



Faculty of Education and Social Work

Mind the blind spot:
The experience of fathering for men who are violent to their partners

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AUTHOR'S DECLARATION

This is to certify that:

- I. this thesis comprises only my original work towards the Doctor of Philosophy Degree
- II. due acknowledgement has been made in the text to all other material used
- III. the thesis does not exceed the word length for this degree.
- IV. no part of this work has been used for the award of another degree.
- V. this thesis meets the *University of Sydney's Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) requirements for the conduct of research.*

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ABSTRACT

This thesis explored the fathering of 17 men who had been violent to their female partners. This subject remains largely unexamined despite evidence documenting the harmful impacts of domestic violence on children and young people. Conversely, women's mothering continues to be intensely scrutinized, particularly by child protective services. By focusing on fathering, this inquiry challenges socially unjust approaches, which hold survivors, rather than perpetrators accountable for the harmful impacts of domestic violence. The following research questions guided the inquiry: What are men's perceptions regarding the nature, extent and severity of domestic violence in their families? How do they describe the impact of their violence on women and children? How do they describe their fathering experiences and practices? How do they describe their relationships with their children? These questions were explored utilizing an approach, which integrated critical feminist understandings of domestic violence, drawing upon radical, poststructural and intersectional perspectives. A primarily qualitative method using a purposive sample and semi-structured, in-depth interviews was utilised. The analysis showed that men's fathering was varied. Variations were particularly evident when comparisons were made between men's identification with hegemonic masculinity and men's beliefs about control over violence and other coercive behaviours. Men used their privileged positions as fathers to oppress women and children. Harmful fathering practices and exposure to domestic violence placed children and young people at risk in various ways. The intersection of constructions of masculinity with other aspects of men's identities, particular their class, culture and health contributed to the diversity of harmful fathering practices. The findings underscore the need to develop strategies that hold men accountable for their violence and harmful fathering practices. The possibilities for developing social work interventions targeting men, which are based upon intersectional approaches are discussed as a way forward in future efforts to address men's violence against women and children.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This thesis applies a critical feminist perspective to the fathering experiences and practices of men who have been violent to their partners. Despite extensive evidence about the harmful impacts of domestic violence on children's wellbeing and development (Edleson, 1999a; Holt, Buckley, & Whelan, 2008), the fathering of men who perpetrate domestic violence has received only limited scholarly attention (Edleson & Williams, 2007; Guille, 2004; Harne, 2002). Rather, the focus of much of the research with men who perpetrate domestic violence has been on the contested issue of the effectiveness of perpetrator programs in reducing their violent and abusive behaviours towards their partners (for example, R. E. Dobash & Dobash, 2000; Gondolf, 2002b). Much less attention has been directed to their fathering, despite the likelihood that the majority will continue in a fathering role after their violence becomes known and after separation (Bagshaw et al., 2011; E. Salisbury et al., 2009).

There are many valid reasons to increase scholarly attention in this area including: to redress gender inequity and the pervasive practice of blaming mothers for children's behaviour problems linked to male violence; to develop more effective and specifically targeted programs to improve the fathering practices of men who perpetrate domestic violence; to increase our understanding of the dynamics involved in situations where violence is transmitted inter-generationally; and to inform policy and practice in the fields of child protection and family law (Holden & Barker, 2004).

In child protection and family law, the limited evidence base about the fathering of men who perpetrate domestic violence has profound implications. In these areas, ascertaining the risk of harm to women and children necessitates an assessment of the fathering of men who perpetrate domestic violence. Too often however, it has been, and continues to be, the victim/mother whose parenting is scrutinised while the risk posed by the perpetrator of the domestic violence is not assessed (Humphreys & Absler, 2011a). In the current Australian family law context which increasingly emphasises shared parenting after separation,

knowledge about the fathering of men who have perpetrated domestic violence is vital to the assessments that inform decisions about post separation parenting arrangements. However, it is often not the focus of these assessments (Elizabeth, Gavey, & Tolmie, 2010; Laing, 2010; Morris, 2009).

My interest in this topic arose from my experience as a social worker employed as a child protection officer in the NSW Department of Community Services¹ (CS). Part of my work was to assess the risk of harm to children experiencing domestic violence in order to address their safety and wellbeing. In responding to these matters it became clear that in the majority of situations the focus of parental assessment and intervention was on mothers. In situations where domestic violence had occurred, mothers were often the only family members interviewed and decisions were often informed by psychological perspectives, which highlighted the primacy of the mother-child attachment (Heward-Belle, 1996). The mother's experiences and practices, for example her parenting capacity, relationship with her partner and child(ren), as well as her 'ability to protect' her child(ren) from her partner's future violence were aspects of her care which were scrutinized.

At the same time the commensurate aspects of fathers' parenting practices and experiences were rarely examined. Crucial questions central to assessing the risks to the wellbeing of women and children were frequently left unasked. These included: the perpetrator's perception of the aetiology, nature, severity and impact of domestic violence; his ability and willingness to restrain himself from future violence; his parenting capacity; as well as the existence of other complicating factors such as substance dependency and/or mental health issues (Heward-Belle, 1996).

My practice experience reflected an entrenched pattern of child protection intervention where perpetrators of domestic violence have been exonerated from answering such questions whilst their victims have been over relied upon to divulge this information (Humphreys &

¹ The NSW Department of Community Services (DoCS), renamed Community Services (CS) in 2011, is the statutory agency responsible for the implementation of the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998.

Absler, 2011a). This 'invisibility' of fathers in child protection practice and the consequent 'over responsibility' of mothers to provide protection is well documented (Edleson, 1998) and has been referred to as an example of gender-blind practice (Burke, 1999; Heward-Belle, 1996). By focusing on the fathering of men who perpetrate domestic violence, this thesis removes the perpetrators of domestic violence from the 'blind spot' and locates them in the centre of the inquiry.

Specifically, this inquiry pivots on an examination of the fathering experiences and practices of 17 men who were recruited through a behaviour change program in New South Wales, called '*Facing Up.*' Rather than focusing on the men's experiences of participating in the program, this inquiry examined the men's experiences of fathering against a backdrop of using violence and other coercive controlling behaviours within their families. The program, consistent with much of the field, is based upon a pro-feminist psycho-educational model, a central therapeutic goal of which is to invite men to accept responsibility for their abusive behaviours and to learn non-abusive ways of relating. At the time of the study, the geographic location in which this study occurred was one of the top five local government areas within the Sydney metropolitan region for reported rates of domestic violence (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2010).

1.1 Research Questions

This thesis explores the experience of fathering for men who have used violence against their partners. The experience of fathering is generally defined as including: the constructed meaning that participants ascribe to being a father, their perceptions and practices of fathering, including their understanding of the impact of domestic violence on their developing children.

The central research question underpinning this enquiry is: what is the lived experience of fathering for men who are domestically violent? The subsidiary questions are:

- What are the men's perceptions regarding the nature, extent and severity of domestic violence in their families?

- How do the men describe the impact of their violence on women and children?
- How do the men describe their fathering experiences and practices?
- How do the men describe their relationships with their children?

As many professionals are asked to engage in 'evidence based practice' this research seeks to contribute to the development of a body of knowledge to support informed decision making. In the absence of critically analysed information about fathers who perpetrate domestic violence, professionals are frequently left to make judgements based upon assumptions, rather than evidence. Assumptions frequently arise from and perpetuate the continuation of dominant discourses present in particular social, economic, political and cultural contexts. Of particular relevance is the dominant assertion that children need fathers and that father involvement is inherently beneficial to all children (Biddulph, 2002). This perspective is embedded within many recent Australian policy initiatives aiming to increase father involvement and is essentialist in the sense that it assumes that all fathers provide positive benefits to all children. As a result, the question arises as to whether fathers who are violent, controlling and abusive should be encouraged to maintain relationships with their children. This research seeks to critically reflect upon those often unquestioned assumptions and aims to contribute to the existing literature base by examining the parenting practices and experiences of men who perpetrate domestic violence from their perspective, using a feminist analysis. At the macro level, this research challenges perspectives that burden women with the responsibility of ending, and ameliorating the impact of, men's violence.

1.2 Domestic violence literature

A central tenet of this inquiry, which is underpinned by a critical feminist approach, is that men's accounts of fathering and using violence against women, cannot be adequately understood without attending to the lived experiences of affected women and children. With this in mind, the next section will review the contemporary literature regarding the nature, extent and impact of domestic violence on women and children, as well as the societal and institutional responses to addressing this issue. This review also contextualizes the research, providing evidence as to why such an inquiry is necessary and locates the inquiry within the

existing bodies of literature relevant to the topic of the fathering of men who use violence and other coercive tactics to control women and children.

a) Nature and extent of domestic violence

Definitions of domestic violence are contested (Domestic Violence and Incest Resource Centre, 1998). The nature of the relationship between gender and domestic violence is a contentious issue stymieing efforts to develop a universally agreed definition. This dissent in the literature is evidenced by the gap between family violence researchers who argue that men and women are equally violent in the context of intimate relationships (Straus & Gelles, 1979, 1986; Straus & Gelles, 1990) and feminist researchers who argue that domestic violence is primarily perpetrated by men against women (R. Dobash & R. E. Dobash, 1979; Hague & Malos, 2005). The former define domestic violence narrowly and argue that it stems primarily from psychological or relational problems and the latter define it more broadly and argue that inequitable gender orders (Connell, 2002) resulting from patriarchal social structures and processes are the root cause (M. Johnson & Ferraro, 2000).

At the core of feminist definitions of domestic violence is the concept of coercive control, which encompasses a wide canvas of controlling tactics including psychological, verbal, spiritual, social and financial abuse, which sit alongside physical and sexual violence (Herman, 1992; Stark, 2007). This understanding of domestic violence has been informed by a significant body of qualitative research which explored women's experiences of living with domestic violence (R. Dobash & R. Dobash, 1979; R. Dobash & Dobash, 1998; Russell, 1984; Scutt, 1983; Walker, 1984). For the purposes of this thesis critical feminist perspectives are adopted which locate:

The central element of domestic violence (as) an ongoing pattern of behaviour aimed at controlling one's partner through fear, for example by using behaviour which is violent and threatening ... In most cases, the violent behaviour is part of a range of tactics to exercise power and control over women and children, and can be both criminal and non-criminal. (National Council to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children, 2009, p. 186)

Within this intentional patterning of behaviour, referred to by some as an 'abusive household gender regime' (Morris, 2009) or 'domestic terrorism' (M. Johnson & Ferraro, 2000),

perpetrators of domestic violence abuse and/or use children with the dual intention of exerting power and control over both partners and children (L. Kelly, Burton, & Regan, 1994; L. Radford & Hester, 2001). Examples of this include: attacking the stomach of a pregnant woman (Taft, 2002); abusing women in front of their children or abusing children in front of their mothers in order to control both; or making women watch, or participate in, the abuse of children (Damant et al., 2010). For this reason institutional practices which compartmentalise men's abuse of children and partners into discrete categories of 'child abuse' and 'domestic violence' are increasingly viewed as unhelpful (L. Radford & Hester, 2006).

From a global human rights perspective, the United Nations uses the term 'violence against women' rather than 'domestic violence' to describe 'any act of gender-based violence against women that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life.' (United Nations General Assembly, 1993) This definition attends to the broad variations and diversity of women's experiences of violence, which can range from cultural practices where women may be involved in harming other women such as so called 'honour killings' or female genital mutilation, to practices where women are victims of domestic violence perpetrated by male partners or ex-partners. Hunnicutt (2009) argues that varieties of patriarchy which are embedded within cultures, religions, social and economic systems account for the variation in violence against women practices.

Whilst the feminist literature does not deny female initiated violence in intimate relationships, whether they be heterosexual or same sex, there is general agreement that male violence against women is quantitatively and qualitatively different in structure, nature and severity (Bagshaw & Chung, 2000; Walby & Allen, 2004). For example, large scale surveys in the U.S.A., the U.K., Canada and Australia show that women as a group are much more likely to experience domestic violence than men, that male to female violence results in more frequent, more severe injuries and death, and is more likely to leave victims feeling afraid (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2005; Home Office, 2001, 2007; H. Johnson, 2006; Tjaden &

Thoennes, 2000). Female to male violence has been found to occur less frequently than male to female violence and often occurs in the context of self defence, and is often reactive to the stress and frustration of being in a submissive position in the context of a violent relationship (Bagshaw & Chung, 2000).

The methodology used to define and measure domestic violence varies between studies and yields considerably different results, especially in relation to the issue of gender. For example, American family violence researchers using the 'Conflict Tactics Scale' to measure incidents of physical violence have contributed a significant amount of scholarship. They argue that men and women are equally violent in intimate relationships (Straus & Gelles, 1990). This approach to measuring the extent of 'family violence' has been widely criticized by feminist scholars on the basis that initial versions of the Conflict Tactics Scale did not measure sexual violence² and that acts of physical violence are measured out of context and without regard to their differential impact on victims. For example, actions ranging from slapping to using a lethal weapon are quantified equally without regard to their qualitative difference. In contrast, R. Dobash, Dobash, Cavanagh, and Lewis (2000) developed measures such as the Violence Assessment Index (Appendix 2), Injury Assessment Index (Appendix 3) and the Controlling Behaviours Index (Appendix 4) to address these limitations. These measures are employed in this inquiry, as they complement qualitative research and facilitate a more nuanced understanding of domestic violence consistent with feminist perspectives.

The three most frequently cited Australian sources using representative community samples, are the two 'Safety Surveys' conducted by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 1996, 2005) and the Australian component of the International Violence Against Women Survey (IWAWS) conducted by the Australian Institute of Criminology (AIC) (Mouzos & Makkai, 2004). The 1996 ABS, *Women's Safety Survey* surveyed 6 300 women,

² The Revised Conflict Tactics Scale (Straus 1990) does measure sexual coercion in intimate relationships.

aged 18 and over, while the 2005 ABS *Personal Safety Survey* surveyed 7 478 men and 7 693 women over the age of 18 years. The IVAWS surveyed 6 677 women aged 18 to 69 years. Using a narrow definition of domestic violence, which was limited to physical and sexual abuse, the *Personal Safety Survey*, found that nearly one in six women (16 %) reported having experienced physical and/or sexual violence by a current or former partner in their lifetime. The survey also concluded that more than one million Australian children were affected by domestic violence.

