.com/10.1080/13552600.2015.1057243>

Copyright © and Moral Rights are retained by the author(s) and/ or other copyright owners. A copy can be downloaded for personal non-commercial research or study, without prior permission or charge. This item cannot be reproduced or quoted extensively from without first obtaining permission in writing from the copyright holder(s). The content must not be changed in any way or sold commercially in any format or medium without the formal permission of the copyright holders.

Pure is the Institutional Research Repository for Coventry University

Title: Subjective accounts of the turning points that trigger primary desistance from intimate partner violence

Kate Walker, Erica Bowen, Sarah Brown and Emma Sleath

Running title: Turning points for primary desistance from IPV

Abstract

The transition from persistence to desistance in male perpetrators of intimate partner violence (IPV) is an understudied phenomenon. This paper examines the factors that initiate and facilitate primary desistance from IPV. The narratives of 22 male perpetrators of IPV (13 desisters and nine persisters), seven female survivors and nine programme (IPV interventions) facilitators, in England were analysed using Thematic Analysis. In their accounts the participants described how the change from persister to desister did not happen as a result of discrete unique incidents, but instead occurred through a number of catalysts or stimuli of change. These triggers were experienced gradually and accumulated over time in number and in type. In particular, *Negative consequences of violence* and *Negative emotional responses* needed to accumulate so that the *Point of resolve: Autonomous decision to change* was finally realised. This process facilitated and initiated the path of change and thus primary desistance from IPV.

Keywords: Primary desistance; Intimate partner violence; Triggers; Turning points; Catalysts for change

Introduction

Desistance from crime (how persistent offenders become non-offenders) has been a long-term area of research interest within criminology (e.g., Giordano, Cernkovich, & Rudolph, 2002; Laub & Sampson, 2003; Maruna, 2001). Considerable attention has been given to identifying factors that may lead to desistance. The most widely identified factors or triggers include social factors such as marriage, employment, family formation and movement away from peer groups (e.g., Laub & Sampson, 2001; Savolainen, 2009; Theobald & Farrington, 2011), and subjective change in identity i.e., concepts of agency (Giordano et al., 2002; Maruna, 2001), all of which emerge during specific later developmental stages e.g., movement away from peers might happen in late adolescence whereas marriage, employment and identity change emerge in adulthood (Sampson & Laub, 1993). The relationship between social factors and subjective change is unclear as debate continues as to whether social factors precede subjective (agentic) change (LeBel, Burnett, Maruna, & Bushway, 2008) or vice versa (Laub & Sampson, 2003). While Bandura (2006) proposed that agency plays an important role in relation to self-change he also placed the emphasis on this interplay between an individual and their environment. He proposed that the core features of agency include intentionality, forethought, self-reactiveness and self-reflectiveness; this last component comprising self-efficacy (Bandura, 2001). Self-efficacy and how individuals develop a sense of control over their lives has been found in the accounts of offenders in their narratives of change (Maruna, 2001). Bandura (2006) therefore proposes that self-efficacy and changes in cognition about beliefs and the self, can in part explain how individuals actually optimally experience and respond to certain events (or potential triggers) which is a concept that can be theoretically linked to the process of desistance across the life-course (Laub & Sampson, 2003). It is therefore the case that generally there is a consensus that social *and* subjective changes are involved in the process of desistance (Healy, 2010; Simons & Barr, 2014).

Typically, researchers have examined desistance from general criminal offending, e.g., delinquency and antisocial behaviour. Shover (1985, 1986) was one of the first in criminological enquiry to outline the process of desistance using in-depth interviews. In his accounts, he contended

that changes in offending were linked to age and included the development of a new perspective of the self, change in aspiration and goals and the establishment of social bonds and ties to another person (e.g., wife) or an activity (e.g., good job). Shover (1996) concluded that there were two aspects that significantly influenced criminal careers and desistance: (i) the development of conventional social bonds, activities and rewards; and (ii) strengthened resolve and determination to abandon crime (p. 124). Such a work gives a detailed insight in to the process of desistance but the interviews were predominantly with non-violent offenders. It remains that case that comparatively little attention has been paid to the factors that lead an individual to stop using violence against an intimate partner. Consequently, the aim of the present study is to also use in-depth interviews and examine the factors that initiate and facilitate desistance from intimate partner violence (IPV), as detailed by male perpetrators of IPV, female survivors of violent relationships and programme (IPV interventions) facilitators.

Although men can and do stop using violence in their intimate relationships (Whitaker, Le, & Niolon, 2010; Wooldredge & Thistlethwaite, 2006), no one single theory or model has been developed to explain why and how this process occurs (for a review see Authors, 2013). In studying desistance from IPV, researchers have not utilised existing explanatory frameworks on desistance from general offending, e.g., propensity of an individual to commit a criminal act (e.g., Gottfredson & Hirschi, 1990; Piquero, Moffitt, & Wright, 2007), or informal social control (e.g., Laub & Sampson, 2001; Loeber, Pardini, Stouthamer-Loeber, & Raine, 2007). In particular, no studies have been published concerning the relevance of turning points i.e., consequential shifts that redirect a process (Abbott, 1997 p.101), or the triggers that facilitate the desistance process for those using IPV.

The aim of the current research is to examine how individuals navigate the initial transition towards 'primary desistance' (i.e., one year offence free), a state that is distinguishable from longer-term 'secondary desistance' (Maruna, Immarigeon, & LeBel, 2004). Such a distinction has been made as it is generally agreed that desistance is not simply 'termination', or the point at which criminal activity has ceased, but the causal process that leads ultimately to the termination of offending.

'Primary desistance' comprises crime free gaps or apparent interludes in the course of a criminal career and is more of a temporary state, whereas 'real/secondary desistance' signifies a long-term shift in behaviour and attitudes that culminates in non-offending, where existing roles become disrupted and an identifiable and measurable change in personal identity is seen (Gadd, 2006; Maruna, Lebel, Mitchell, & Naples, 2004). Such a transition is perhaps consistent with the wider literature on change in social and health behaviours and theoretical frameworks such as the Transtheoretical Model (TTM) of behaviour change (Prochaska, 1979; Prochaska & DiClemente 1983; Prochaska, DiClemente, & Norcross, 1992). The TTM proposes that individuals move through six stages of change that prepare them for and assist them in maintaining behaviour change. This integrates well desistance, which is generally deemed to be a process that includes transitions from offending, to primary and then secondary long-term and permanent desistance. Although, there may be more theoretical interest in secondary desistance (Maruna et al., 2004), King (2013) proposed that primary desistance should be seen as a 'transitional phase' between offending and crime cessation (as opposed to a lull in offending), which is a necessary condition for secondary desistance. Consequently, understanding primary desistance provides a valuable insight as to how this transition is initiated.

There is no published research to date that has specifically examined the factors that trigger desistance from IPV, although three studies, two from the US (Haggård, Gumpert, & Grann, 2001; Pandya & Gringerich, 2002; Silvergleid & Mankowski, 2006) and one from Sweden (Haggård, Gumpert, & Grann, 2001) examine data relevant to the process of change. Pandya and Gringerich (2002) in their microethnographic study examined the process of change (during 12 weekly, two-hour therapy sessions), for six male IPV perpetrators (three treatment completers and three drop-outs). The completers identified that the consequences of their violent behaviour (e.g., being arrested, breaking up the family) initiated change, whereas the dropouts felt that violence met their emotional needs, with anger often experienced as a positive emotion. Silvergleid and Mankowski (2006) examined what facilitated change in those who successfully completed treatment programmes by interviewing both the completers and the facilitators of the programmes. They suggested that it was important to include

multiple perspectives of the process of change, as it is commonly agreed that IPV men are open to denial and minimisation of their behaviours. They argued that multiple perspectives represent a more valid and reliable source of information and as such this practice informed the methodology in the current paper. Their study found that change was facilitated by the men at different levels: individual (e.g., self-awareness and decision to change), community (e.g., fear of losing partner, involvement in criminal justice system), organisational (e.g., treatment group facilitators' influence) and group level (e.g., impact of other men attending treatment). Unfortunately, neither of these studies explicitly stated whether and for how long violence had actually ceased.