Using a different methodology and wider definition of domestic violence, more consistent with feminist understandings of the nature of domestic violence because it included controlling behaviours, the AIC study found that 34 per cent of women who have ever had a boyfriend or husband reported experiencing at least one form of violence during their lifetime, with half experiencing physical violence and a third experiencing sexual violence in these relationships. In total 12 per cent of women who had ever had a boyfriend or husband reported experiencing sexual violence from a partner in their lifetime, with five to seven per cent reporting forced sexual intercourse and a further three to four per cent reporting attempted forced sexual intercourse. Furthermore the AIC study found that eight per cent of 18 to 69 year old women had been physically abused in the two months prior, three per cent by a current or former intimate partner (Mouzos & Makkai, 2004). Research conducted in the U.K., the U.S.A. and Canada has found similar prevalence rates when using definitions consistent with feminist understandings of domestic violence (H. Johnson, 2006; Tjaden & Thoennes, 2000; Walby & Allen, 2004).

Indigenous women are over represented in prevalence studies conducted in Australia, the U.S.A. and Canada (Aboriginal Justice Council, 1999; H. Johnson, 2006; U.S. Department of Justice, 2005). Indigenous Australian women are 12 times as likely to be victims of assault as their non-Indigenous counterparts and the abuse is more likely to result in more severe injury (Aboriginal Justice Council, 1999). Aboriginal women are also more likely to be victimized by family members including male partners and ex-partners (Ferrante, Morgan, Indermaur, & Harding, 1996). Women with disabilities are also over represented in statistics measuring

prevalence (Barile, 2002; Hague, Thiara, & Mullender, 2010), as are women living in poverty (Walby & Allen, 2004).

b.) Children's exposure to domestic violence

Until relatively recently, children who were exposed to domestic violence were considered the 'silent,' 'forgotten,' 'unintended,' 'invisible' and/or 'secondary' victims of domestic violence (Edleson, 1999b; Kovacs & Tomison, 2003; Tomison, 2000). However, the variance in children's exposure to domestic violence, and the potential impact of exposure, is being increasingly recognised (Humphreys, Houghton, & Ellis, 2008).

Considerations have shifted from an initial and narrow focus on the impact of 'witnessing' domestic violence to a broader focus on the myriad ways that children and young people are 'exposed to' and experience domestic violence (Edleson et al., 2007). The initial narrow focus predominantly considered the emotional impact on the child of watching an incident between the mother and a male adult where there was both verbal and physical abuse (Kaufman, Kantor, & Little, 2003). More recently, Humphreys et al. (2008) summarised the research, which illustrates the problem with narrowly defining the child's lived experience. The review found that children's experiences of domestic violence were complex, variable and included: sustaining injuries when attempting to protect their mothers (Blanchard, Molloy, & Brown, 1992); experiencing fear when mothers are attacked whilst holding them (Mullender, Kelly, Hague, Malos, & Iman, 2002); being held hostage (Ganley & Schecter, 1996); and being raised in an atmosphere of fear and terror (Peled, 1998). Labelling this broad canvas of violent experiences as 'witnessing' obfuscates the proximate nature of these experiences. Although this label is not preferred, it appears in this thesis when citing studies, which used this terminology.

It is equally difficult to accurately gauge the number of children and young people who are exposed to domestic violence due to a range of factors (K. Richards, 2011). Despite the difficulties however, research has consistently shown that significant numbers of children who live with domestic violence are present during assaultive incidents. The ABS *Personal Safety*

Study found that 34 per cent of women experiencing violence by a current partner and 39 per cent of those experiencing violence by a former partner reported that violence was witnessed by children (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2005). Approximately a quarter of 5 000 Australians between the ages of 12 and 20 surveyed for the *2001 National Crime Prevention Survey* described witnessing an incident of physical or domestic violence against their mother or stepmother (Indermaur, 2001). These figures closely align with data from an English prevalence study which found that 26 per cent of 2 869 young people described witnessing at least one incident of violence between their parents and five per cent reported witnessing frequent violence (Cawson, 2002). Similarly a survey of Victorian children and young people found that one in four had witnessed domestic violence (Office of Women's Policy, 2002).

c.) Impact on women and children

There is extensive evidence documenting the fatal and non-fatal outcomes for women and children, which will be addressed in this section. It underscores that domestic violence is a significant contributor to international mortality rates of women and children, as well as, the world wide burden of disease (García-Moreno, Jansen, Ellsberg, L., & C., 2005).

Approximately 75 Australian women per year or nearly three per fortnight are murdered by their male partners or ex-partners with nearly all of these homicides following a 'domestic altercation.' (Mouzos, 1999) In 2007-08, of the 134 domestic homicides, 78 per cent involved the murder of a woman at the hands of her male partner or ex-partner. The most frequent causes of death were stab wounds followed by beatings, gunshot wounds, and strangulation/suffocation (Virueda & Payne, 2010). In addition, 40 children aged 17 years and younger were murdered in this time period, 23 of whom were murdered by a custodial or non-custodial parent (Virueda & Payne, 2010). Between 1989 and 1993, approximately one third of children murdered in Australia were killed by a male offender following a family dispute, frequently associated with the termination of their parents' relationships (Strang, 1996). Domestic violence has been identified as the most common precursor to child homicide in the United States (Mills, Friend, Conroy, Fleck-Henderson, & Krug, 2000).

The gendered pattern reflected in the Australia data is a global phenomenon. For example, research conducted in the U.S.A., Canada, the U.K. and Australia attests to the gendered nature of domestic homicide whereby women are disproportionately the victims and male partners and/or ex-partners are disproportionately the perpetrators (Dearden & Jones, 2008; H. Johnson, 2006; U.S. Department of Justice, 2005). Particular groups of women are over represented in domestic homicide statistics such as those from Indigenous, ethnic minority, and low socio-economic groups. In Australia, Indigenous women are over represented in homicide statistics generally and domestic homicides specifically, with Indigenous women seven times as likely to be murdered as non-Indigenous women (Virueda & Payne, 2010). In the United States, femicide³ is the leading cause of death for African American women aged 15 to 45 years, with male partners or ex-partners most often the perpetrators (Campbell et al., 2003).

Domestic violence has negative consequences for the short and long term physical health of women and children (Bonomi et al., 2009; Campbell, Jones, Dienemann, Kub, Schollenberger, O'Campo, Gielen, et al., 2002). VicHealth, employing the burden of disease methodology used by the World Health Organization, identifies domestic violence as the leading risk factor, (above smoking, alcohol, obesity and high blood pressure) contributing to death, disability and illness for Victorian women aged 15 to 44 years – the key child rearing and raising years (Victorian Health Promotion Foundation, 2004).

An American study examining women's presentations to medical services, found that 35 per cent of female presentations to emergency departments related to domestic violence and most traumatic injuries to women are caused by domestic violence (21 %) and include injuries ranging from:

(c)uts, bruises, and black eyes to miscarriage, bony injuries, splenic and liver trauma, partial loss of hearing or vision, and scars from burn or knife wounds.

³ Russell's definition of femicide is used here to distinguish 'femicide' from other types of homicides. This definition is based upon a gendered analysis, highlighting that a central motivation in such homicides is the killing of females by males because they are female. (Russell, 2011)

Injuries to the breast, chest and abdomen are more common in battered women, as are the presence of multiple old and current injuries. Defensive injuries are common. For example, fractures, dislocations, and contusions of the wrist and lower arms result from attempts to fend off blows to the chest or face. (Guth & Pachter, 2000, p. 135)

Survivors of domestic violence can be burdened with long-term physical disabilities arising from injuries sustained during assaults. Female survivors have also been found to have a higher rate of health problems even after domestic violence ends than women who have never been abused, including gynaecological, central nervous system and chronic stress related problems (Campbell, Jones, Dienemann, Kub, Schollenberger, O'Campo, & Wynne, 2002).

In addition to suffering physical injuries and symptoms, women who are abused are likely to experience psychological problems, particularly depression, anxiety and suicide attempts (J.M. Golding, 1999; Helfrich, Fujiura, & Rutkowski-Kmitta, 2008; Jordan, Campbell, & Follingstad, 2010; Mertin & Mohr, 2000; Rees et al., 2011; Roberts, Lawrence, & Williams, 1998; Romito, Turan, & De Marchi, 2005). Moreover abused women were found to have no pre-existing mental disorders, suggesting that psychological symptoms resulted from domestic violence (Kessler, Molnar, Feurer, & Appelbaum, 2001). Abused women are also more likely to experience substance abuse problems than women who are not abused (J.M. Golding, 1999; Graham et al., 2008; Loxton, Schofield, Hussain, & Gita, 2006; Quinlivan & Evans, 2001).

Pregnant women who experience domestic violence are at increased risk of physical assault during pregnancy, which commonly includes being kicked or punched in the stomach and breasts (R. Dobash & Dobash, 1998; Pak, Reece, & Chan, 1998). In the *Personal Safety Study*, 59 per cent of female respondents who experienced domestic violence reported that they were pregnant during the course of the relationship. Just over a third indicated that violence during pregnancy had occurred and 17 per cent indicated that physical violence occurred for the first time during pregnancy (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2005). An increased rate of miscarriage and abortion (Fanslow, Silva, Whitehead, & Robinson, 2008; Pallitto, Campbell, & O'Campo, 2005; Webster, Chandler, & Battistutta, 1996), as well as poor

neonatal health outcomes including intrauterine growth retardation, low birth weight and/or other neonatal risks have also been documented in the research (Altarac & Strobino, 2002; Bullock & McFarlane, 1989; Murphy, Schei, Myhr, & Mont, 2001).

Children who experience domestic violence are directly and indirectly at risk of significant harm (Edleson, 1999b; Humphreys et al., 2008; Kellogg & Menard, 2003). A wide body of evidence finds that men who abuse their partners are also highly likely to abuse their children (Bancroft & Silverman, 2002; Edleson, 1999b; Laing, 2002; World Health Organisation & ISPCAN, 2006). The association between physical child abuse and domestic violence has been examined in over 30 studies, and the average co-existence rate within families studied was found to be 40 per cent, with a range of between 30 per cent and 60 per cent, when a narrow definition of child abuse was used (Edleson, 1999b). Results of a 2001 *National Crime Prevention study* in Australia found that of the ten per cent of young people who had been physically abused by their male carer, 55 per cent indicated the presence of domestic violence in their home, which was more than twice the rate for the comparison group who had not reported physical abuse. An American study of 3 363 parents found a near 100 per cent correlation between severe domestic violence and paternal physical child abuse (Ross, 1996). Similarly, although less explored, many published studies have identified a link between child sexual assault and domestic violence, with numerous studies suggesting that exposure to perpetrators of domestic violence is one of the strongest indicators of risk of incest victimization (Goddard & Hiller, 1993; Herman, 1981; M. Hester, Pearson, & Harwin, 2000; Kellogg & Menard, 2003; McCloskey, Figueredo, & Koss, 1995; Paveza, 1988; Roy, 1988; Sirls & Franke, 1989).

Numerous extensive reviews of published research over the last 30 years have concluded that childhood exposure to domestic violence is associated with significant negative consequences including death (Mouzos & Rushforth, 2003; Taft, 2002), physical, psychological, behavioural and developmental problems (Edleson, 1999b; Humphreys et al., 2008; Margolin, 2005; McFarlane, Groff, O'Brien, & Watson, 2003; Mullender et al., 2002; Wolfe, Crooks, Lee, McIntyre-Smith, & Jaffe, 2003). Although not equivocal, the bulk of research findings indicate that there is a higher prevalence of trauma symptoms (Levendosky

& Graham-Bermann, 2001), depression and anxiety (McCloskey et al., 1995), and cognitive and behavioural problems (O'Keefe, 1995) amongst children who experience domestic violence. An emerging body of evidence in the fields of neurobiology and trauma concludes that prolonged exposure to stress in the early years of life impacts the neurological development of children (Perry, 1997; Schore, 2003).

In a meta-analysis of 118 studies on childhood outcomes, Kitzmann, Gaylord, Holt, and Kenny (2003) found that children who experienced domestic violence performed significantly worse than non-exposed children on 21 developmental and behavioural indicators. No significant differences were noted between children who experienced domestic violence and were also directly abused and children who 'only' experienced domestic violence. In another meta-analysis of 84 published studies on childhood outcomes, 31 were identified as meeting rigorous research design criteria (Edleson, 1999a). Across the 31 studies, children who experienced domestic violence were consistently found to exhibit the following problems: psychological and emotional problems such as aggression, hostility, social withdrawal and depression; cognitive functioning problems such as lower verbal and quantitative skills and the development of attitudes supporting the use of violence; and longer term development problems such as depression, trauma-related symptoms and low self-esteem among women and trauma related symptoms among men (Edleson, 1999a).

Qualitative research drawing on the perspectives of children and young people who have experienced domestic violence attends to the diversity of children's lives, their resilience, and the complexity of their experiences of living with domestic violence including the ways in which they negotiate conflicting feelings towards their mothers and fathers (Blanchard et al., 1992; McGee, 2000; Mullender et al., 2002).

There has been an increasing emphasis on identifying factors that may mediate the impact of domestic violence. Research has consistently identified factors such as the child's age, gender, ethnicity and culture, severity of the violence, family supports and maternal wellbeing as contributing to childhood outcomes (Brooks, 2011). Research examining the impact of

domestic violence on mothering has matured from early studies that were predominantly deficit focused (Davies & Krane, 2006) to recent studies that highlight the multiple ways that many mothers compensate for and mediate the impact of domestic violence for their children (Humphreys, Thiara, & Skamballis, 2011; Laing, 2010; Lapierre, 2008; L. Radford & Hester, 2006).