Haggård et al. (2001) identified some triggers and turning points associated with desistance in relation to violent behaviours, although their sample was not specifically IPV offenders, but four high-risk violent offenders who had not been reconvicted during the past ten years. They found that shocking experiences (turning points), e.g., being traumatised by experiences in forensic psychiatric hospital and being arrested, triggered and accelerated desistance. Thus, desistance was triggered by strong negative experiences related to the individuals' offending, i.e., the costs of offending outweighed the benefits of it (Haggård et al., 2001) as it was seen that individuals weighed up the pros and cons of changing their violent behaviour. This exemplifies the Decisional Balance construct (Janis & Mann, 1977), which is presented as a schema that represents both the cognitive and motivational aspects of human decision making whereby individuals assess competing consequences that they evaluate as comparative gains (benefits) and losses (costs).

It is therefore the case that to date, researchers have not investigated if there are certain turning points or events that trigger changes in the life course of male offenders of IPV that in turn constitutes a change in their individual offending. Such an insight is of relevance to practitioners as this information could be used to inform criminal justice interventions (e.g., arrests and law enforcement interventions) and IPV treatment, in relation to what needs to be targeted or in place to enable the process of or speed up the process of desistance. Researchers have examined the effectiveness of treatment and if it leads to desistance but tend to report that it has minimal impact (if any at all) on

recidivism (Babcock, Green, & Robie, 2004; Feder & Wilson, 2005). , In their meta-analysis Babcock et al. (2004) examined treatment efficacy based on 22 studies and found that treatment design tended to have a small influence on effect size, and that overall effects due to treatment were in the small range. They concluded that the interventions were having a minimal impact on recidivism beyond the effect of being arrested. An exception to this finding identified by Murphy and Tring (2010) is that interventions that include the integration of substance use treatment and supportive interventions that enhance attendance and motivation are found to be more favourable in reducing IPV relative to treatment-as-usual controls. Such inconsistencies regarding treatment suggests there is a need to understand if there are other factors that are relevant when treating IPV offenders. However, it still remains, important to understand how turning points, in different contexts of different types of offending can facilitate other changes that become central for the process of desistance to be initiated (Carlson & Rose, 2012) and to use such information when treating IPV men. Turning points such as marriage, parenthood, and employment are important as they have been seen to act as a deflection in the trajectory or pathway of development over the lifespan (Sampson & Laub, 2005). Göbbels et al. (2012) extended the concept of turning points, referring to them as decisive momentum. They proposed that this term momentum is used to signify that desistance is a process that involves a redirection of activities and they argued that their concept is less static than the conceptualisation of turning points as proposed by other researchers (e.g., Laub & Sampson, 2003). Despite the presence of opportunities to change, the offender needs to actively take advantage of these opportunities to facilitate change, so capitalising on decisive momentum is only possible when a person is open to change (Göbbels et al., 2012).

Carlsson (2012:8) suggested that in order to understand the process of change, the concept of turning points is useful as it focuses on the events, stages and processes wherein changes emerge. As this is currently unknown in relation to desistance from IPV, data are gathered from multiple perspectives using a qualitative approach, from individuals identified as desisters, as persisters, as well as IPV survivors, and programme facilitators. The aims of the research are to specifically understand:

(i) the triggers and transitions that are evident for those who have achieved successful primary desistance from IPV; (ii) how such experiences facilitate primary desistance from IPV; and, (iii) how these experiences differ for desisters and persisters.

Method

Design

A qualitative approach was used in order to develop a conceptual model of the process of desistance that encapsulates what the circumstances were like when the men were using violence, what initiated the process of change, and what was different when the men stopped using violence (for an overview of the whole model see Authors, in press).

Participants

A convenience sample of 38 participants was recruited for the study. Thirteen male desisters ($M_{age} = 38.0$ years, $SD = 10.3$), nine male persisters ($M_{age} = 36.0$ years, $SD = 10.3$), seven female survivors ($M_{age} = 49.14$ years, $SD = 7.19$), and nine (five female and four male) Offender Managers / Programme Tutors (to be referred to collectively as facilitators; $M_{age} = 43.7$ years, $SD = 9.1$) were interviewed. The sample was predominantly White British (92.1%). Participants were recruited from community rehabilitation programmes in England to which the men were court-mandated through probation to attend treatment ($n = 10$), or had self-referred ($n = 12$). Persisters were attending ($n = 7$) or waiting to attend ($n = 2$) these programmes. Desisters were coming to the end of treatment ($n = 9$) or had completed treatment ($n = 4$). The facilitators were also recruited through these organisations, as were survivors who were identified through women support workers.

The Revised Conflict Tactic Scale (Straus et al., 1996) was used to identify men who had used violence in their relationships based on their use of physical violence in their lifetime and the past year. Desisters were primary desisters, categorised by their use of physical violence in their lifetime but not in the past year. To promote external validity of desistance file notes held by the treatment providers were also cross-checked for any police and/or victim reports of violence in the previous year. Persisters were categorised on the basis that they were still using physical violence in their relationships. The

survivors were all females who had previously experienced physical IPV from their male partners (three previously left relationships due to the continuation of physical IPV; four remained in the relationships, with the partners meeting the criteria for desisters). When presenting quotes to identify which group each individual comes from, the following codes are used: S for survivor, D for desister, P for persister, and F for facilitator.

Data Collection

Ethical approval was obtained from the University's Research Ethics Committee and the National Offender Management Service. All participants were interviewed on a one-to-one basis in a private room. For the offenders and facilitators this was completed at the location where they attended or delivered treatment programmes. The survivors were interviewed in their homes. Semi-structured interviews were undertaken using questions developed by the authors to maintain uniformity across all participants. However, the interviews followed slightly different formats dependent on the type of interviewee (i.e., desister, persister, survivor, or facilitator). The structure of the interviews for the IPV men included background information and details of the use of violence within relationships and any changes in their use of violence. The survivors and facilitators were asked about their backgrounds regarding either working with offenders, or their experiences as survivors of IPV, and their views on the process of change in perpetrators. As desistance is generally seen as a process and not a static point in time (Maruna, 2001), the questions focused on determining a timeline of events that included discussing the circumstances around the use/experience of violence, attempts to stop using violence and importantly for this paper, what triggered this change.

Data Analysis

Thematic analysis (TA; Attride-Stirling, 2001) was used to analyse the data as it is a flexible approach that can be applied across a range of theoretical and epistemological approaches (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The analysis involved understanding both the role of individuals in constituting the social world in relation to IPV and the independent mechanisms that may also form part of the process, meaning that critical realism was the epistemological position taken.

All of the interviews were transcribed manually and verbatim. Braun and Clarke's (2006) process of TA was followed and thematic networks that summarised the main themes found in the data set were developed. These themes were analysed through organisation and description, as well as by interpretation of the various aspects of the research topic under investigation (Boyatzis, 1998). Networks were built from three classes of themes: (i) basic themes that are the lowest order of theme derived for the textual data; (ii) organising themes that are middle-order themes and are represented by basic themes; and, (iii) global themes which are super-ordinate themes that encapsulate the principal concept in the data as a whole. To support the themes that were generated, a balanced presentation of the experiences of those interviewed was utilised to promote trustworthiness of the data (Silverman, 2000) and direct quotes were captured to promote verifiability (Murphy & Meyer, 1994).

Shenton's (2004) guidelines were followed to remove potential biases, to promote the credibility and confirmability of the research, and to ensure the findings were the result of the experiences of the participants. Firstly, the methodology and procedures employed were based on those used successfully in previous projects. Secondly, a colleague unfamiliar with the topic area verified that the questions were easily understandable, not leading, and consistent with the research objectives. Thirdly, detailed memos and extensive records were kept in each stage of the analysis to ensure that the findings were data-orientated and to demonstrate transparency regarding the development of the themes. Fourthly, systematic checks were also undertaken to ensure that the findings were clearly supported by the data, and therefore represented the participants' experiences. Finally, two independent researchers were asked to examine and verify the analysis undertaken and the conclusions drawn.