1.3 Societal and institutional responses

Historically, society's response to domestic violence has been to blame the victims, predominantly women, for their own victimization and to exonerate men from taking responsibility (Herman, 1992). D. K. Anderson and Saunders (2003) argue that the subject most studied in the social science literature is the female victim of domestic violence and the question most asked is, 'why does she stay?' Comparatively, much less attention has been directed at trying to understand the motivations, actions and perceptions of men who perpetrate domestic violence.

When they have been considered, there is often a fragmentation of men who perpetrate domestic violence into discrete binary categories of partners/fathers. They are often viewed with monocular vision in society, with one eye, they are seen as men who have 'conflict' with their partners and with the other, they are seen as fathers. This fragmentation has resulted in a perception that men who perpetrate domestic violence against their female partners can simultaneously be 'poor partners' but 'good fathers.' This viewpoint is evidenced in many recent decisions of the Family Law Court of Australia, whereby domestic violence towards the mothers of their children is treated as an issue entirely separate to considerations about their fathering capacity (Hart & Bagshaw, 2008; Laing, 2010; Morris, 2009).

This binary is challenged by the significant body of evidence illustrating the co-existence of woman abuse and child abuse and has led to widespread calls for a more holistic response based upon a gendered analysis of family dynamics (Featherstone & Peckover, 2007; M. Hester, 2005; Morris, 2009). This is especially the case as historically responses to families experiencing domestic violence have been fragmented with a separation between services for

women, children and men. As a result of the second wave feminist movement, grass roots services for women emerged in the 1960s in the U.S.A. and Canada and in the 1970s in Australia, which were focused on providing refuge accommodation for women escaping domestic violence. Within the refuge establishment, feminist workers were primarily woman-centred and aimed to empower, educate and assist women and by proxy, their children to recover from and live free from future domestic violence. Refuge workers were also first to raise awareness and advocate for children living with domestic violence (McGregor & Hopkins, 1991).

When concerns are raised about men's violence against women, the institutional response often exonerates them from taking responsibility by attributing their violence to external factors such as alcohol, poverty, poor upbringing, and/or the 'provocative' behaviours of their victims. The research is divided between feminist approaches, which contend that men 'use control' to maintain power within their families and those who argue that men 'lose control,' due to external stressors (James, Seddon, & Brown, 2002).

1.4 Gender blind policies, practices and research

With the burgeoning of research examining the deleterious impact of domestic violence on children beginning in the 1980s, childhood exposure began to be framed as a child protection issue. The increased acknowledgement of the impact of domestic violence on children resulted in the institutional practice of reporting all exposed children to statutory child protective services in many western countries. This practice has not necessarily resulted in appropriate, proportionate and timely responses to children's needs (Hesse-Biber, 2007) and has overloaded already vulnerable systems (Humphreys, 2007). Indeed, as the historical analysis conducted by Gordon (1989) underscores, child welfare services have a controversial history in relation to responding to families where there is domestic violence (Humphreys & Absler, 2011b). Feminist critiques of historical and contemporary child protection services have centred on gender blind practices that exculpate violent fathers, construct victimized women as 'bad mothers,' yet hold them responsible for men's violence and offer solutions based upon a 'child rescue' discourse. Such critiques include the

argument that these pervasive practices are structural in nature rather than the result of poor professional practices (Collins, 1990; Fish, McKenzie, & MacDonald, 2009; Humphreys & Absler, 2011b).

Featherstone (2004) argues that the use of gender neutral terms like 'parenting' and 'family functioning' by policy makers, practitioners and researchers obscures the reality that it is women's actions that are scrutinized and different gender expectations are placed upon mothers and fathers. A number of studies have recently purported to study 'parenting' as a mitigating factor contributing to childhood outcomes, but when examined, only the behaviours and practices of mothers are scrutinized (Holden, Stein, Ritchie, Harris, & Jouriles, 1998; Levendosky & Graham-Bermann, 2001; Levendosky, Lynch, & Graham-Bermann, 2000; McCloskey et al., 1995; Wolfe, Jaffe, Wilson, & Zak, 1985).

Two large Canadian studies (Letourneau, Fedick, & Willms, 2007; Onyskiw & Hayduk, 2001) provide compelling examples of this gender bias. Both used data from the *National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth*, which is a 20 year study of 22 831 children aged newborn to 11 years of age tracking their development, health and wellbeing over time. Both studies use large samples, consisting of data relating to 11 221 children (Onyskiw & Hayduk, 2001) and 3 245 children (Letourneau et al., 2007). The first study tested the hypothesis that physical aggression in a family affects children's adjustment through both observational learning and through its impact on 'parenting.' (Onyskiw & Hayduk, 2001) Despite claiming to study the impact on 'parenting,' the authors of both studies specifically chose to exclude data pertaining to children if their fathers rather than their mothers had been interviewed in the NLSCY. In the second study the authors excluded fathers' data on the basis that they only included data provided by the 'PMK' (person most knowledgeable). One can only assume that the researchers did not believe that fathers could provide credible and knowledgeable information about their children or family situations.

In the first study, the authors explain that psychosocial and demographic variables shown in previous research to influence 'parenting' were included such as: maternal age, maternal education, maternal depression, maternal alcohol consumption, family income, family size,

family structure, and family tension due to alcohol consumption (presumably tension related to the alcohol consumption of mothers as no measures of fathers' alcohol use are listed). Mothers also answered questions purporting to measure their level of maternal responsiveness, child adjustment and how often children witnessed intra-family aggression. Children reported to witness more aggression were reported to behave more aggressively. Not surprisingly, since the only 'parenting' studied was the mothers, the research concluded that 'mothers who report being less warm and responsive in parenting reported that their children were more aggressive, had more internalizing behaviours and fewer pro-social behaviours.' (Onyskiw & Hayduk, 2001, p. 376) Mothering was scrutinized publically while fathering remained a private and hidden affair.

Similarly in the second study, the authors included data pertaining to 'parenting behaviours' but again only collected data regarding mothers' behaviours as they related to 1) positive discipline, 2) warmth and nurturance, and 3) consistency. Exposure to domestic violence was measured in the same way as the first study but additional information pertaining to social support and family functioning were also included. No data about fathers' parenting behaviours were included and the authors concluded that mothers of children exposed to domestic violence appear to have higher levels of depression, less education, and less available social support, live in households with lower socio economic status and higher levels of family dysfunction than mothers of children not exposed to domestic violence. Mothers of children exposed to domestic violence had lower mean level values on all three parenting behaviours assessed (Letourneau et al., 2007).

1.5 Men's behaviour change programs

The institutional response to men who perpetrate domestic violence originated in the criminal justice system, where the focus was on using legal remedies to address their criminal behaviour. Recently, there has been an increasing movement within Australia and other similar western countries towards directly engaging men who perpetrate domestic violence in the struggle to address this crime (National Council to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children, 2009). The context for the shift towards engaging men who perpetrate

domestic violence is multiple and has occurred amidst a political discourse endorsing 'holistic community responses' and a 'law and order' approach to domestic violence, promoting offender responsibility. Calls to directly engage men in efforts to address domestic violence have also been made in the midst of increased scepticism about the effectiveness of criminal justice responses, particularly for some groups of men such as Indigenous, those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, who are substance abuse dependant and/or from lower socio-economic strata (Sokoloff & Dupont, 2005). Furthermore, the growing awareness of the deleterious impact on women and children, the construction of domestic violence as a child protection concern, as well as increased scepticism about the effectiveness of programs that only engage with survivors, also form the contextual back drop for the increase in programs targeted at men who perpetrate domestic violence.

A commonly heard assertion is that educating men who perpetrate domestic violence about the impact on their children will result in a cessation or reduction in domestic violence. However, limited research has been conducted to test this assertion (National Institute of Justice, 2008; Stanley, Graham-Kevan, & Borthwick, 2012). In the absence of a substantial research base examining their fathering, these claims may be understood as based more on the 'rule of optimism' (Dingwall, Eekelaar, & Murray, 1983) than empirical evidence.

A critique of contemporary men's programs is that on the whole, they pay insufficient attention to the subject of fathering (Costello, 2006; Harne, 2011). Programs were originally developed in the U.K. and the U.S.A. and paid scant attention to men's dual roles as perpetrators of domestic violence and fathers (Stanley et al., 2012). Despite the subject of fathering frequently emerging in men's programs, with a few exceptions such as the *Caring Dads* program developed in Canada (Scott & Crooks, 2006), and the *Restorative Parenting Program* at the Domestic Abuse Project (DAP) in Minnesota, few programs comprehensively address the fathering practices of men who perpetrate domestic violence.

1.6 Methodology

The bulk of research with men who perpetrate domestic violence focuses on the effectiveness of perpetrator programs. Although participants were recruited from such a program, this inquiry does not centre on the process of change of the men within the program, but rather on their experiences and practices as fathers. Recruiting men who perpetrate domestic violence to participate in research studies is difficult for many reasons (Holden & Barker, 2004) hence, the approach to a men's program, was made on the basis of practical considerations such as safety and accessibility, rather than a desire to explore issues of program effectiveness.

As this inquiry concerns itself with considering how the participants construct meaning around their particular life experiences, a principally qualitative methodology was employed. Central to this analysis was a desire to invite the participant to freely and openly 'share his story' with the researcher. The qualitative method was therefore useful as it allowed for a broad and expansive exploration of this under researched area.

Although the study was primarily qualitative in nature, some quantitative methods were also utilized in order to triangulate the data collection process. Triangulation, or the combination of obtaining data from multiple sources in the study of the same phenomena is often advocated as a method strengthening research design (M. Patton, 2002). Given the sensitive nature of the subject material that was discussed, and the tendency of many male perpetrators of domestic violence to deny, minimize and externalize blame to other sources, for their abusive and often times criminal behaviours (Cavanagh & Cree, 1996; Cavanagh, Dobash, Dobash, & Lewis, 2001; R. Dobash et al., 2000; Gondolf, 2002a), a triangulated approach to data collection was adopted. A similar approach, which aimed at eliciting survivors' experiences of domestic violence, sexual assault and stalking was adopted for use in the 2010/11 British Crime Survey (BCS), which included a self-completion model on intimate abuse to complement data obtained in the face-to-face interviews. This approach was adopted to address the challenges of obtaining data about such a sensitive topic (K. Smith & Hall, 2011). With this in mind, at the conclusion of the semi-structured in-depth interview, each participant was asked to complete a number of quantitative instruments

including a demographic questionnaire (Appendix 1), the Violence Assessment Index (Appendix 2), the Injury Assessment Index (Appendix 3), and the Controlling Behaviours Index (Appendix 4 - Parts 1 & 2).

Undertaking feminist research with men who are violent to women and children was challenging on both an emotional and intellectual level. Given the lack of research in this area generally, and feminist research in particular, I frequently felt myself sailing uncharted waters. As this area is under researched and under theorized, a range of knowledges in the social sciences were reviewed, including literature and research from the following fields of scholarship: psychology, criminology, sociology, medicine, and social work. Knowledge gained from feminist scholarship and research, however provided an essential framework to help navigate the uncharted waters. This knowledge base was useful as a reference point in all phases of the project from choice of topic, through to research design, literature review and eventual analysis of the data.

1.7 Organisation of the Thesis

A brief outline of the organization of the thesis follows:

Following this opening chapter, chapter two describes the philosophical underpinnings of this inquiry including a discussion of epistemological and theoretical influences, which guided the research process. Chapter three reviews the fatherhood scholarship generally, as well as the literature examining the fathering of men who perpetrate domestic violence in particular. Chapters two and three contextualize the participants' descriptions of their subjective experiences of fathering.

Chapter four describes the methodology used in the study and methodological issues pertaining to research with men who perpetrate domestic violence are discussed.

Chapters five to eight present the findings of the research. Chapter five provides an introduction to the participants including a summary of basic demographic details such as

age, ethnicity, education, employment, income, marital and fatherhood status as well as health and welfare indicators such as mental health status, criminal justice involvement, and substance usage.

Chapter six details the narratives of the participants in relation to the nature and severity of their violence towards women and children, as well as their perception of the resultant actions taken by women and children.

Chapter seven explores the men's narratives regarding their view of the impact of their violence on women and children, which included both physical and emotional/psychological injuries.

Chapter eight presents a matrix model based upon two significant themes that emerged in relation to men's narratives regarding their perception of responsibility for domestic violence and their constructions of masculinity.

Chapter nine discusses the key findings of the inquiry in relation to the existing bodies of knowledge relevant to the topic of the fathering of men who are domestically violent. The implications of the findings are considered and the applicability of adopting a feminist intersectional analysis to understand men who use violence against women is explored. Concluding comments are also made in this chapter.

CHAPTER 2

THROUGH A FEMINIST LENS

2.1 Theoretical perspective

This qualitative research inquiry is underpinned by feminist theories. Feminist research is a general term for a range of approaches and methodologies sharing a commitment to 'produce useful knowledge that will make a difference to women's lives through social and individual change.' (Letherby, 2003, p. 317) Any research that aims to understand the oppression of women can be regarded as feminist research, including research focused on men (L. Kelly et al., 1994). Gannon and Davies (2007) contend that when it comes to feminist research 'there are many discourses of feminism in circulation, and we need, at times to deploy them all.' (p. 100) This inquiry is influenced by multiple feminisms and their varying contributions to theory building, research and activism aimed at 'debunking patriarchy' (Dominelli, 2002) generally, and addressing violence against women specifically. In particular, radical, poststructural and intersectorial feminist approaches to theorizing and researching in the area of domestic violence influenced and ultimately shaped my approach to this inquiry. Their relative contributions and limitations to knowledge building in the area of domestic violence are discussed below.

a.) Radical feminism

Hunnicutt (2009) argues that radical feminism has contributed the most scholarship on the subject of violence against women of all feminisms. Scholars from this perspective first identified patriarchy as the most crucial factor contributing to and maintaining violence against women at the personal level (Bograd, 1988; Brownmiller, 1975; Caputi, 1989; Firestone, 1970; Griffin, 1971; Millett, 1970; Russell, 1975). From this perspective, violence is seen as a tactic used by men to control women and to suppress women's 'rebellion and resistance to male domination, and to enforce the differential status of men and women that have traditionally been translated into laws and customs, in order to serve the collective interests of men.' (DeKeseredy, 2007, p. 6)

Although contested and criticized for being under theorised (Kandiyoti, 1988), radical feminism made a significant contribution to sociological understandings of violence against women by identifying gender as a set of power relations that are dynamic and historically contextualized. The sociological perspective stands in contrast to individual explanations, which although many and varied, locate the origins of domestic violence to deviant personal characteristics of the perpetrator and/or victim.

Radical feminist researchers in the domestic violence field have primarily concerned themselves with providing a space for female survivors of domestic violence, and more recently children and young people to voice their experiences. Historically, radical feminists argued strongly against directly engaging with men in research or service provision for multiple reasons including that such work diverts scarce resources away from women (Dominelli, 2002), drains women of energy that could be better directed towards helping other women (Firestone, 1970) and for perpetuating patriarchal gender roles locating women as the nurturers/carers of men (Eisenstein, 1983). Chung and Zannettino (2005) note that there has been much debate about what part (if any) feminist researchers and practitioners should play in the work with and about men who perpetrate domestic violence. There is now a growing number of feminists who assert that feminist work and research with male perpetrators is essential to the cessation of domestic violence (Cavanagh & Cree, 1996; Chung & Zannettino, 2005; Orme, Dominelli, & Mullender, 2000).

As radical feminist approaches do not have a strong tradition of intervening directly with male perpetrators of domestic violence, limited guidance in relation to how to conduct cross gender research in this area was available. However, it has been argued that 'research does not occur on a blank slate, but is shaped from the beginning choice of topic to the methodology and analysis by the theoretical perspective which is brought to the work.' (Lewins, 1998, p. 11) With this in mind, radical feminism did guide my research substantially, influencing my rationale for this inquiry, methodology, selection of anchor points for discussion and data analysis. Furthermore, the knowledge gained from theory and research grounded in this approach also informed this inquiry.

Radical feminism is a structural approach, which has and continues to, contribute heavily to theorizing, research and activism aimed at addressing domestic violence. Radical feminists argue that women are systematically oppressed along gendered lines by patriarchy. Violence against women has been conceptualized as one type of oppression perpetrated by men within this wider social structure (Bograd, 1988; Millett, 1970). Radical feminist researchers have a strong tradition of engaging in political activism and their efforts have led to increased recognition of the significance and prevalence of domestic violence, as well as to the establishment of services to assist survivors (R. Dobash & R. Dobash, 1979; J. Radford, 1994). Structural perspectives locate the root causes of male supremacy and female subordination within a patriarchal system of oppression. Structural approaches promote female solidarity, seek to uncover universal truths about men's and women's existence and location within patriarchal structures. As a result, solutions for social change lie in addressing structures and power imbalances that oppress women at all levels, including the individual, family, community and socio-cultural.

b.) Poststructural and postmodern feminism

Denzin and Lincoln (2013) argue that poststructural and postmodern feminist research influenced by French feminists and theorists continues to create controversy and invigorate debate amongst feminist researchers. This approach has gained in popularity as a theoretical perspective in domestic violence theorizing and research (Featherstone, 1996; Featherstone & Trinder, 1997). This perspective problematizes modernist approaches, such as radical feminism, to issues of difference, subjectivities and power in particular. Feminist postmodern and poststructural research pivot on examinations of text and promote the primacy of the struggle over meaning and the power of meaning that is discursively expressed through language.

Structural and poststructural perspectives differ in relation to the way they consider women's existence and relationship with men (Phillips 2013). Poststructural perspectives deny essentialist or universal categories such as radical feminism's theory of patriarchy. Furthermore, they argue that there are no single truths or essential experiences of being a

woman or a man. Social problems such as domestic violence are seen as 'discursive constructions,' which vary across cultures and time (Damant et al., 2008, p. 125). Poststructural perspectives question 'scientific objectivity' and dominant discourses, aim to expose binary thinking, celebrate diversity, privilege individual narratives and subjugated knowledges. Poststructural feminist research approaches question the validity of 'truth,' instead claiming that 'research into people's lives is only capable of eliciting partial stories or texts that withstand the integration of power and oppression.' (Denzin & Lincoln, 2013, p. 274) and 'constitute us as subjects in a determinant order.' (Hawkesworth, 1989, p. 549) With this in mind, Howe (1994) argues that all identity is meaning making, that is, rooted in language, and that meaning and truth are always provisional and shifting. Phillips (2013) argues that 'the strategic approach to social change is the deconstruction of existing theorization and the critique of discourse, knowledge, truth, reality, rationality and the idea of the socially constructed subject.' (p. 6)

More recently, poststructural feminists influenced by Foucault's analysis of the nature of power, have also made significant contributions to further theorizing on violence against women. Drawing upon the work of Foucault (1977) particularly, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, Westlund (1999) argues that survivors of domestic violence experience both 'pre-modern' and 'postmodern' power. In the patriarchal domestic sphere, male partners/sovereigns may employ tactics used in the pre-modern state, where corporal punishment was deployed in an 'intensely corporal and brutal manner' (p. 1045) to emphasize the unequal relationship between sovereign and subject. At the same time, survivors of domestic violence are subjected to the impersonal, meticulous, diffuse tactics of power and control deployed by postmodern institutions such as child protective services, courts, police and psychiatry. These institutions frequently pathologize victims of domestic violence 'analysing their psychological and emotional life rather than focusing on the batterer's quest for power and control' (p. 1059) and ultimately diagnosing her with a mental health issue (Westlund, 1999). An extreme example is provided by the study conducted by a British psychiatrist and published in the *British Medical Journal*, which uncritically rendered female survivors of domestic violence as pathological co-conspirators in their own abuse (Gayford

1975). In the same vein, in the child protection realm, mothers who experience domestic violence are frequently constructed as failing to protect their children.

c.) Intersectional approach

Yuval-Davis (2006) argues that the intersectional feminist approach has increasingly gained scholarly attention as an analytical and political frame since bell hooks (1981) scathingly critiqued the widespread analogy commonly used by feminists to draw parallels between the oppression of women and the oppression of blacks in her book, *Ain't I a Woman: Black Women and Feminism*. Critical legal theorist, Crenshaw is credited with naming the concept of 'intersectionality' in relation to her analysis of the discrimination faced by black women in the American work force. K. Crenshaw (1989) used the metaphor of an intersection to describe:

(w)hat occurs when a woman from a minority group ... tries to navigate the main crossing, with traffic in an intersection, coming and going in all four directions. Discrimination, like traffic through an intersection, may flow in one direction, and it may flow in another. If an accident happens in an intersection, it can be caused by cars traveling from any number of directions and, sometimes, from all of them. Similarly, if a black woman is harmed because she is in an intersection, her injury could result from sex discrimination or race discrimination ... But it is not always easy to reconstruct an accident: Sometimes the skid marks and the injuries simply indicate that they occurred simultaneously, frustrating efforts to determine which driver caused the harm. (p. 149)

The intersectional approach attends to the diversity of women's lived experiences and complex identities particularly as they are constituted within and between various social divisions, frequently but not exclusively including, race, class, ethnicity and sexual orientation with gender. The turn towards diversity in feminism has its origins in the critiques of feminist approaches which have attempted to universalize women's experiences and in so doing have privileged the experiences and concerns of white, educated, middle class women. As Monture-Angus (1995) argues:

Understanding how patriarchy operates in Canada without understanding colonization is a meaningless endeavour from the perspective of Aboriginal people. The Canadian state is the invisible male perpetrator who unlike Aboriginal men does not have a victim face. And at the feet of the state I can lay my anger to rest. Being able to name the state as my oppressor has allowed me to sit outside the personal cyclone of pain that once raged out of control in my life. ... (c)olonialism must be incorporated in feminist analysis. The women's movement has never taken as its central and long-term goal, the eradication of the legal oppression that is specific to Aboriginal women. (p. 24)

Such critiques have contributed to the development of the intersectional approach and the development of knowledge and research that examines the complexity of intersecting systems of oppression. As Dill (1987) argues a central tenet of the intersectional perspective is the notion that 'people live multiple, layered identities and can simultaneously experience oppression and privilege.' (p. 175) In this way, men who perpetrate violence against women can be seen to also have a 'victim face,' as described by Monture-Angus (1995). Yuval-Davis (2006) observes that a major point of difference in regards to the application of the intersectional approach relates to positioning with some focusing on the particular positions of women of colour (K. Crenshaw, 1989; Essed, 1991; Harding, 1991) and others focusing on the positions of general populations of people, including advantaged and disadvantaged (Brah & Phoenix, 2004; Yuval-Davis, 2006). The latter approach broadens the applicability of intersectional theory in the domestic violence field from studies, which have focused on those oppressed (principally women) to studies focusing on those privileged (principally men).

The intersectional approach has gained currency in the field of domestic violence research and practice, particularly as it offers an alternative to radical feminist approaches, which have been criticized for essentializing and postmodern approaches, which have been criticized for being nihilistic. However the best way to analyse and make sense of the complexities of identity as they are constituted in a multitude of social dimensions remains a contested issue. For example the issue of what dimensions should be considered (i.e. class, gender, race, culture, disability, sexuality, etc.) and promoted as relevant categories is the subject of considerable controversy. Furthermore the issue of whether the dimensions intersect, interact, are additive or irreducible is another contested issue. Regardless the intersectional approach offers a promising theoretical perspective that can be used to attend to the subtle nuances of women's and men's diverse experiences.

Building on early conceptualizations of patriarchy as the central system promoting violence against women, feminist scholarship has also integrated postmodern perspectives particularly in relation to beliefs about the nature of power, which is understood to operate diffusely at

micro and macro levels. The following definition of patriarchy engages with intersectorial and postmodern perspectives and will be used for the purposes of this thesis:

Patriarchy means social arrangements that privilege males, where men as a group dominate women as a group, both structurally and ideologically – hierarchical arrangements that manifest in varieties across history and social space. There are patriarchal systems at the macro level (bureaucracies, government, law, market, religion), and there are patriarchal relations at the micro level (interactions, families, organisations, patterned behaviour between intimates) ... Although gender hierarchies are the central organizing feature of patriarchal systems, age, race, class, sexuality, religion, historical location, and nationality mediate gender statuses, assigning males and females varying amounts of social value, privilege and power. (Hunnicut, 2009, p. 558)

This definition fixes on the centrality of patriarchy in contributing to and maintaining domestic violence but promotes a more nuanced understanding by attending to varieties of patriarchy which may account for the diversity of lived experiences of those perpetrating and living with domestic violence.

Increasingly the intersectional approach has been advocated as a theoretical framework to understand men who perpetrate domestic violence. For example Bograd (1999) argues:

(i) Intersectionality suggests that no dimension, such as gender inequality, is privileged as an explanatory construct of domestic violence, and gender inequality itself is modified by its intersection with other systems of power and oppression. So, for example, while all men who batter exercise some form of patriarchal control, men's relationships to patriarchy differ in patterned ways depending on where they are socially located. (p. 277)

This approach is also being used in intervention with men who use violent and other coercive controlling behaviours against women. For example, the '*Cultural Context Model*' developed by Almeida and Lockard (2005) seeks to hold men accountable for their domestic violence by challenging patriarchy, racism and classism and by promoting human rights and social justice. This approach regards as essential the social location of individuals within the contexts of power, privilege and oppression and seeks to build communities that support collaboration and nonviolence (Almeida & Lockard, 2005). Drawing upon the work of P. Freire (1972), male perpetrators of domestic violence are invited to develop and embrace a 'critical consciousness' to resist oppressive attitudes and behaviours that foster hierarchical social relationships. The '*Cultural Context Model*' seeks to understand men who perpetrate domestic violence by examining their behaviour in relation to their social location within a wider hierarchy of oppression. This does not mean that men's oppression within families is

condoned or excused. However, this approach is predicated on the view that men can be simultaneously both oppressors and oppressed, as a result of the intersection of those factors which variously constitute their identity, including such dimensions as gender, class and race. This approach was recently applied to research conducted by Rees and Peace (####) that explored the experiences of a particular group of marginalized men, namely refugees who had been violent to their partners.

2.2 Gender studies

Research in the field of men's studies (also referred to as the critical studies of men and/or masculinity studies) has engaged with feminist analyses. For example, scholarship in this area particularly, Connell's sociological theory of gender (Carrigan, Connell, & Lee, 1985; Connell, 1987, 1995, 2002; R. W. Connell & J. W. Messerschmidt, 2005) engages with feminist theories by emphasising the difference between sex and gender, and the relationship between social formation, power and gender. This work has contributed to questioning the validity of previous theories, such as sex role theory that narrowly constructed gender as one dimensional. Criticisms of sex role theory as argued by M. S. Kimmel (1987) and J. Pleck (1981) centred on conflating behaviours and norms, the consequences of essentialising categories of people on the basis of biological sex, and the lack of attention given to power as a contextual feature. Connell (2000) argues that understanding gender requires more than an examination of men as a statistical category. The social theory of gender, based upon extensive criticisms of the existence of a rigid 'male sex role' instead proposes the concept of multiple masculinities, embedded within power relations.

Feminists were among the first to identify the association between violence and male norms in many societies and cultures which stressed, 'values such as courage, inner direction, certain forms of aggression, autonomy, mastery, technical skills, group solidarity, adventure and considerable amounts of toughness in mind and body.' (Sexton, 1969, p. 20) The association between this early feminist insight about male socialization has more recently contributed to theorizing on hegemonic masculinity and violence.