Results and Discussion

A conceptual model (see Authors, in press) was developed that was in-line with current thinking that desistance is a dynamic process that gradually unfolds overtime (e.g., Maruna & Roy, 2007). The model comprised three main elements: (i) Lifestyle behaviours (violent): 'Old way of being'; (ii) Catalysts for change and, (iii) Lifestyle behaviours (non-violent): 'New way of being.'

An important part of the process of desistance is the bridge between persistence and desistance, i.e., experiencing *Catalysts for change*, and consists of the triggers and transitions that activate change (see Figure 1 for the structure of this theme and its associated subthemes). Catalysts for change is constructed of three organising themes, *Negative consequences of violence*, *Negative emotional responses*, and *Point of resolve: Autonomous decision to change*.

[Figure 1 here]

Catalyst for Change

The themes (or triggers) were not described by participants as discrete unique incidents associated with a transition from persistence to desistance from IPV. As such these incidents were identified as being catalysts or stimuli of change. The participants explained that certain triggers were experienced, but gradually and more importantly they accumulated over time in number and in types experienced. Accumulation was found to be more likely to be associated with the initiation of desistance when the *Point of resolve: Autonomous decision to change* was realised. As part of this process the participants described that they were exposed to and experienced, several *Negative consequences of violence* and *Negative emotional responses*. It was not simply the presence of these factors that was relevant in relation to the process of change, but their combination with the realisation that something had to change. These factors were identified as being important based on the subjective accounts of the participants and therefore developed into individual but intrinsically linked themes.

The *Point of resolve: Autonomous decision to change* is where individuals talked about taking responsibility and ownership for their behaviours and at the very least, admit the need to change. The desisters in their narratives expressed that they experienced far more *Negative consequences of violence* than the persisters. What is even more notable is that all of the desisters described how they experienced the *Point of resolve: Autonomous decision to change* but only three of the persisters did. This suggests this resolve and decision to change is a crucial part of the transitional process of desistance. The point of autonomous resolve may be where the individuals' values and belief systems start to change and in doing so, desistance is more likely to be achieved. It was apparent that the

triggers were associated with changes in individuals' attitudes and beliefs and that this may have encouraged changes in offending. However, the males described that they may have reached a point of realisation, because they experienced punishment in the form of *Negative consequences of violence* and *Negative emotional responses*. The impact of this could be understood from operant conditioning perspective (Skinner, 1974), whereby the lack of perceived benefits from using IPV and the experience of negative outcomes discouraged them from using IPV (see also Decisional Balance construct; Janis & Mann, 1977).

The themes, based on subjective accounts, that represent the triggers and transitions, demonstrate that the initiation of desistance involves an interaction between structure (life-course events) and agency (individuals' choices, motivations, values, and beliefs). This interaction was described as being fundamental to the process that initiated the move from persistence to desistance. Vaughan (2007) proposed that when the structural account of desistance is taken in isolation, the process is seen as passive, e.g., suggesting social influences such as employment can exert change with little participation from the individual. However, this emphasis on the role of structure neglects the involvement of the individual in the occurrence of life events (LeBel et al., 2008), and suggests that individuals are wholly constrained by structural forces. More recent accounts of desistance have championed the roles of both structure and agency in the process (Bottoms, Shapland, Costello, Holmes, & Muir, 2004; Farrall, Sharpe, Hunter, & Calverley, 2011). This was observed in explanations on the current study where in order for structural factors (e.g., *Negative consequences of violence*) to influence change, the men needed to regard them as personal concerns and see them as positive developments and available for realisation (active role of agency).

In this preliminary qualitative study, IPV males offered a series of accounts that described what led to their decisions to desist or persist in their use of IPV. In addition to this survivors and facilitators accounts were included based on their experiences as a partner or treatment provider. Due to the nature of the research and the sample size involved the triggers and transitions found in the themes, should not be seen having a cause-effect relationship with desistance; however, they offer an insight into

factors associated with the transition from persistence to desistance based on subjective accounts from multiple perspectives. Among the themes found in the accounts the following observations were made regarding the relevance of triggers and transitions in the move towards primary desistance from IPV.

Negative Consequences of Violence

This contained four basic themes that captured the negative consequences that happened following violence that were described as being catalysts for change. The basic themes were: *Impact on family*, *Criminal Justice involvement*, *Shock following extreme violence*, and *End of relationship*. These themes symbolise the turning points, i.e., events, situations, or incidents that occurred and progressively activated the men's thought processes towards recognising the need to change. Certain turning points or triggers have been closely linked to desistance in the general offending literature (Sampson & Laub, 2005; Savolainen, 2009; Uggen, 2000). Factors including marriage/spouses, disintegration of peer groups and neighbourhood change create a new situation that can trigger desistance (Laub & Sampson, 2003). However, this does suggest that desistance is a static process initiated following a one-off event, e.g., marriage. Other scholars (e.g., Farrall, Bottoms, & Shapland, 2010; Maruna, 2001) suggest that such turning points mean individuals can knife off 'the past from the present' i.e., they explicitly remove past options and withdraw from environments conducive with their offending (Maruna and Roy, 2007) which is more aligned to desistance as a process.

In the present study the men described that they experienced an accumulation of several external triggers (opposed to a simple static one-off event), as a consequence of their use of violence that was associated with the initiation of desistance. These subjective accounts regarding the triggers suggested that these were not general social controls (e.g., marriage) but context-dependent external factors (e.g., impact on family, end of relationship) that accumulated through the on-going use of violence. These turning points in isolation did not facilitate desistance, as both the desisters and persisters experienced elements of them, although the desisters experienced more negative consequences than the persisters. Such a proposal is aligned with work by Maruna and Roy (2007) who have examined the role of turning points in relation to knifing off. They suggest that turning

points create situations that give individuals the opportunity to desist, but that this needs to be accompanied with the provision of 'new scripts' for future identity development (Maruna and Roy, 2007 p. 119) i.e., that it involves agentic and subjective change. Turning points therefore need to be accompanied by other process and factors. This is also aligned with the concept of decisive momentum (Göbbels et al., 2012) where it is proposed that turning points can stimulate change but only when that person is ready, and dependent on the surrounding social context and individual features of the person, and the interaction of those factors (Carlsson, 2012).

Impact on family. Based on the accounts from the participants the *Negative consequences of violence* and therefore the *Catalysts for change* relate simply to the men's realisation about the impact their IPV had on either their children or partners, and the bearing this had on their family units. It is therefore not the impact of marriage and parenthood per se that triggers desistance but a realisation of the effects of violence on family members. Sivergleid and Mankowski (2006) found that fear of losing partners and children, and criminal justice involvement facilitated a movement towards non-abusive behaviours. The importance of children and family is not a new concept in the general delinquency literature, although this refers more to the event of marriage and becoming a father. In the current data set both persisters and desisters talked about the influence of children and family, but it appears that it is the context that is important, as opposed to static events (e.g., getting married). Furthermore, the incidents build over time and needed to be meaningful to the individual to engender change and so are not simply passive events that happen to individuals.

Across the accounts and particularly those of the desisters, the participants discussed and described how they felt that understanding the impact that their behaviour had on children and partners initiated and facilitated the process of change. In the following account from this facilitator, the impact of a child potentially witnessing violence is identified as important.

F2: How do they stop ...it probably helps if there is a biological child...because they don't want the child to witness or to act like that.

Similarly, this was explained succinctly by one of the desisters when during an episode of violence:

D1: It's just I remember seeing my daughter and that's what triggered the, this is not acceptable any more.

Of particular importance for the men was the potential of loss of their children and families, which acted as a trigger for change. This factor seems to instigate the awareness that a different lifestyle was needed. As can be seen in the following quote from one of the desisters, he describes how following his use of violence he starts to map out the potential unfavourable consequences. The thought of losing his son and family had the greatest impact and therefore initiated him thinking he needed to take steps towards changing.

D5: It's the thought of it when I actually slapped *****(wife).....I was don't let them take my son, don't let them take my son, don't let them take my son...And the thought of losing family first and foremost ran through my mind. Then you think I've got to do whatever I can to secure my family.

Giordano et al. (2002) identify 'hooks for change' that include marriage and parenthood, which are seen to be relevant in the process of desistance. However, they also emphasise the 'up front' work that needs to accompany these triggers. The authors suggest that influences such as partners and children will only be effective as catalysts for lasting change, when they are accompanied with fundamental shifts in identity and cognitive transformations which enable individuals to envisage the replacement self e.g., as a 'good' father and/or partner.

Criminal justice involvement. This theme represented aspects of the criminal justice process, or external structures, which were associated with initiating change. Participants described how certain events related to criminal justice e.g., arrests, court, police, and probation, acted as a catalyst to make individuals start thinking that they needed to change. Such events in isolation are not enough to guarantee desistance (Maruna, 2001) but in the current study they were described as being part of the process associated with starting the process of desistance. For example based on the accounts of a facilitator and a survivor:

F4: So the Court event mainly is the trigger that brings it to light, brings the reality to people that they can't go on like this.

S3: The fact he was taken in to probation was a key trigger for him changing his behaviour.

The men also talked about the influence of criminal justice processes, but this was more prominent in the desisters' accounts than in those of the persisters. The key trigger for this desister was the fear that their violence could result in re-arrest.

D6: And like I said it was the fear of getting arrested that stopped me from hitting her.

This trigger manifested as an awareness in the men that if they continued to use violence they could end up in prison. This encouraged the men to stop using violence for reasons of self-interest. Some of the men were driven by negative reinforcement, not positive reinforcement (Bandura, 1986); i.e., change was initiated in order to avoid prison and it was not motivated by desires to have violent free relationships. This was seen in the preceding quote where the trigger is described as being a fear of arrest (i.e., problematic for the perpetrator) and not the act of hitting an intimate partner. This would suggest that for part of the process, the men's focus needed to be placed on 'the self' and avoiding unpleasant outcomes, which provided a strong motivation for change. This negative reinforcement is seen in this desister's account.

D9: But I suddenly realised at that point you know, I was thinking I'm going to jail. I've messed everything up.....I mean sat in the cells I was scared to death of being sent to prison you know.

For some men, the specific *Criminal justice involvement* of probation was enforced, i.e., they were court-mandated to treatment and not voluntarily self-referred, and so some of the participants talked about the fact they only attended treatment because they had to and explained that felt this was a trigger that was leading them to address their violence. However, it was only the persisters who identified this as a trigger, which suggests that this factor alone is not necessarily strong enough to facilitate change from a violent pathway. It may be that the trigger was there but the desire and want to change (or readiness) was not, both being required for desistance (Göbbels et al., 2012). Likewise as Maruna and Roy (2007) identified this type of trigger creates a situation for individuals to desist but needs to be accompanied with the provision of new scripts for future identity development (p. 119)

Shock following extreme violence. The shock experienced by the perpetrators when they committed severe violence was described across the participants as a trigger. From the accounts of the

perpetrators and survivors specific incidents of violence were discussed, which due to their severity acted to drive the realisation that change is needed. As one of the survivors recalled:

S3: I think he [*partner*] didn't realise he was capable of doing what he did [*beat her up badly*]...he needed a wakeup call.

Simply put by one of the desisters:

D8: So the one incident that really went over the top was the one that made me go, do you know what, I've got this so wrong.

The men needed this shock to activate an internal reaction towards their behaviours. One of the facilitators noted:

F3: But hmm they see the damage they've done, or they've seen the look on her face you know, when she was being choked and that and it scares them.

Such findings are similar to those of Haggård et al. (2001) who observed that extreme shock following the use of severe violence the process of desistance was triggered in high-risk chronic violent offenders. Furthermore, Sommers et al. (1994) suggested that a shock or crisis triggers the decision to change as individuals hit rock bottom, and realise that objective and subjective changes are required. In the current data it seemed that 'rock bottom' (e.e, seen from D8 above) was experienced when extreme violence was used.

Permanently end relationship. This consequence is a different trigger for change to the other ones identified, in that this does initiate desistance immediately but only within a particular relationship at a particular time. The desisters, persisters and survivors described how through the termination of their relationships the violence ended with *that* partner at that point in time. This might relate to opportunity, as reducing the opportunity for violence has been associated with desistance from IPV (Wooldredge & Thistlethwaite, 2006). In the quote that follows, the desister identifies that it was purely separation and not being in a certain situation reduced the opportunity for violence to occur.

D1: The situation needs to change and I think in separating from ****(wife)* obviously helped But in ending this, in leaving the situation I was in made it easier for me to get rid of that part of, side of my personality.

For two of the desisters, being violence-free continued across other following relationships. This is consistent with research by Whitaker et al. (2010) who found that IPV did not always occur across relationships as a high percentage of men (70%) successfully maintained a violence free relationship with a new partner following a violent relationship with a previous partner; a facilitator also observed this:

F2: A lot of the men say that it's a change of relationship and the fact that they are out of that relationship means that they are no longer abusive and their current relationship is perfect.

However, for others this is not a strong enough trigger to stop the violence permanently across relationships, as for this to happen other influences are required. An example of this is seen with one of the persisters whose violence ended with his first wife only because they separated. However, this man was violent again in his next serious relationship. Whitaker et al. (2010) observed that 30% were violent across more than one relationship. Although it is not possible to determine a percentage of men for which this is true in the current study, persistence and desistance of violence across relationships is likely to be different for each man (Whitaker et al. 2010), which emphasises the importance and relevance of the dyadic context in the process of desistance.

Across all the accounts it was described how the males experienced an accumulation of different triggers to initiate desistance. The triggers identified were all differed in nature and number but they seemed to gain momentum over time, and this increased momentum instigated at the very least the realisation that changes were needed. One of the desisters specifically talked about this accumulation.

D6: Yeah. So there wasn't one big shocking event that you suddenly thought, right I need to change. It was kind of a process of the police were involved, probation were involved, girlfriend saying you should be something about it, IDAP come along. So it was kind of all of those things that.

Negative Emotional Responses

Negative emotional responses felt by the men as a consequence of their violent behaviours were clearly identified and described as being catalysts for change. Again, it was a process of

accumulation that assisted the men to move to non-violent lifestyles of behaviours. The basic themes *Guilt, Shame and Fear* represent the three negative emotional responses found most widely within the data and these emotions arose as a response to the *Negative consequences of violence*. Desistance was only initiated following an interaction between the external structural factors (*Negative consequences of violence*) and agency (internal *Negative emotional responses*). The *Negative emotional responses* should not be considered in isolation. They appeared to increase in intensity over time until their presence reached a threshold at which point they began to act as a form of psychological punishment. This served as a deterrent and became part of the intrinsic motivation to change.

Guilt. This is an emotion that was seen in both the desisters and the persisters. Guilt needs to be activated by an event or situation (Olthof, Schouten, Kuiper, Stegge, & Jennekens-Schinkel, 2000) and this was described in the current study as an acknowledgement that harm has actually been caused. The differentiating factor seems to be that for the persisters (as see in the following excerpt) this acknowledgement and negative emotional response was short lived.

I: How did you feel after the incident where you punched her in the face

P2: Really guilty. Incredibly guilty straightaway. Like a mille second after I did it.....Well I felt guilty...well for a couple of weeks.