Italian Marxist Gramsci is credited with developing the concept of hegemony to refer to 'the social structures and processes by which a dominant social group maintains and legitimates its privileged position.' (Harvey & MacDonald, 1993, p. 14) Although originally applied to class based dominance, feminists and other scholars in men's studies have applied the concept to describe the stratification of society based upon gender and gender based oppression. The ruling class maintains its domination through various means including persuasion particularly through the media, and the organisation of social institutions in ways that appear natural, ordinary, and normal. Donaldson (1993) describes that a central tenet of the concept is the employment of ideology, and in particular, the 'ideology of supremacy' of men over women. The use of violence by the dominant group is integral. 'A structure of inequality on this scale, involving a massive dispossession of social resources, is hard to imagine without violence. It is, overwhelmingly, the dominant gender who hold and use the means of violence.' (Connell, 1995, p. 83)

Hegemonic masculinity, has contributed to theorizing on violence against women and is 'defined as the configuration of gender practice which embodies the currently accepted answer to the problem of the legitimacy of patriarchy, which guarantees (or is taken to guarantee) the dominant position of men and the subordination of women.' (Connell, 1995, p. 77) Hegemonic masculinity, as described by Donaldson (1993) is a 'culturally idealized form, both personal and collective, it is about bread winning and manhood. It is exclusive, anxiety provoking internally and hierarchically differentiated, brutal and violent. Pseudo-natural, tough, contradictory crisis provoking, rich and socially sustained. Not all men have to practice it but all men gain from it in patriarchal society.' (p. 3) R. W. Connell and J. W. Messerschmidt (2005) argue that hegemonic masculinity does not necessarily equate with violence, even though violence promotes its existence, rather it refers to 'ascendancy achieved through culture, institutions and persuasion.' (p. 832)

In theorizing about why men are over represented in the perpetration of violent crime generally, and violence against women specifically, Connell (2002) proposes the idea of the 'patriarchal dividend,' which is defined as 'the advantage to men as a group from maintaining

an unequal gender order. The patriarchal dividend is reduced as gender equality grows. Monetary benefits are not the only kind of benefit. Others are authority, respect, service, safety, housing, access to institutional power, and control over one's life.' (p 142) Bufkin (1999) and Messerschmidt (1997) argue that the pursuit of hegemonic masculinity, rather than this form of masculinity on its own, explains men's over-representation in violent crimes and patterns of male aggression.

Hegemonic masculinity controls a hierarchy of 'subordinate masculinities' established to preserve the gender order (Donaldson, 1993). 'Subordinate masculinities' include groups of men who have been historically marginalized such as men who are gay, unemployed, uneducated and/or from Indigenous cultures or ethnic minority groups. Power differentials between men are understood to be relationally and hierarchically based and to exist between and within genders, with hegemonic masculinity at the apex. The gay liberation movement was pivotal in developing a comprehensive analysis of the oppression of men as well as oppression by men, (Altman, 1972) which stemmed from theorizing about homophobia-related violence against gay men by heterosexual men.

Ethnographic research examining men and masculinities has found evidence to support sociological understandings of gender, in particular evidence of multiple masculinities, which are associated with class and culture amongst Mexican men, (Gutmann, 1996), Peruvian men (Fuller, 2001) and Japanese men (Ishii-Kuntz, 2003). In efforts to understand men's experiences, attention must be given to men's gender practices, and the ways that they are mediated through the gender order, which defuses, positions, empowers and constrains men (Connell, 2000). Intersectional approaches to theorizing about men and masculinities promote an exploration of how gender practices are mediated through class, culture and health.

2.3 Summary

Over time, multiple feminisms have developed and have brought different strengths to understanding violence against women. Early feminist messages about domestic violence

include that it is common, based in gender inequality and female oppression, and affects women of all social standings, effectively cutting across stratifications of ethnicity and socioeconomic status (Nixon & Humphreys, 2010). Early feminist theories advanced the notion of a 'universal sisterhood' (Hannam, 2007) promoting the similarities of women's lived experiences.

Building on poststructural ideas, feminist academics attending to the diversity of women's lived experiences, have contributed to violence against women theorizing by examining the intersection between violence against women, gender, sexual orientation, culture, disability and poverty (Almeida & Durkin, 1999; Bograd, 1999; K. Crenshaw, 1995; Nixon & Humphreys, 2010; Sokoloff & Dupont, 2005). This perspective criticises much existing feminist scholarship for over representing the voices and experiences of middle class, well educated, white, heterosexual, women and questions the notion of a 'universal sisterhood' by examining the diverse experiences of women, especially those from marginalized groups in society. By exploring and legitimizing their experiences, poststructural feminists aim to expose dominant patterns and discourses, which subjugate women further. This body of work frequently referred to as the 'intersectorial perspective' examines the nature of violence against women and its differential impact on individuals by attending to the intersection of gender, class, race, sexual orientation and disability (Almeida & Lockard, 2005). This perspective provides the opportunity to develop more nuanced and sophisticated understandings of domestic violence (Nixon & Humphreys, 2010).

Crucial concepts born out of feminist scholarship and research that were fundamental in guiding my research and analysis included: the conceptualization of gender as socially, rather than biologically constructed; the location of patriarchy as a diffuse but fundamental system contributing to and maintaining violence against women, and the critical examination of much existing scholarship for excluding the voices and experiences of women in general and marginalized women in particular. Aspects of poststructural feminism such as its attention to diversity as well as, analyses of the nature of power were also useful paradigms guiding my research and analysis. As this thesis focuses on men who are domestically violent, it was

important to explore the ways in which these feminist theories can be applied to understanding this population.

CHAPTER 3

MEN, VIOLENCE, FATHERING

3.1 Introduction

The fathering experiences and practices of men who perpetrate domestic violence have been largely neglected in both the mainstream fatherhood scholarship and ‘batterer⁴’ scholarship. Challenging the binary categories of ‘violent men’ and ‘fathers’ has been a relatively new area of interest for scholars and researchers (Eriksson, Hester, Kueskinen, & Pringle, 2005; Featherstone & Peckover, 2007; M. Hester, 2004; L. Radford & Hester, 2006). Consistent with feminist understandings of domestic violence, this research locates the attitudes and behaviours of violent men as central to their patterns of relating in their dual roles as fathers and partners. This chapter begins with a review of the mainstream fatherhood scholarship since decisions in the areas of child protection and family law are heavily influenced by dominant themes arising from this field. Research examining attitudinal and behavioural characteristics of domestically violent fathers is then critically examined. A review of the limited scholarship that focuses on the intersection of fathering and men’s use of violence in intimate relationships concludes the chapter. This review contextualizes the participants’ narratives, which attended to their dual experiences of being fathers and using violence.

3.2 History and the social construction of fatherhood

The word, ‘patriarchy’ originating from the Latin word, ‘pater’ literally means rule of the fathers. Patriarchy, as defined by Adrienne Rich encompasses:

(a) familial-social, ideological, political system in which men-by force, direct pressure, or through ritual, tradition, law and language, customs, etiquette, education, and the division of labour, determine what part women shall or shall not play, and in which the female is everywhere subsumed under the male. (Rich, 1976, p. 57)

In more recent history, scholars interested in the study of motherhood and fatherhood have identified the influence of the social and cultural context in defining these constructs (Harne, 2011). The ‘historical flexibility of fatherhood’ (Marsiglio, Day, & Lamb, 2000) however

⁴ The term ‘batterer’ is used when citing North American scholarship, where the term is commonly used to refer to men who perpetrate domestic violence.

stands in contrast to the institution of motherhood, which although responsive to social change, has consistently been constructed upon gender based assumptions biologically defining women as the 'natural' carers and nurturers of children. Although the construction of fatherhood has varied across time, the transmission of masculinity has remained a stable feature, legitimizing and distinguishing fatherhood from motherhood.

In the seminal work of Pleck (1984), the variability of the fatherhood role in American history is examined and four distinct social-historical periods are identified alongside their accompanying dominant fathering motifs. One of the most notable contributions to emerge from this work is the identification of fatherhood and fathering practices as historically varying social constructions responsive to changing social and cultural expectations of the particular period under examination (Griswold, 1993; Lamb, 2000; Marsiglio & Cohan, 2000; Pleck, 1984; E. H. Pleck & Pleck, 1997).

The first period stretching from Puritan times through the Colonial period and ending with the formation of the Republic, saw the dominant role of fathers as one of 'moral teacher or guide.' Although both mothers and fathers were expected to care for children, fathers were primarily responsible for overseeing children's education and moral development. In particular, social expectations encouraged fathers to ensure that children were literate to enable them to read the Scriptures in order to become morally upright Christian citizens. During this period, fathers dominated the domestic sphere and the social expectation of mothers was to submit to the will of husbands in all matters including childrearing. Paternal authority persisted into adulthood with the father's influence and control continuing to dominate family life (Rotundo, 1985). Fathers were expected to discipline 'errant' wives and children as required. In fact, English common law enshrined the right of husbands to give their wives 'moderate correction' which included confinement. Guidance on the boundaries of 'moderate correction' was established in 1782 when a magistrate ruled that a man could effectively use an implement no wider than his thumb to beat his wife (Walker, 1984).

Furthermore, the English common law doctrine of 'coverture' enshrined men's property rights, which included wives and children. This legal doctrine classified women according to their relationship status with men and afforded differential legal status to married and single women. A single woman, or 'feme sole' had the right to own property and/or enter into contracts while a married woman, or 'feme covert' did not. Furthermore, a 'feme covert' was also not entitled to hold her own salary nor to acquire an education without her husband's permission (Beard, 1946).

The second or industrialization period marked a significant shift in the role of the father, which persisted from the mid 19th century through to the Great Depression. The reduced reliance on an agrarian lifestyle and subsistence living created a division between work and home life and many men sought work and status outside the family domain. Providing financially for one's family became the yardstick upon which fathers were judged. Significant aspects of traditional fatherhood such as the moral overseer role were supplanted by new expectations, particularly that fathers provide strong male role models (Demos, 1986). The role of family disciplinarian continued to be ascribed to fathers but their absences from the home lessened their emotional, familial ties and paternal authority in the domestic sphere. Success as a male role model was increasingly established through occupational and economic success (Rotundo, 1985). This shift from the traditional actively involved father to the 'good provider/role model' has been attributed to the creation of a more distant, detached and constricted motif of fatherhood (Tanfer & Mott, 1997), one which persists to the present day.

The father as male role model was promulgated in psychoanalytic theory, originating in the early 20th century work of Sigmund Freud. This particular fatherhood motif was and continues to be, extremely influential. The quintessential father is a strongly hegemonic masculine figure whose function is to provide a male role model for his family and particularly his sons. Demonstrating psychological and physical strength, being dominant, assertive, decisive and providing economically for his family are the hallmarks of the successful hegemonic father (Lamb, 2000). Freud opined that the father-child relationship was more integral to child development than the mother-child relationship. His 'Oedipus Complex,' central to his theory

of personality development, was postulated as a universal stage of 'normal' psychological development. The Oedipal father is characterised within the psychiatric literature as a powerful, punishing, frightening, castrating and controlling figure (Machtlinger, 1981).

Psychoanalytic theory had a significant influence on the study of fathering and child development. The main thrust of research between 1920 and 1940 pivoted on measuring the degree to which boys identified with and modelled their fathers. In practice, the dominant concern in this period was to determine the degree to which boys behaved like or perceived themselves to be comparable to their fathers (Lyn, 1969; Mussen, 1967). Lamb (2000) argues that the typical study in this period examined some feature of the father's masculinity, such as his level of dominance or assertiveness and compared it to the same feature of the son's masculinity or personality, in order to measure the extent of the successful transfer of male traits (Lamb, 2000). Scant attention was paid to the father-daughter relationship.

The upheaval, disturbance and disruption caused by events such as the Great Depression, and the two World Wars created a context for questioning previous assumptions governing many aspects of family and social life that had been hitherto taken for granted. This led to the third period, identified by Pleck (1984) in which a literature burgeoned questioning the adequacy of previous discourses of masculinity and fathering practices.

Deriving from psychoanalysis, Bowlby's 'attachment theory' emerged in Britain post World War II. This theory, described as the most important theoretical advance in the study of socialization since the emergence of psychoanalysis (Buchanan, 2008; Lamb, 2000) focused on the relationship between personality development, interpersonal behaviour, and the quality of the social environment during childhood (Howe, 1996). Attachment theory had and continues to have, widespread influence in research and practice in the areas of child and family health, welfare and policy.

Bowlby (1951) considered the psychological implications of maternal deprivation on orphans institutionalized due to the effects of World War II. He argued that the absence of a primary

attachment figure, particularly in the early years, left a child vulnerable to significant psychological, social and cognitive damage. Although Bowlby used non-gendered language such as 'primary attachment figure,' the bulk of the literature describes the behaviour and attitudes of mothers. Bowlby argued that the type and quality of the initial attachment relationship between mother and child created a template for all subsequent social relationships.

Ainsworth, Blehar, Waters, and Wall (1978) outlined a classification system describing five types of attachment experiences with concomitant mothering practices and implications for personality and social development. Proponents of attachment theory argue that 'secure attachment patterns result when **mothers** (emphasis added) are alert and sensitive to the needs of their children and when the communication between parents and children is rich and full, reciprocal and accurate, synchronous and harmonious. This promotes a sense of potency and self worth and a personality type generally regarded as positive, socially competent and likeable.' (Howe, 1996, p. 9) It is proposed that mothers who provide children with a 'secure base' and 'safe haven' enable their offspring to perform tasks fundamental to the social evolutionary survival of the species. For example, children who feel secure in the knowledge that they can return to the safe base (ie. mother) in the face of danger are said to be empowered to leave the mother and learn through the exploration of their environment.

The wide spread use of attachment theory has been a double-edged sword in the fight for the rights of women and children. On one side, it has led to a scientific discourse giving primacy to mothers' significant contributions in child development, which had hitherto been missing. On the other side, its uncritical application has led to a culture of blaming mothers for children's behaviour problems even when those problems stem from men's use of violence and control in domestic relationships (Edleson & Williams, 2007).