The above account is representative of the persisters in that they described and acknowledged guilt but in terms of a passing emotion that they felt (with no reference of harm to others) that was not strong enough to stop them using violence again. For the desisters, in their accounts they suggested the guilt was more entrenched. This may be because the desisters were exposed to more negative consequences to violence than the persisters. This may strengthen and extend the guilt felt, both in terms of the depth of feeling and the number of times it was experienced. One of the desisters described himself as 'guilt ridden' [D1], whilst another commented that there was always 'more and more guilt' [D4]. Another desister explained that he had felt guilt when using violence and that this reached a point after a particularly violent incident where he felt 'significantly different from a guilt point of view' [D12]. This finally triggered his move on to a non-violent pathway. This links to the trigger *Shock following extreme violence*, and shows how these themes are all intrinsically linked.

Certain triggers were associated with activating guilt and and this then was described as initiating change. For example in this desister's account he talks about the guilt he feels, the harm his actions caused and how this activated a decision to change.

D8: I felt, guilt, more guilt I felt the worst I've ever felt in my life..... for the harm what I did to her how she must have felt it's bad so bad....Which was then the driver for, I've got to fix this.

There is common agreement that a certain level of guilt (and shame) can be an adaptive emotion that is orientated towards prosocial behaviour (Aksan & Kochanska, 2005; Hoffman, 2000; Tangney, Wagner, Fletcher, & Gramszow, 1992), e.g. when it motivates the individual to be concerned with others (Lindsay-Hartz, De Rivera, & Mascolo, 1995). As seen in the example above from D8, desisters not only experienced feeling exceptionally guilty they also experienced this 'concern' for others (for the harm done) from their guilt, which then initiated desistance. The persisters seemed to concentrate on feeling guilty about the fact they had used violence and about the act itself and how that made them feel as opposed to the repercussions for their partners and how they might have felt following violence.

Shame. Shame has been identified as being part of the process for moving away from offending (e.g., Braithwaite, 1989; Giordano et al., 2002; LeBel et al., 2008; Leibrich, 1996). This is different to guilt, where the men focused on their behaviours, because in this theme the focus is on the self. The survivors and facilitators alike all referred directly in their accounts to the fact that their partners or the men they treat were deeply 'ashamed' of their behaviours. A typical example of this is seen firstly from this survivor and secondly from a facilitator.

S1: He's very ashamed of himself and he's ashamed in front of his family.

F4: A lot of men come to us [self-referred treatment] because they are ashamed.

However, what is interesting about this theme is that majority of the desisters talked about the influence of shame in relation to IPV, but none of the persisters did. Shame appeared to be a deeply embedded feeling. From the data it appears that guilt needs to intensify and that shame also needs to be experienced in order to initiate change. When describing their shame, for the desisters there is a sense

of this being something that will stay with them and not something that can be forgotten. Some of the examples of shame given from the desisters include:

D5: After that I felt disgusted with myself. Through actually hitting someone let alone a woman, you know made me feel ill really. And that's something that I've got to deal with for the rest of my life.

D12: The shame actually, to be honest I just, I didn't know where to hide me, put me face... even now I don't know where to put me face.

There are differences in how individuals manage shame, either by shame displacement or shame acknowledgement (Ahmed, 2001; Braithwaite, Ahmed, Morrison, & Reinhart, 2003). Shame acknowledgement is the admission and recognition of wrong and involves expressing remorse, as evidenced by the desisters and was linked to the cessation of violence. However, displacement involves blaming others and expressing anger towards them, and the persisters evidenced this. It has been suggested that shame proneness and aggression is mediated by externalisation of blame (Bennett, Sullivan, & Lewis, 2005). The acknowledgment of shame means that individuals take personal responsibility and will refrain from further wrongdoing, whereas purely dismissing shame (and therefore not experiencing it) by blaming others will initiate further wrongdoing (Ahmed, 2001; Ahmed & Braithwaite, 2006; Braithwaite et al., 2003).

From these data it would appear that this movement along a continuum from guilt to shame acknowledgement is required in order to activate change and initiate desistance. For some, guilt initiates desistance when the focus is on the behaviour (Olthof et al., 2000). For others, guilt can be managed and avoided by simply not acknowledging the behaviours used and the harm done. With shame the focus is on a global negative evaluation of the self rather than on the behaviour (Proeve & Howells, 2002) and needs to be acknowledged and not displaced. If guilt and shame (acknowledgement) are both experienced, negative emotional responses are more likely to act as triggers for desistance. This was seen in the accounts in that although both desisters and persisters described how they experienced guilt, this was not enough on its own to be associated with desistance as shame was identified by the desisters as a factor associated with their cessation of violence, but it was not mentioned by the persisters.

Fear. Only one survivor talked about her partner being fearful of the consequences that might happen if he used violence, e.g., arrest. Three of the facilitators identified fear as a potential trigger to change, with one suggesting the men may become fearful of their own behaviours.

F3: It frightens them [*offenders*]. A lot of men are frightened by their behaviour...afterwards they will be frightened by their own aggression and want to change this.

This theme was predominant for the desisters in comparison with the persisters. Throughout their accounts the desisters specifically talked about fear, being frightened, having dread and anxiety in relation to the consequences of using violence. As one of the desisters commented:

D13: I was disgusted with myself... I was frightened of the implications of what I'd done.

This theme demonstrates the inextricable link between *Negative consequences of violence* and *Negative emotional responses* as several environmental and situational triggers were seen to generate an emotional response of fear. Fear is particularly aligned with deterrence theory, which assumes offending is inversely proportional to the swiftness, certainty and severity of punishment (Polinsky & Shavell, 2000). In the current study when frequency and severity of violence and contact with Criminal Justice agencies increased over time, the levels of fear felt by the men increased, which then became a deterrent (as certainty and severity of punishment increased) that initiated the desistance process.

Point of Resolve: Autonomous Decision to Change

This organising theme is a concept in its own right (i.e., has no associated basic themes) and it represents the intrinsic triggers within the men themselves that stimulated the recognition that change was required. This was not a spontaneous event, but a result of experiencing the *Negative consequences of violence* and *Negative emotional responses* that concurrently occurred. Prior to the accumulation point of the identified catalysts for change, the men did not acknowledge their behaviours needed to change. In the context of the Transtheoretical Model (TTM) of change (Prochaska & DiClemente, 1984), the men at this point were experiencing the first stage of the process of change, precontemplation, where the behaviour is denied or minimised. However at the point of resolve, the men seemed to experience two other stages in the TTM, contemplation and preparation. This was shown through how they acknowledged their behaviours as abusive and wrong and

established commitments to change and is indicative of cognitive changes or changes on the way they are thinking. Similarly Giordano et al. (2002) in their theory of cognitive transformation suggested the desistance process involved four factors: (i) general cognitive openness to change; (ii) exposure and reaction to hooks for change; (iii) envisioning of conventional replacement self; and (iv) transformation in way actor views deviant behaviour. The first two of these involves an awareness and willingness of the individuals that change is both desirable and needed. All of the desisters (and several of the facilitators) referred to an awareness, desire and willingness to change, but only three of the persisters seem to have experienced this part of the process, meaning that they might have been starting a move towards desistance.

The point of resolve emerged as the end point after the cumulative impact of the consequences of their behaviours and therefore individuals needed to be agents of their own change within the structural and external factor that they were experiencing. In the following excerpt this desister talks about an episode of violence witnessed by his daughter, which importantly triggers an awareness and desire to change.

D1: It's just I remember seeing my daughter and that's what triggered this is not acceptable anymore....I need to, have to, no want to change this, this is not right.

The general essence of this theme is that the men cannot 'go on like this'. The men seemed to admit to themselves that they had a problem that needed addressing and looked for help. This is therefore more of a subjective turning point in that part of the process now includes changes in thinking and the construction of their lives (Maruna and Roy, 2007). Several of the men referred in their accounts to the fact that they were making a 'conscious choice'. The desisters, described how it was agentic choices that were being made in that the structural forces around them had facilitated reorientation of the self (Giordano et al. 2002), as far as they realised they needed to change (i.e., needed a replacement self) although had not at this point defined what the replacement self should exactly be like. Some examples from the desisters accounts include:

D4: I was on the verge of insanity really, I was angry all the time and ...I just thought I can't go on like this anymore.....and I had to go there (*to treatment*) because I was afraid and I needed to get it sorted out....it was all from within me.

D8: So I came to the group because I got to a point where I made a decision to do something. Nobody, I was in no situation where it was forced or imposed..I made a decision that said, well I made a conscious decision to try to change.

It is clear this was a conscious autonomous choice. Self-determination theory distinguishes between the motives, i.e., autonomous or controlled, that regulate behaviours (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Autonomous motivation originates from the self and fulfils personally relevant goals, whereas controlled motivation emanates outside the self (Deci & Ryan, 2012). Autonomous motivation has been found to be positively associated with various types of behaviour change, including health related behaviours, exercise and dietary behaviours (Ng et al., 2012; Silva et al., 2011; Teixeira, Patrick, & Mata, 2011), and appeared to be relevant to behavioural change in IPV men.

Summary

The themes developed represent descriptions from the participants about the internal and external factors that they describe as being inextricably linked and function as stimuli or catalysts for change. These *Negative consequences of violence* and *Negative emotional responses*, rather than a single, defining moment or incident, over time accumulate and gain momentum over the course of time. If the triggers are perceived as important enough, they facilitate change as the men reach the *Point of resolve: Autonomous decision to change*, which encourages them to move towards the pathway of desistance. Turning points, which act as a trigger to stimulate change, in isolation are necessary but not sufficient for change. Gobbels et al. (2012) within their ITDSO therefore extend turning points to develop a concept they call decisive momentum. This underlines the fact that desistance is dynamic and while turning points can trigger change, other factors are also likely to be involved in the process, such as social contexts, individual features of the person, and a readiness to change.

Theoretically it is the case that triggers are not static single events that cause change but are incidents that build-up over time until they become meaningful or important enough to an individual. This would suggest that it is not the actual events per se that are important but the meaning that these events have during an individual's offending. Researchers who have examined general offending suggests turning points are something new in the life-cycle (marriage, becoming a parent) and offenders 'desist in response to structurally induced turning points that serve as the catalyst for sustaining long-term behavioural change' (Laub and Sampson 2003, p. 149). How this features in relation to IPV is not a straightforward relationship. In the case of IPV offenders the trigger is an interaction with something already present within that person's life, such as a child or family member, which are likely to have different meaning to that individuals at different stages of their lives (Cid & Martí, 2012) and it is this change of meaning that is important not the event itself. This is much more aligned with theorists who have identified that triggers create the environment for desistance but this needs to be accompanied by cognitive shifts or transformations and agentic choices (Giordano et al. 2002; Maruna, 2001)

It was seen that triggers are not just passive events that happen and facilitate change. The men were active in the process (e.g., internalising and acting on triggers). Vaughan (2007) proposes that when the structural account of desistance is taken in isolation the process is seen as passive, e.g., suggesting social influences such as employment can exert change with little participation from the individual. However, this emphasis on the role of structure neglects the involvement of the individual in the occurrence of life events (LeBel et al. 2008), and suggests that individuals are wholly constrained by structural forces. More recent accounts of desistance champion the roles of both structure and agency in the process (Barry 2010; Bottoms et al. 2004; Farrall et al. 2011). This was observed in the current study where for structural factors (found in Consequences of violence) to be influential in facilitating change, the men needed to regard them as personal concerns and see them as positive developments and available for realisation (active role of agency).

Limitations

Although this study provides a new insight in to the turning points for male IPV offenders, the findings need to be interpreted within the context of the study's limitations. Group classification of the men was based on self-report using the CTS2 (Straus et al., 1996), which can be problematic (Cook, 2002). There is no guarantee that the desisters had been violence free for a year. However, file notes were accessed for the desisters, which would have alerted the researchers to any police call-outs. Due to the proxy nature of police contact data as a measure of IPV (Falshaw, Bates, Patel, Corbett, & Friendship, 2003) it remains possible that although no call-out had been recorded for any of the desisters, physical violence may have occurred during this timeframe. In addition, desistance was defined as an absence of physical violence by male perpetrators. It is acknowledged that IPV comprises a range of non-violent and coercive behaviours (Bowen, 2011), and so it was not known if when the males stopped using physical violence, this absence was replaced with other types of non-physical IPV.

Recruitment of participants came from intervention groups (both self-referred and court mandated). Nine of the desisters were completing the end of their treatment or still being supervised by Offender Managers, which might be related to why they were desisting at the time of the study. The sample was predominantly White-British meaning that the triggers and transitions experienced by other ethnicities were not reported in this research. It is important to realise that structural (family, friends, employment) and cultural (religion, values) ethnic differences will affect how desistance is experienced (Calverley, 2012) and therefore this warrants further attention. In addition this sample did not include data from those who live in the community but have never been arrested or never voluntarily sought help/treatment. Those who have not been referred constitute a large proportion of IPV men (Dutton, 1988). It is exceptionally difficult to access this type of sample, which is why they were not included in the current study, but by doing so, this could offer an insight in to what triggers the process of desistance found in 'untreated samples'.

Although a measure of desistance was used, this was only based on one-year offending free, which while clinically relevant (Feld & Straus, 1989), this represents primary desistance. It is not clear how relevant at this stage the triggers found in the current study are to long-term or secondary desistance. This can be remedied by extending the current research to look include those who have desisted from IPV over longer time periods. However the findings are still important on the basis that primary desistance is part of the complete desistance process, and understanding this can provide an insight into what is initially need to be in place to desist and how the transition to secondary desistance can then be achieved.

Clinical and Offender Treatment

Both persisters and desisters experienced, to varying degrees, negative consequences and emotions following their use of violence. However, it was only when these factors became meaningful and the men realised or made autonomous decisions to change, that primary desistance was achieved. It is at this stage that IPV users search for help to change and are receptive to it. It is therefore important that there is provision to respond to these calls for assistance and that treatment is easily accessible. This would suggest there is a clear need for an increase of intervention provision within the community as well as within the criminal justice context in order to insure a timely response to the needs of men wishing to change. Interventions should advance the development of self-awareness, encourage active involvement in the process, by focusing on agency and hope (Lloyd and Serin, 2012), and enable men to understand the consequences if they continue to use violence and to identify what could be different for them if they stopped using IPV.

Implications for Future Research

Further attention should be given to understanding the social contexts, individual features of the person, and readiness/motivation to change that are required in order to enable triggers to become salient and initiate change. Research should also examine autonomous motivation as this was a key trigger for the men in this study, and although this has been extensively explored with successful changes in health, exercise and dietary behaviours (Ng et al., 2012; Silva et al., 2011; Teixeira et al.,

2011), it has not been explored in relation to IPV. Finally research over longer time-periods should be conducted to explore both primary and secondary desistance and the links between them. Longitudinal analysis is required to understand how the turning points found in the current study are relevant when individuals have achieved secondary or long-term desistance.