Furthermore, Lamb (2000) criticizes attachment theory for largely ignoring the father-child relationship, narrowly concentrating on mothers and excluding the potential impact of fathers and other people on children's development. Lewis (2000) argues that the social, affective

and cognitive development of children is not determined unilaterally by the quality of the mother-infant attachment. Rather children's development is seen as being influenced by numerous relatively independent systems developing simultaneously, as opposed to stemming sequentially from the mother-infant relationship. R. E. Dobash and Dobash (2000) argue that attachment theory has also been used as a conservative ideology to exclude people, principally women, from competing economically during times of recession. The uncritical application of attachment theory can also lead to culturally insensitive practices, which disregard multiple and diverse child rearing practices, many of which do not pivot on the white, middle class concept of a primary attachment model of parenting.

The 1960s and 70s saw an increase in research investigating the 'monotropic' claims of attachment theory as well as examining the effects of fatherlessness on children and society. Against a backdrop of social changes including increased female participation in the labour force, and increased divorce rates, many fathers became increasingly involved in child-care. As a result, the discourse that propagated that mothers were the only suitable caregivers to children was questioned and research increasingly explored the father-child relationship in more detail. At the same time social scientists became more intent on operationalizing concepts such as 'father involvement' and frequently used time-use methodologies to measure things like the amount of time that fathers spent with their children.

The last period identified by Pleck (1984) beginning in the mid 1970s and persisting to the present day, marks the return to an expectation that fathers be actively and practically involved in meeting the day to day basic physical and emotional needs of their children, work that in recent history has been labelled as 'mothering.' Contemporary fathering discourses, although containing many of the expectations from previous generations such as an emphasis on breadwinning, guidance and sex role modelling, also highlight paternal care and sensitivity.

Studies of fathering practices in the 1970s and 80s primarily focused on issues such as: paternal sensitivity and responsiveness; paternal-infant attachment; and the level of father-

child involvement. The capacity and desire of fathers to respond to infants' attachment behaviours has been the subject of much research and the majority of the findings concluded that there were no biologically based sex differences in responsiveness to infants (Feldman & Nash, 1981; Feldman, Nash, & Cutrona, 1977; Frodi, Murray, Lamb, & Steinberg, 1984). Rather differences related more to variables that researchers believed were associated with societal pressures and expectations, particularly paternal age and socio-economic status.

The degree of emotional connectedness that fathers felt for their infants was also increasingly explored in the 1970s and 80s. Qualitative studies exploring fathers' emotional responses soon after child birth found that most fathers reported feeling elated at this time (Greenberg & Morris, 1974). Other research found that men continued to feel emotionally connected to their infants and reported similar anxiety levels upon leaving them in the care of someone other than the mother (Deater-Deckard, Scarr, McCartney, & Eisenberg, 1994). No biologically based sex differences were found between mothers and fathers introduced to their newborn babies for the first time (Klaus, Kennell, Plumb, & Zuehlke, 1970; Rodholm & Larsson, 1979) and men and women were found to be equally involved in interactions with their newborns when observed in maternity ward settings (Parke, O'Leary, & West, 1972). Both were observed to respond appropriate to the feeding cues of their infants (Parke & Sawin, 1980) although fathers were observed to leave responsibility for child caring tasks to mothers.

A number of other studies have examined father-child sensitivity and responsiveness. Donate-Bartfield and Passman (1985) found fathers less likely to respond to their crying infants when compared with mothers. Fathers recognized the cues of their eight month-old infants, regarding their interests and activities less often when compared with mothers (Power & Parke, 1983). However, mothers and fathers were found to change their speech patterns equally when communicating with their babies. The researchers concluded that whilst fathers can be equally responsive to infants when compared with mothers, they are often observed to be less sensitive. In a large-scale study of parent-infant interactions conducted by Heermann, Jones, and Witkoff (1994), fathers were rated lower in scales of sensitivity at

every age when compared with mothers. Belsky, Gilstrap, and Rovine (1984) found fathers to be less actively engaged in interaction with their infants at one month, three months and nine months, however these differences narrowed over time. The researchers found a parallel relationship between the degree of father-child interaction and partner interaction. For example, fathers who were more engaged in partner interaction had higher levels of engagement with their infants (Belsky et al., 1984). Other studies have also found a correlation between paternal sensitivity and the degree to which fathers are actively involved in the day-to-day care of their infants (Donate-Bartfield & Passman, 1985; Zelazo, Kotelchuck, Barber, & David, 1977).

3.3 The generative father

The concept of the 'generative father' was first applied to the fatherhood literature by Snarey (1993) who conceived of fathering as 'generative work' inspired by the developmental lifespan model developed by Erickson (1950). In this model, the term 'generativity' was used to describe a developmental stage in which the crisis is to achieve a balance between creativity, productivity and procreation rather than stagnation and self-absorption. This adult caring work is believed to strengthen the next generation. Snarey (1993) argues that there is strong empirical evidence to demonstrate that fathering benefits society presently and in the future.

This narrative of the 'generative father' is pervasive in contemporary western culture, promoted in the public policy arena and frequently promulgated as the panacea for many societal problems. Marsiglio et al. (2000) argue that different stakeholder groups with vested interests in propagating particular images of fatherhood and paternal involvement, have contributed their often emotionally charged views on the subject. For example, the National Congress for Fathers and Families, a peak American 'responsible fatherhood group' argues that

More than any other single factor, the absence of biological fathers is the leading cause of many of our nation's problems. Crime, drug problems, teen violence, inner-city strife and juvenile delinquency are cited among the results of fatherless homes. The compelling implication of these findings is clear: one parent is simply not enough. (Ballard, 1995 in Edleson & Williams, 2007, p. 9)

Furthermore, fathers' rights advocates assert that women and children are less at risk of poverty, child abuse and domestic violence when the biological father is in residence (Pardue & Rector, 2004).

Indeed, the discourse of the 'absent father,' which emerged in the 1960s when societal concerns about the impact of fatherlessness received widespread attention, was causally linked with a multitude of social and individual problems in America as well as other western countries (Lamb, 2000). This discourse continues to dominate discussions and scholarship to the present with 'fatherlessness' continuing to be named as the root problem behind a multitude of social ills.

In Western countries, the institutional response to the so-called 'crisis of the absent father' has included legal and policy reforms. In America for example, Congress passed the Responsible Fatherhood Act of 1999, aiming to 'promote stable and married families, responsible fathering, and a particular emphasis on reversing the growing trend toward absentee fathering that has taken a terrible toll not only on our children but our nation as a whole.' (Davidoff, 1999, p. 28) In the U.K. similarly there has been an increase in policy discourses promulgating the view that families and children fare better in homes with fathers due to presumptions about both the economic resources they contribute and the uniquely masculinised parenting contribution that they bring, particularly to their sons (Harne, 2011).

Furthermore many Western governments, including the last Australian federal Liberal government led by John Howard, enacted legal reforms in the area of family law to address claims of 'paternal alienation' by fathers' rights advocates. Howard argued:

(T)hat one of the regrettable features of society at the present time is that far too many young boys are growing up without proper male role models. They are not infrequently in the overwhelming care and custody of their mothers, which is understandable ... and with an overwhelming number of teachers being female, in primary schools in particular—many young Australian boys are at the age of 15 or 16 before they have a male role model with whom they can identify. (Howard, 2003, p 17278)

The 2006 amendments to the Family Law Act in Australia contained a presumption in favour of shared parenting as well as the controversial 'Friendly Parent Provision.' These reforms

were heralded as being in the best interests of children. However many critics have argued that the changes had the reverse effect and actually placed many women and children at risk, particularly those subjected to domestic violence and child abuse (Laing, 2010). Whether these changes serve the best interests of children or fathers is contested.

Tanfer and Mott (1997) argue that assertions about the impact of father absence on children are not based upon sound empirical evidence. Summarising the large body of child developmental research examining the impact of increased paternal involvement and children's wellbeing, they conclude that increased paternal involvement does not automatically result in improved child outcomes. Rather, the bulk of research indicates that children's wellbeing is mediated by numerous factors primarily relating to the mother, the father and the child. Harne (2011) argues that the evidence from studies examining the impact of fathering on children's mental health outcomes are equivocal and contradictory, despite the repeated assertions by many contemporary politicians and policy makers that children fare better when fathers are present.

Further, claims that fathers contribute uniquely masculinised parenting opportunities have also been contested. The proposition that fathers are instrumental in teaching sons 'how to be men,' has been found to frequently equate to fathers transmitting constructions of dominant or hegemonic masculinity inter-generationally. Findings from longitudinal studies suggest that fathering contributes to assertive behaviours in sons but compliant behaviours in daughters (Flouri, 2005). Furthermore, research has found that it is not clear whether fathers' involvement provides unique nurturance that can not be as readily provided by substitute caregivers (Tanfer & Mott, 1997).

Additionally, the idea promulgated by fathers' rights advocates that fatherhood at all costs should be the goal is questionable with an increasing body of evidence showing that children's wellbeing and development is predicated on the complex interaction of multiple factors including separation, divorce, abuse and family wellbeing (Catlett & Artis, 2004). The essentialist assertion that all families benefit from the presence of fathers, is simplistic and not

grounded in evidence. Moreover, the issues are made even more complex when considering fathers who are domestically violent (Harne, 2011; Williams, 2001).

Furthermore, the body of fatherhood scholarship has been criticized for its methodological limitations. For example, the bulk of the literature is based upon studies of the fathering practices of affluent, well educated, white, American men whilst limited attention has been given to the fathering practices of men from other cultures and/or lower socio-economic groups (Lamb, 2000). Of particular relevance for this thesis is the argument that the fathering literature has largely neglected fathers from marginalized groups including the subset of men who abuse the mothers of their children (Booth & Crouter, 1998; Phares, 1997; Silverstein & Auerbach, 1999). In fact in a literature review on the role of fathers in families (D. Johnson, 1996) commissioned by the National Centre on Fathers and Families in the U.S.A., there is no mention of fathers who perpetrate domestic violence. This is despite the widespread prevalence of domestic violence.

3.4 Men who perpetrate domestic violence

Knowledge about male perpetrators, like knowledge in the domestic violence field generally, has been distinctly bifurcated between psychopathological and sociological approaches. A central point of divergence lies in the analysis of the origins of domestic violence, with psychological approaches attributing responsibility to characteristics of the perpetrator and/or victim and sociological approaches attributing responsibility to factors embedded within macro systems such as cultures and societies. It follows that approaches to working with men are also divided and contested. Psychological approaches rooted in the medical model offer 'treatment' addressing individual 'pathology.' Sociological approaches rooted in feminist understandings of domestic violence attend to the influence of patriarchal social structures and discourses.

a.) Psychopathological approaches

The psychopathological approach is cited as the earliest framework to conceptualize domestic violence and continues to contribute to knowledge about men who perpetrate

domestic violence (Pagelow & Pagelow, 1984). The earliest psychiatric writings are based upon small, non-representative subsamples of men incarcerated for murder, attempted murder or severe assault. Their violence is attributed to mental and/or physical illness based in biological abnormalities such as temporal lobe epilepsy, brain lesions, episodic dyscontrol syndrome, metabolic disorders (Dutton, 1998) or pathological dependency (Snell, Rosenwald & Robey, 1964; Faulk, 1974 in Jordan et al., 2010). For example, a frequently cited study by Faulk (1974) concluded that of 23 men who had either killed or seriously injured their partners, 70 per cent were diagnosed with a psychiatric disorder. The findings from exceptional case studies 'served as a basis for the over generalized conclusion that all men who assault their wives do so because of pathology or psychiatric disorder.' (Jordan et al., 2010, p. 26)

With the exception of studies examining extreme cases of domestic violence, the systematic study of men who perpetrate domestic violence is a relatively recent phenomenon in psychiatry and psychology. For example, Dutton (1998) emphasizes that the *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, the seminal publication on issues relating to marital and other domestic relationships, did not contain one reference to 'violence' from 1939 through 1969. Descriptions of marriages as 'conflicted' appeared in the literature but they were certainly not labelled as involving violence (Dutton, 1998).

Domestic violence was portrayed as a rare occurrence perpetrated by a minority of deviant individuals who possessed significant emotional problems or alcohol addictions (Oneill, 1998). For example, Pizzey attributed domestic violence to the 'sadistic character' (Pizzey, 1974 in Jordan et al., 2010) of offenders. Viewing men who abused and controlled their partners and children as aberrant or deviant characters perpetuated the view that domestic violence and child abuse were rare and separate events (Jordan et al., 2010; Oneill, 1998).

As Finkelhor explains:

In all cases they were analysed as extremely pathological behaviours. Incest offenders were seen as backwoods degenerates and feeble minded freaks. Child beaters were seen as depraved. Wife beaters were seen as alcoholic rogues and psychopaths and were considered to come from only extremely lower class and disorganized families. (Finkelhor in Oneill, 1998, p. 111)

Similarly, in her historical study of violence in American families, Gordon (1989) found that from the perspective of the child protection movement the 'brutalizer of women and children had the same face – the drunken, brutal, poor immigrant male.' (p. 253)

b.) Exonerated men, culpable women

The early psychopathological approach devoted more attention to studying female victims of domestic violence than male perpetrators. The reluctance of violent men to participate in research studies and the bias of the researchers are cited as reasons for the gender bias evident in the literature (Herman, 1992; Oneill, 1998). Engaging violent men in research focusing on their behaviour has been particularly problematic and researchers have overly relied upon women to divulge information about their violent partners (Humphreys & Absler, 2011b). This has contributed to the tendency to pathologize victims of violence, as well as perpetrators. Herman (1992) argues that a compelling example is evident in a psychiatric study of female victims of domestic violence initially designed to be the first systematic study of male perpetrators. As few men, but all of their female partners, agreed to participate in the research, the scope of the study was changed to an examination of the 'psychopathology' of female victims. Female participants were labelled as 'domineering, masochistic, frigid, aggressive, indecisive, masculine, passive, overprotective of their sons, emotionally deprived and the researchers concluded that domestic violence fulfilled these women's masochistic needs.' (Herman, 1992, p. 117) The researchers opined that the wives needed periodic 'punishment from their castrating activity and the men's violence served to re-establish (their) masculine identities.' (Snell, Rosenwald, & Robey, 1964, p. 111) Furthermore, they offered 'treatment' which included teaching a woman to 'stop provoking domestic violence, by consenting to violent sex with her partner and ceasing to ask her 16 year-old son for assistance after she was beaten.' (Herman, 1992, p. 117) The absence of scientific literature on the perpetrator of domestic violence contributed to the fact that this article was quoted widely and taken as scientific fact regarding the psychology of battered women for many years (Oneill, 1998).