References

- Abbott, A. (1997). On the concept of turning point. *Comparative Social Research*, 16, 85-105.
- Ahmed, E. (2001). Shame management: Regulating bullying. In E. Ahmed, N. Harris, J. Braithwaite & V. Braithwaite (Eds.), *Shame management through reintegration* (pp. 211-314). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Ahmed, E., & Braithwaite, V. (2006). Forgiveness, reconciliation, and shame: Three key variables in reducing school bullying. *Journal of Social Issues*, 62(2), 347-370. doi:10.1111/j.1540-4560.2006.00454.x
- Aksan, N., & Kochanska, G. (2005). Conscience in childhood: Old questions, new answers. *Developmental Psychology*, 41(3), 506-516. doi:10.1037/0012-1649.41.3.506
- Attride-Stirling, J. (2001). Thematic networks: An analytic tool for qualitative research. *Qualitative Research*, 1(3), 385-405. doi:10.1177/146879410100100307
- Babcock, J. C., Green, C. E., & Robie, C. (2004). Does batterers' treatment work? A meta-analytic review of domestic violence treatment. *Clinical Psychology Review*, 23(8), 1023-1053. doi:10.1016/j.cpr.2002.07.001
- Bandura, A. (1986). *Social foundations of thought and action: A social cognitive theory*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Bandura, A. (2001). Social cognitive theory: An agentic perspective. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 52(1), 1-26. doi:10.1146/annurev.psych.52.1.1
- Bandura, A. (2006). Towards a psychology of human agency. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 1(2), 164-180. doi:10.1111/j.1745-6916.2006.00011.x
- Barry, M. (2010). Youth transitions: From offending to desistance. *Journal of Youth Studies*, 13(1), 121-136. doi:10.1080/13676260903233712
- Bennett, D. S., Sullivan, M. W., & Lewis, M. (2005). Young children's adjustment as a function of maltreatment, shame, and anger. *Child Maltreatment*, 10(4), 311-323. doi:10.1177/1077559505278619
- Bottoms, A., Shapland, J., Costello, A., Holmes, D., & Muir, G. (2004). Towards desistance: Theoretical underpinnings for an empirical study. *Howard Journal of Criminal Justice*, 43(4), 368-389. doi:10.1111/j.1468-2311.2004.00336.x

- Bowen, E. (2011). *The rehabilitation of partner-violent men*. Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Boyatzis, R. E. (1998). *Transforming qualitative information: Thematic analysis and code development*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Braithwaite, J. (1989). *Crime, shame and reintegration*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Braithwaite, V., Ahmed, E., Morrison, B., & Reinhart, M. (2003). Researching the prospects for restorative justice practice in schools: The 'Life at school survey' 1996–9. In L. Walgrave (Ed.), *Repositioning the restorative justice: Restorative justice, criminal justice and social context* (pp. 169-190). Devon: Willan Publishing.
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77-101. doi:10.1191/1478088706qp063oa
- Calverley, A. (2012). *Cultures of desistance rehabilitation, reintegration and ethnic minorities*. Oxon: Routledge.
- Carlson, W., & Rose, A. J. (2012). Brief report: Activities in heterosexual romantic relationships: Grade differences and associations with relationship satisfaction. *Journal of Adolescence*, 35(1), 219-224. doi:10.1016/j.adolescence.2010.09.001
- Carlsson, C. (2012). Using 'Turning points' to understand processes of change in offending. *British Journal of Criminology*, 52(1), 1-16. doi:10.1093/bjc/azr062
- Cid, J., & Martí, J. (2012). Turning points and returning points: Understanding the role of family ties in the process of desistance. *European Journal of Criminology*, 9(6), 603-620. doi:10.1177/1477370812453102
- Cook, S. L. (2002). Self-reports of sexual, physical, and nonphysical abuse perpetration: A comparison of three measures. *Violence Against Women*, 8(5), 541-565. doi:10.1177/107780102400388425
- Deci, E. L., & Ryan, R. M. (2012). Self-determination theory. In P. A. M. Van Lange, A. W. Kruglanski & E. T. Higgins (Eds.), *Handbook of theories of social psychology* (pp. 416-436). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications Ltd.
- Dutton, D. G. (1988). Profiling of wife assaulters: Preliminary evidence for a trimodal analysis. *Violence and Victims*, 3(1), 5-29.

- Falshaw, L., Bates, A., Patel, V., Corbett, C., & Friendship, C. (2003). Assessing reconviction, reoffending and recidivism in a sample of UK sexual offenders. *Legal and Criminological Psychology, 8*(2), 207-215. doi:10.1348/135532503322362979
- Farrall, S., Bottoms, A., & Shapland, J. (2010). Social structures and desistance from crime. *European Journal of Criminology, 7*(6), 546-570. doi:10.1177/1477370810376574
- Farrall, S., Sharpe, G., Hunter, B., & Calverley, A. (2011). Theorizing structural and individual-level processes in desistance and persistence: Outlining an integrated perspective. *Australian & New Zealand Journal of Criminology, 44*(2), 218-234. doi:10.1177/0004865811405136
- Feder, L., & Wilson, D. B. (2005). A meta-analytic review of court-mandated batterer intervention programs: Can courts affect abusers' behavior? *Journal of Experimental Criminology, 1*(2), 239-262. doi:10.1007/s11292-005-1179-0
- Feld, S. L., & Straus, M. A. (1989). Escalation and desistance of wife assault in marriage. *Criminology, 27*(1), 141-161. doi:10.1111/j.1745-9125.1989.tb00866.x
- Gadd, D. (2006). The role of recognition in the desistance process: A case analysis of a former far-right activist. *Theoretical Criminology, 10*(2), 179-202. doi:10.1177/1362480606063138
- Giordano, P. C., Cernkovich, S. A., & Rudolph, J. L. (2002). Gender, crime, and desistance: Toward a theory of cognitive transformation. *American Journal of Sociology, 107*(4), 990-1064. doi:10.1086/343191
- Göbbels, S., Ward, T., & Willis, G. M. (2012). An integrative theory of desistance from sex offending. *Aggression and Violent Behavior, 17*(5), 453-462. doi:10.1016/j.avb.2012.06.003
- Gottfredson, M. R., & Hirschi, T. (1990). *A general theory of crime*. Stanford CA: Stanford University Press.
- Haggård, U., Gumpert, C. H., & Grann, M. (2001). Against all odds: A qualitative follow-up study of high risk violent offenders who were not reconvicted. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 16*(10), 1048-1065. doi:10.1177/088626001016010005
- Healy, D. (2010). Betwixt and between: The role of psychosocial factors in the early stages of desistance. *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency, 47*(4), 419-438. doi:10.1177/0022427810375574
- Hoffman, M. L. (2000). *Empathy and moral development*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

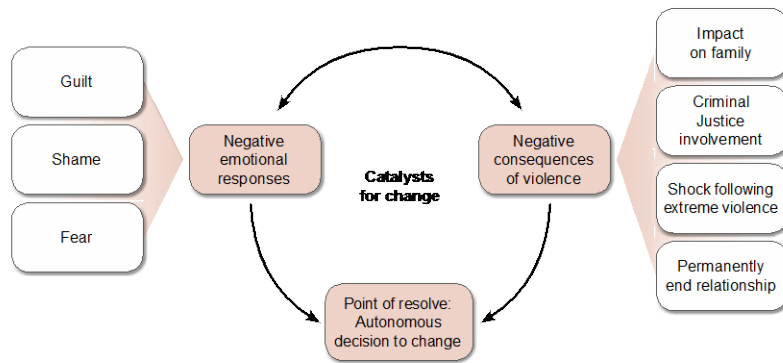
- Janis, I. L., & Mann, L. (1977). *Decision making: A psychological analysis of conflict choice and commitment*. New York: Free Press.
- King, S. (2013). Early desistance narratives: A qualitative analysis of probationers' transitions towards desistance. *Punishment & Society*, 15(2), 147-165. doi:10.1177/1462474513477790
- Laub, J. H., & Sampson, R. J. (2001). Understanding desistance from crime. In M. Tonry (Ed.), *Crime and justice: A review of the research* (pp. 1-69). London: University of Chicago Press.
- Laub, J. H., & Sampson, R. J. (2003). *Shared beginnings, divergent lives: Delinquent boys to age 70*. Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press.
- LeBel, T. P., Burnett, R., Maruna, S., & Bushway, S. (2008). The 'chicken and egg' of subjective and social factors in desistance from crime. *European Journal of Criminology*, 5(2), 131-159. doi:10.1177/1477370807087640
- Leibrich, J. (1996). The role of shame in going straight: A study of former offenders. In B. Galaway, & J. Hudson (Eds.), *Restorative justice: International perspectives* (pp. 283-302). Monsey, NY: Criminal Justice Press.
- Lindsay-Hartz, J. L., De Rivera, J., & Mascolo, M. F. (1995). Differentiating guilt and shame and their effects on motivation. In J. P. Tangney, & K. W. Fisher (Eds.), *Self-conscious emotions: The psychology of shame, guilt, embarrassment and pride* (pp. 274-300). New York: Guilford Press.
- Loeber, R., Pardini, D. A., Stouthamer-Loeber, M., & Raine, A. (2007). Do cognitive, physiological, and psychosocial risk and promotive factors predict desistance from delinquency in males? *Development & Psychopathology*, 19(3), 867-887.
- Maruna, S. (2001). *Making good: How ex-convicts reform and rebuild their lives*. Washington DC: American Psychological Association.
- Maruna, S., Immarigeon, R., & LeBel, T. P. (2004). Ex-offender reintegration: Theory and practice. In S. Maruna, & R. Immarigeon (Eds.), *After crime and punishment: Pathways to offender reintegration* (pp. 3-26). Collumpton: Willan.
- Maruna, S., Lebel, T. P., Mitchell, N., & Naples, M. (2004). Pygmalion in the reintegration process: Desistance from crime through the looking glass. *Psychology, Crime & Law*, 10(3), 271-281. doi:10.1080/10683160410001662762

- Maruna, S., & Roy, K. (2007). Amputation or reconstruction? Notes on the concept of "knifing off" and desistance from crime. *Journal of Contemporary Criminal Justice*, 23, 104-124.
doi:10.1177/1043986206298951
- Murphy, C. M., & Meyer, S. L. (1994). Dependency characteristics of partner assaultive men. *Journal of Abnormal Psychology*, 103(4), 729-735. doi:10.1037/0021-843X.103.4.729
- Murphy, C. M., & Ting, L. A. (2010). Interventions for perpetrators of intimate partner violence: A review of efficacy research and recent trends. *Partner Abuse*, 1(1), 26-44. doi:10.1891/1946-6560.1.1.26
- Ng, J. Y. Y., Ntoumanis, N., Thøgersen-Ntoumani, C., Deci, E. L., Ryan, R. M., Duda, J. L., & Williams, G. C. (2012). Self-determination theory applied to health contexts: A meta-analysis. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 7(4), 325-340. doi:10.1177/1745691612447309
- Olthof, T., Schouten, A., Kuiper, H., Stegge, H., & Jennekens-Schinkel, A. (2000). Shame and guilt in children: Differential situational antecedents and experiential correlates. *British Journal of Developmental Psychology*, 18, 51-64. doi:10.1348/026151000165562
- Pandya, V., & Gingerich, W. J. (2002). Group therapy intervention for male batterers. *Health & Social Work*, 27(1), 47-55.
- Piquero, A. R., Moffitt, T. E., & Wright, B. E. (2007). Self-control and criminal career dimensions. *Journal of Contemporary Criminal Justice*, 23(1), 72-89. doi:10.1177/1043986206298949
- Polinsky, A. M., & Shavell, S. (2000). The economic theory of public enforcement of law. *Journal of Economic Literature*, 38(1), 45-76. doi:10.1257/jel.38.1.45
- Prochaska, J. O., & DiClemente, C. C. (1984). *The transtheoretical approach: Crossing the traditional boundaries of therapy*. Homewood IL: Dow-Jones-Irwin.
- Proeve, M., & Howells, K. (2002). Shame and guilt in child sexual offenders. *International Journal of Offender Therapy & Comparative Criminology*, 46(6), 657-667. doi:10.1177/0306624X02238160
- Ryan, R. M., & Deci, E. L. (2000). Self-determination theory and the facilitation of intrinsic motivation, social development, and well-being. *American Psychologist*, 55(1), 68-78. doi:10.1037/0003-066X.55.1.68
- Sampson, R. J., & Laub, J. H. (2005). A life-course view of the development of crime. *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 602, 12-45. doi:10.1177/0002716205280075

- Savolainen, J. (2009). Work, family and criminal desistance: Adult social bonds in a nordic welfare state. *British Journal of Criminology*, 49(3), 285-304. doi:10.1093/bjc/azn084
- Shenton, A. (2004). Strategies for ensuring trustworthiness in qualitative research projects. *Education for Information*, 22(2), 63-75.
- Shover, N. (1985). *Aging criminals*. Beverley Hills, California: Sage.
- Shover, N. (1996). *Great pretenders: Pursuits and careers of persistent thieves*. Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press.
- Silva, M. N., Markland, D., Carraça, E. V., Vieira, P. N., Coutinho, S., Minderico, C. S., . . . Teixeira, P. J. (2011). Exercise autonomous motivation predicts 3-yr weight loss in women. *Medicine & Science in Sports & Exercise*, 43(4), 728-737. doi:10.1249/MSS.0b013e31810818f
- Silvergleid, C. S., & Mankowski, E. S. (2006). How batterer intervention programs work: Participant and facilitator accounts of processes of change. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 21(1), 139-159. doi:10.1177/0886260505282103
- Silverman, D. (2000). *Doing qualitative research: A practical handbook*. London: Sage.
- Simons, R. L., & Barr, A. B. (2014). Shifting perspectives: Cognitive changes mediate the impact of romantic relationships on desistance from crime. *Justice Quarterly*, 31(5), 793-821. doi:10.1080/07418825.2012.704388
- Skinner, B. F. (1974). *About behaviorism*. New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf.
- Sommers, I., Baskin, D. R., & Fagan, J. (1994). Getting out of the life: Crime desistance by female street offenders. *Deviant Behavior*, 15(2), 125-149. doi:10.1080/01639625.1994.9967964
- Straus, M. A., Hamby, S. L., Boney-McCoy, S., & Sugarman, D. B. (1996). The revised conflict tactics scales (CTS2). *Journal of Family Issues*, 17(3), 283-316. doi:10.1177/019251396017003001
- Tangney, J. P., Wagner, P., Fletcher, C., & Gramszow, R. (1992). Shamed into anger? The relation of shame and guilt to anger and self-reported aggression. *Journal of Personality & Social Psychology*, 62(4), 669-675.

- Teixeira, P. J., Patrick, H., & Mata, J. (2011). Why we eat what we eat: The role of autonomous motivation in eating behaviour regulation. *Nutrition Bulletin*, 36(1), 102-107. doi:10.1111/j.1467-3010.2010.01876.x
- Theobald, D., & Farrington, D. P. (2011). Why do the crime-reducing effects of marriage vary with age? *British Journal of Criminology*, 51(1), 136-158. doi:10.1093/bjc/azq060
- Uggen, C. (2000). Work as a turning point in the life course of criminals: A duration model of age, employment, and recidivism. *American Sociological Review*, 65(4), 529-546. doi:10.2307/12657381
- Vaughan, B. (2007). The internal narrative of desistance. *British Journal of Criminology*, 47(3), 390-404. doi:10.1093/bjc/az1083
- Whitaker, D. J., Le, B., & Niolon, P. H. (2010). Persistence and desistance of the perpetration of physical aggression across relationships. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 25(4), 591-609. doi:10.1177/0886260509334402
- Wooldredge, J., & Thistlethwaite, A. (2006). Changing marital status and desistance from intimate assault. *Public Health Reports*, 121(4), 428-434.

Figure 1: Themes that represent triggers and transitions that initiate primary desistance from IPV



Kate Walker PhD (Corresponding Author):

Research Associate in Violence and Interpersonal Aggression

The Faculty Research Centre in Psychology, Behaviour, and Achievement (PBA), Coventry University

Tel: 02477659514

Kate.Walker@coventry.ac.uk

Erica Bowen PhD:

Professor in the Psychology of Violence and Interpersonal Aggression

PBA Coventry University

Erica.Bowen@coventry.ac.uk

Sarah Brown PhD

Professor of Forensic Psychology

PBA Coventry University

Sarah.Brown@coventry.ac.uk

Emma Sleath PhD

Senior Lecturer

HLS Coventry University

Emma.Sleath@coventry.ac.uk