British psychiatrist Gayford's (1975) work further illustrates the gender bias inherent within the psychopathological literature. Published in the *British Medical Journal*, he reports on his study of 100 battered women who received medical treatment. The following description illustrates the 'typical' level of violence experienced by participants:

He hit me with his fists, feet, and bottles, smashing me to the floor; then he started to kick, sometimes with repeated blows to the face and other parts of the body. He has kicked me in the ribs and broken them, he has tried to strangle me and taken me by the shoulders and banged my head against the floor. During my marriage of nearly four years I have received constant bruises all over my body, this has been more so during pregnancy. I have received black eyes, cut lips, and swollen nose. Most of my bruises have been to the scalp where they do not show. On one occasion I had bruises to the throat and abdomen and was unable to speak, on admission to hospital I was found to have multiple injuries and broken ribs. (Gayford, 1975, p. 195)

Despite not interviewing a single man, Gayford describes the men as having low frustration tolerance, and attributes their loss of control to the influence of alcohol. He describes the men savagely brutalizing their partners, often with the aid of weapons and sometimes during pregnancy, but opines that few were sadistic. Battered women however, are described as responsible for the violence that they suffered:

A few women present as extremely damaged personalities who will need long-term support with their children. Often they need protection against their own stimulus-seeking activities. Though they flinch from violence like other people they have the ability to seek violent men or by their behaviour to provoke attack from the opposite sex. (Gayford, 1975, p. 197)

Furthermore, women are described as being responsible for their 'disastrous marriages, often undertaken precipitately by a desire to leave home and attracted by the protective image of their men' (p. 196) and 'at least 25 did have a warning of what was to come, by being battered before a marriage.' (p. 195) Furthermore, he adds that 'mating theories are against her finding a future stable relationship. Few men want the responsibility of other people's children, especially if disturbed. At an age of 30 and with these handicaps she cannot afford to be too selective about her partners.' (p. 197) In later publications, he describes his typology of battered women which includes categories such as; 'Tortured Tina,' 'Fanny the Flirt,' and 'Go-Go Gloria.' (Gayford 1976 in Oneill, 1998)

Scutt (1983) argues that gender bias is also apparent in the way that male and female victims of domestic violence are portrayed in the psychopathological literature. Furthermore, she

argues that whilst female victims of domestic violence are often labelled 'masochistic,' male perpetrators are rarely given the corresponding label 'sadistic.'

c.) Contemporary psychopathological approaches

The typical modal study in the last 30 years has been one in which male perpetrators of domestic violence have been compared to non-violent men on a range of personality, behavioural and demographic characteristics (Caesar, 1988b; Dutton, 1998; Gondolf, 1998; L.K. Hamberger & Hastings, 1986; D. Saunders, 1992). The presence of psychopathology, substance abuse, exposure to family of origin violence – including domestic violence, stress levels and socio-economic status are common comparative variables. The research findings are varied and at times contradictory, but useful to consider as they provide some insight into particular attitudes and behaviours correlated with battering, which Guille (2004) argues could affect their fathering.

Men who perpetrate domestic violence are more likely to have been abused in childhood or to have been exposed to domestic violence in their family of origin than non-violent men (Beasley & Stoltenberg, 1992; Brisson, 1981; Caesar, 1988a; L.K. Hamberger & Hastings, 1991; Kalmuss, 1984; Rosenbaum & O'Leary, 1981). However, many have highlighted methodological limitations in this body of research, particularly the intergenerational transmission of violence theory (Kaufman & Zigler, 1987; Widom, 1989) and there is general agreement that exposure to violence in childhood is a risk factor, rather than a causal factor in later violence usage (Jaffe, Wilson, & Wolfe, 1990).

Although there is general agreement in the literature that the relationship between domestic violence and substance abuse is complex and multi-dimensional (Bennett & Williams, 2003), numerous studies have found a high incidence of substance abuse amongst batterers (Chermack et al., 2008; Gondolf, 1998; Tolman & Bennett, 1990). In comparison with men who do not perpetrate domestic violence, more perpetrators have been found to exhibit chronic alcohol abuse and numerous studies have found a correlation between alcohol and/or other drug usage and violent behaviour (Brisson, 1981; Fitch & Papantonio, 1983; L.K.

Hamberger & Hastings, 1991; Rosenbaum & O'Leary, 1981). However, other studies have shown that batterers are just as likely to act violently when sober and to commit a range of hands-off domestic violence offences when not drug-affected (Rounsaville, 1978). Other research has found that alcohol and/or other drugs are most likely to contribute to violence when the perpetrator believes that they will (Bancroft & Silverman, 2002; Gelles, 1993).

Higher rates of personality disorders, including antisocial, borderline, narcissistic and dependent personality disorders, as well as mood disorders such as depression and anxiety have been found amongst men who perpetrate domestic violence (Dutton, 1998; L.K. Hamberger & Hastings, 1986). However, concerns over labeling batterers as 'sick,' have been voiced by feminists who argue that this construction excuses their behaviour and obfuscates the social factors that contribute to domestic violence. Tolman and Bennett (1990) also highlight that overemphasizing characteristics that differentiate men who perpetrate domestic violence from other men, may hide crucial similarities or macro socio-cultural characteristics that promote and perpetuate domestic violence.

Male perpetrators of domestic violence are found in every socio-economic strata but men from lower economic, occupational and educational status are over represented in epidemiological research (L. Kennedy & Dutton, 1989; M. D. Smith, 1990; Straus & Smith, 1990). In a study of risk factors associated with domestic violence perpetration, M. D. Smith (1990) concluded that the lower the income, the greater the probability of abuse and the greater the probability that the man ascribed to the ideology of familial patriarchy.

d.) Batterer Typologies

Despite common characteristics, there is no single unifying psychological profile that consistently differentiates men who batter from men who do not (Beasley & Stoltenberg, 1992; L.K. Hamberger & Hastings, 1991; Sonkin, 1988). However, since the 1980s a growing trend within the psychopathological approach has been to classify batterers according to personality, behavioural and demographic characteristics.

L.K. Hamberger and Hastings (1986) developed the first typology to be based upon empirical research with men who had perpetrated domestic violence by using the MCMI (Version I)⁵, which was administered to 99 men who had perpetrated domestic violence and who were participating in therapy. The authors concluded that there were three types of batterers; antisocial/narcissistic, schizoid/borderline and dependent/compulsive. Subsequent models have classified batterers according to their psychopathology in conjunction with their use of violence. Many typologies contain tri-modal classification systems, some of which are listed below (Dutton, 1988; Holtzworth-Munroe & Anglin, 1991; D. Saunders, 1992).

Table 3:1 Summary of batterer typologies

Holtzworth-Munro and Anglin (1991)	Saunders (1992)	Dutton (1998)
Generally violent/antisocial	Type 2 (generally violent)	Psychopathic /Antisocial
Dysphoric/borderline	Type 3 (emotionally volatile)	Overcontrolled
Passive-dependent (family only)	Type 1 (emotionally suppressed)	Cyclical/Emotionally Volatile

Proponents of the use of subtypes believe that batterers can be distinguished by their psychopathology, emotional control and use of violence. Emotional control relates to the degree of control that they feel over their emotions, while use of violence refers to the type and severity of violence and the motivations of the batterer. For example it is argued that over controlled perpetrators deny their rage while feeling a persistent sense of frustration and resentment whilst impulsive perpetrators act violently in response to a building inner tension, whilst men using violence instrumentally act in a rational, calculated fashion to obtain desired outcomes.

The typology literature suggests that perpetrators vary in relation to the severity and generality of their violence as well as their psychopathology. For example, in distinguishing types of batterers, primacy is given to identifying features such as: who are the victims of their

⁵ MCMI (Version I) or Millon Clinical Multiaxial Inventory is a psychological assessment tool which is used to assess psychopathology.

violence and abuse; the type and severity of their violence; and the existence of mental health issues. Research in this area has contributed to the knowledge base particularly by identifying variance amongst the population of men who perpetrate domestic violence. However, it is noted that the typology literature does not sufficiently attend to issues of gender and power, which are central aspects of feminist analysis. For example, men's varying constructions of masculinity and their beliefs about the relationship between domestic violence and gender are not central features of the typology literature.

Another aspect missing from the typology literature is a consideration of the possible relationship between batterer typology and fathering practices. For example, there is no research which specifically examines fathering practices apropos typologies and Guille (2004) hypothesizes that there may be a relationship between fathering and characteristics of batterers. For example,

A father who is a Type 1 batterer and who experiences his actions as ego-dystonic may try to account for his behavior by teaching his children that violence is not an acceptable way to resolve conflict. On the other hand, a Type III batterer who uses violence as a habitual means of control and who does not experience guilt over his abusive acts may not see the harm in allowing children to witness his violence. He may make no effort to explain his behavior and most likely would be abusive with his children as well as his partner. (Guille, 2004, p. 49)

This study is unique in that it integrated aspects of the typology literature with feminist understandings of domestic violence. Further, this integration contributed to the development of a heuristic model to explore the diverse fathering experiences and practices of men who perpetrate domestic violence.

e.) Feminist Approaches

Feminist approaches have made significant contributions to the knowledge base about men who perpetrate domestic violence by questioning central tenets of the psychopathological approach, particularly its narrow focus on identifying individual pathology, its view of domestic violence as the aberrant behaviour of a minority of disturbed individuals, and the gender bias underlying much of the research. Early feminist approaches, particularly as they appear in the works of R. Dobash and R. Dobash (1979), Firestone (1970) and Millett (1970) attended to the underlying social conditions which embedded and legitimized male authority and

privilege. Rather than viewing male perpetrators as aberrant and pathological, they were viewed as living up to cultural expectations that were cherished in patriarchal societies. For example, by using physical force to exert power and control over women, they were assured of female subordination and maintained male dominance (R. Dobash & Dobash, 1984).

Research with men based upon feminist understandings of domestic violence has resulted in research that attends to men's attitudes and beliefs about their use of violence, taking into account the influence of social and cultural context in which men make choices about their behaviours. A common finding in research conducted in this vein is that men who perpetrate domestic violence share common attitudes and behaviours that are linked to their wider social and cultural context. The most common behavioural characteristic consistently described in the literature is the imposition of a pattern of control within the domestic sphere (Bancroft & Silverman, 2002; Lloyd & Emery, 2000) and the most common attitudinal characteristic described is 'entitlement or the belief that one has special rights and privileges without accompanying reciprocal responsibilities' (Bancroft & Silverman, 2002, p 5). These rights and privileges frequently relate to the domestic sphere where men who batter have been found to hold particularly rigid gender role expectations and patriarchal beliefs (R. Dobash & Dobash, 1984).

More recently feminist understandings of domestic violence have been expanded by the contribution of poststructural and inter-sectorial approaches. Drawing upon a wide body of evidence which attends to the intersection of gender, culture, race and class, this burgeoning literature has contributed to understanding the multiple realities and experiences of men who perpetrate domestic violence. Contributions from poststructural and inter-sectorial feminist approaches have led to calls for interventions that acknowledge and attend to the multiple realities of individual men and women in domestically violent relationships. These approaches attend to the diverse meanings and experiences of individuals but at the same time avoid obfuscating the similar conditions contributing to domestic violence. For example, as discussed in the previous chapter, the '*Cultural Context Model*' used by Almeida and Lockard (2005) challenges patriarchy by exposing and restructuring gender based power

imbalances within families but also by attending to other forms of oppression that families, including male perpetrators of violence, may experience through racism, classism, etc.

3.5 The fathering of men who perpetrate domestic violence

The extensive research and clinical literature on family violence pays surprisingly little attention to the fathering experiences and practices of men who batter their female partners and their impact on childhood development has been largely unexplored (Holden et al., 1998; Sternberg, 1997). However, the last ten years has seen a growing interest in this topic with a number of studies redressing this gap in the literature by eliciting the perspectives of fathers who perpetrate domestic violence (Baker, Perilla, & Norris, 2001; Fox, Sayers, & Bruce, 2001; Harne, 2002; Perel & Peled, 2008; Rothman, Mandel, & Silverman, 2007; E. Salisbury, K. Henning, & R. Holdford, 2009). The few published studies that have directly sought the viewpoints of men themselves differ greatly in their epistemology, theoretical perspective, methodology and methods. A discussion of their major findings and associated implications follows.

a.) Poor partners but good fathers? Separating parenting and partnering

A review of the literature located only a small number of studies that specifically examined the experience of fathering from the perspective of the domestically violent father himself (Fox et al., 2001; Harne, 2002; Perel & Peled, 2008). These studies have provided a rich and detailed narrative account of the fathers' experiences, but with mixed findings.

The first published study examined the experiences of eight fathers court ordered to participate in treatment and concluded that the men expressed feelings of guilt, shame, remorse, a sense of responsibility for the damage that they had caused and a desire to ameliorate the effects (Fox et al., 2001). The authors drew upon Goffman's (1963) theory of remedial work and concluded that men used their role as fathers 'as a source of re-entry into the moral community' and described them as 'being variously engaged in the management of spoiled identities, a complicated, multi-phased and multi-dimensional process.' (p. 147)

Furthermore, the authors described the men as being in a process of self-reclamation or self-rehabilitation, which included a number of themes such as, the catastrophic moment, remorse, responsibility, reparational scripts, redemption and reconstruction. In relation to their parenting, the authors found evidence of parental pride, sorrow and failure, conflict and cooperation with the children's mothers, disinterest and commitment, growth and maturation. The authors found two major themes: 1) most men constructed their fathering role narrowly as that of 'provider' and 2) men recognized and regretted the negative impact of domestic violence. The authors noted that all of these fathers seemed to recognize and regret the negative impact their violence had on their children and the disruption they had brought to their families and concluded: 'the father role may be separable from the husband role and that having been an abusive husband does not preclude having been, being, or becoming a good father.' (Fox et al., 2001, p. 158) The authors drew a distinction between child abuse and domestic violence which was articulated by a participant thus:

I want to make one thing clear. I have abused my wife but I've never laid a finger on my kids. I'm no child abuser. (p. 141)

Neither the participants, nor the researchers viewed exposure to domestic violence as a form of child maltreatment, in and of itself. In fact the researchers expressed that men who had perpetrated child abuse had been screened from the study.

The aforementioned study by Fox et al. (2001) provides a detailed account of the complex feelings and experiences of the men interviewed. The fathers are described as multi-dimensional men who experience a range of feelings associated with their fathering. Research in the field of domestic violence and child maltreatment has not generally portrayed violent fathers in this light:

Currently men who are physically violent to women are constructed as men who offend, and are seldom seen in the round in terms of their other roles, for example, as fathers. When their relationships with children are considered it is ... solely for the purposes of elucidating how damaging or dangerous they can be to their children. Consequently, they are usually constructed as one dimensional characters and dealt with in ways which deny/ignore central aspects of their identities and relationships (Featherstone, 2001, p. 184).

Perel and Peled (2008) concur, describing the literature on the fathering of violent men as one-dimensional, alienated from lived experience, judgmental, deficit focused and replete with sweeping generalizations

However, Cavanagh et al. (2001) caution against adopting a purely phenomenological approach to research with men who perpetrate domestic violence, arguing that this approach can obscure the perspective of the victim and does not take into account the multiple strategies that men use to define their violence in exculpatory and expiatory terms. The problems with adopting this methodology and epistemology are discussed further in the next chapter. Suffice to say however, in the absence of a feminist perspective, it appears that in the Fox et al. (2001) study, the authors uncritically accepted the narratives of the participants. For example a number of men in the study are congratulated for their self described, 'use of self-restraint' as a parenting strategy:

The use of self-restraint was an important strategy in maintaining ties with their children, leaving the door open to reconstructing the father-child bond in the future: David deliberately chose not to prosecute his violent wife for abuse. In similar fashion, Brad, Gus, Isaac and Hank told of resisting the temptation to retaliate for their wives injurious behaviours because of their potential harm to their children. The men also relied upon their children in indirect ways to redeem their spoiled identities. Lance, whose ex-wife frequently slandered him to his child, found reassurance in his son Zachary's continued admiration of him. (Fox et al., 2001, p. 156)

The fact that perpetrators of domestic violence frequently under report, minimize and externalize blame for their violence onto their partners (Cavanagh & Cree, 1996; Cavanagh et al., 2001; R. Dobash et al., 2000; Gondolf, 2002a) is not mentioned by the authors. Furthermore, the authors explain the rationale for their decision to not seek out information about fathers' use of domestic violence thus:

Because we were interested in them as **fathers, not as batterers**, (emphasis added) our schedule of questions did not ask about their violent behaviours. (Fox et al., 2001, p. 145)

The assertion that fathering and battering are two mutually exclusive domains is a view that is contrary to feminist understandings of domestic violence (Bancroft & Silverman, 2002; Dick, 2005; Perel & Peled, 2008; L. Radford & Hester, 2006). L. Radford and Hester (2006) argue that the practice of disconnecting a man's violence from his parenting is a dangerous tradition that commonly occurs in policy, practice and research. In their study of violent men in

England, they found that men frequently talked about their 'superior' parenting as a strategy to further abuse their partners:

In particular, they would use talk of how they could do parenting better in order to put down their female partners. By not dealing critically with the men's violent behaviour and dissociating it from their parenting some of the welfare agencies ended up colluding in the men's abusive behaviour against the women. (L. Radford & Hester, 2006, p. 147)

Furthermore, Perel and Peled (2008) argue that the fathering practices of men who perpetrate domestic violence are integrally linked, describing 'violent men's abuse of their children as another central aspect of their fathering.' (p. 459) Bancroft and Silverman (2002) argue that men who batter are distinguished both by the fear that they inculcate and by their abusive mental processes which are seen to play a powerful role in shaping the daily experience of women and children who live with them. In this sense, the attitudes and practices that support men's use of domestic violence are integral aspects of their parenting practice:

We believe that the parenting style that batterers exhibit is grounded both in their attitudes and perceptual systems and in their patterns of behaviour. (Bancroft & Silverman, 2002, p. 5)

Furthermore, Dick (2005) argues that:

It is likely that the men's violent behaviour toward the child's mother is likely to impact the way in which he carries out his role as a father in other domains of fatherhood, especially in terms of his emotional responsiveness towards his children. The father's lack of emotional attunement to his children may play a part in the difficulty children exposed to marital violence have with emotional expression and in recognizing the emotional state of others. (p. 5)

In addition, Dutton (1998) argues that most violent men describe a particular style of fathering which is a significant antecedent to domestic violence and child abuse. He describes fathers who perpetrate domestic violence as typically being physically abusive, rejecting, shaming and parenting in a way that results in the formation of insecure attachment relationships.

A further study by Fox and Benson (2004), found differences in the fathering of batterers and non-batterers. When compared with fathers who did not perpetrate domestic violence, the batterers were found to use more punitive and less positive parenting behaviours. However, other aspects of their fathering, including the quantity of time spent with children or their monitoring standards and actions were the same as non-violent fathers.

b.) Harmful partners, harmful fathers

Harne (2002) conducted the first feminist qualitative study in the U.K. with violent men, which specifically focused on their fathering practices. A sample of twenty men who had perpetrated domestic violence and were separated or divorced from their partners and ten women who had experienced domestic violence and whose children had ongoing contact post-separation were interviewed in-depthly. Harne (2002) explored the way in which violent fathers described their relationships with their children and their experiences about contact in the post separation period. Fathers also described their understanding of child abuse and discussed whether they perceived of their relationships with their children as abusive.

Harne (2002) found that almost half of the men described being 'serial' abusers, having been violent to partners and children in multiple relationships. Harne (2002) also found that two thirds of the fathers in her study were involved in the ongoing and regular care of their children and that very few (three) subscribed to the traditional fatherhood motif. Many of the men described abusive child rearing practices, which they justified in a similar fashion to their justifications for domestic violence. Many men described being 'provoked' by their children into abusing them whilst they were supposedly providing care to their children. Two fathers in the study described hitting their children too hard because they would not go to sleep and others described instances of deliberate cruelty.

In two families, children were forcibly abducted by their fathers. Harne (2002) concluded that violent men extended their beliefs and practices of domineering and violent masculinity into the parenting domain where they were used to further oppress and control women. She further described how children were frequently perceived as emotional property or investment. Children were valued for the benefits that they could provide to fathers. For example, children were described as meeting the emotional needs of their fathers and paternal love was described as a vehicle to exert power and control over children. Contact was frequently described as an inviolable right of the father and was separable from the child's wishes. Some fathers had expressed recognition of the harm that they had done to their children. However, only one of 20 fathers interviewed, reported that the needs of their

children should be prioritized when they were providing child-care. Harne (2002) concluded that the problem is not merely one of poor parenting skills but that violent fathers' practices in relation to children are bound up with constructions of dominant masculinity that are integrally connected to their violence and control of women in familial relationships. Further, Harne (2002) concluded that domestically violent men will most likely be poor role models and incompetent parents.

c.) Constricted, complex fathers

The first exploratory qualitative study of 14 Israeli fathers in treatment yielded a rich and complex narrative (Perel & Peled, 2008). The authors described the impetus for the research and the complexities of undertaking research in this area:

Caution and even suspicion are imperative in dealing with fathers who are violent – their parenting is deficient by virtue of their violence toward the mother of their children. This notwithstanding, an exclusive reliance on the deficit paradigm for learning about these fathers is restrictive. Our current knowledge about violent men as fathers enhances our ability to protect their victims but does not help us understand them as fathers. We believe that an understanding of their experience of fatherhood is crucial for helping those of them who are interested in embarking on the long and demanding process of rehabilitating their damaged fatherhood and their relationship with their children and their children's mothers. (p. 460)

Participants had completed five months of intervention and their reported level of violence was 'low.' Unfortunately however, the authors do not quantify what is meant by 'low' level violence. Similarly to other studies in this area (Fox et al., 2001; Harne, 2002), there is no description of the frequency, duration, nature nor severity of violence perpetrated.

Perel and Peled's (2008) research canvassed men's activities and experiences as fathers, the perceptions of fathers, mothers and children regarding fathering and the use of violence and control. The researchers found that many of the fathers had a 'bad faith' in the outside world, perceiving it as dangerous and threatening, and posing risks to their children, which they needed to protect them from. Only two men described their own fathers as being warm towards them and some perceived that exposure to domestic violence had a harmful impact, which was severe and disturbing to children. In contrast to the findings of Fox et al. (2001), they concluded that most men were not prepared to consider the effects of domestic violence on children and none of the fathers reported any attempt to address the emotional distress that their use of violence had caused their children. They also concluded that acknowledging

exposure did not necessarily lead to recognition of harm, however the men who were most aware of the consequences of domestic violence for children were the same men who tried to ameliorate the resultant damage.

The research findings suggest that conflicting forces and processes are inextricably linked in the experience of fathering for men who perpetrate domestic violence. On the one hand, the participants talked about the centrality of fathering and their desire to be 'good fathers' but this was bound up with a 'fundamental, mostly denied parental deficit, namely, the violence.' (Perel & Peled, 2008, p. 478) Another theme, which emerged from the research, was the 'yearning' of the participants for a close and warm connection to their children while constriction, remoteness and absence existed. The authors highlight the dilemmas of working with violent fathers:

The flawed and abusive parenting of men who are violent toward their partners poses a challenge to anyone wishing to work with them. At the same time, we believe that intervention will be effective only if it is based on respect and empathy to their experiences and views, in line with the generative fathering approach. We suggest regarding these men as simultaneously harmful and vulnerable. This implies condemnation of the harm they cause to the children and striving to put a stop to it, while being attentive to their distress and providing them with support. (p. 478)

However, Cavanagh et al. (2001) caution against overemphasizing the distress of violent men given that their narratives and perceptions are frequently self serving, 'directed at mitigating and obfuscating culpability while at the same time seeking forgiveness and absolution.' (p. 711) It is also noted that limited attention is paid to the question of how violent men will be encouraged to remedy the consequences of their lack of respect and empathy towards their partners and children.

3.6 Awareness of the impact of domestic violence

It is increasingly argued that if men are taught about the consequences of domestic violence on their children, they will stop being abusive and controlling (e.g. Partnerships Against Domestic Violence: *WA Freedom from Fear Campaign*). Similarly, it has been argued that for many abusive men, the fear of losing contact with their children is a key incentive towards changing their abusive behaviour (Humphreys et al., 2008). Interestingly, there is an absence of research to support these claims, which is not surprising given that many, including L.

Radford and Hester (2006) have found that the 'rule of optimism' often prevails in relation to fathering, but not mothering practices:

(I)n our study of child contact arrangements, fathers are often reported to lack parenting skills or interest in caring for their children, leading in some instances to dangerous or even deadly situations for the children concerned. Yet professionals were found to be very optimistic about men's parenting skills, while scrutinizing women's parenting in much greater detail. (p. 146)

The judgement of what constitutes good enough mothering and fathering is a subject of concern as different yardsticks are often used to measure these roles. In discussing the fathering practices of men who perpetrate domestic violence the following comments have been made:

And what of the perpetrators? Is it good enough that the yardstick of their ability to parent is the presence or absence of direct physical violence to their children? The answer can only be no, it is not good enough: children deserve more. While a mother's role encompasses all aspects of the care and protection of her children, the father's role is often perceived to be fulfilled simply by his mere presence in the family or in the child's life. It is interesting that these men appear confident that their own parenting skills are above reproach and have no fear of the consequences of others learning about their violence. (McGee, 2000, p. 219)

Despite the optimistic claims about the transformative effects of educating men about the impact of domestic violence, few studies were located which directly examined paternal perceptions of the effects of domestic violence on children (Baker et al., 2001; Rothman et al., 2007; Sternberg, Lamb, & Dawud-Noursi, 1997). Many of these found that abusive fathers are frequently cognizant of the effect of their behaviour on their children. Rothman et al. (2007) conducted the first study to explore possible differences between biological and social fathers' beliefs and responses to the exposure of their children to intimate partner violence (IPV). They surveyed 384 biological and 80 social fathers (whom the authors referred to as married or unmarried step-fathers), who had been recruited from American and Canadian intervention programs between 2002 and 2003. The men, who had perpetrated domestic violence completed a 34 item questionnaire, which incorporated questions regarding fatherhood status, perception of the impact of IPV on children and its long term effects, effects of IPV on co-parenting relationships, steps that they would take to end their violence and demographic details. Social fathers were less likely than biological fathers to express concern about the impact of IPV on their children. Biological fathers were more likely to believe that exposure to IPV had negative effects on their children and had negatively

affected the father-child relationship. Biological fathers also expressed the view that exposure to IPV had resulted in child behaviour, mental health and school problems and had also negatively affected the mother-child relationship. Biological fathers were more likely to report feeling worried about the long term effects of IPV and were more likely to think that female children would be abused in later life and that boys would become perpetrators of IPV. Biological fathers were also more likely to report negative effects on their partner's parenting. However, despite the fact that biological fathers were more aware of the negative effects of IPV, they were no more likely than social fathers to take action to stop their violence or to do anything to moderate the impact of their violence on their children.

Baker et al. (2001) surveyed 43 immigrant Latino couples living in the U.S.A. which included a comparison group of 17 couples who were volunteers awaiting services from a Catholic mission, and a control group made up of 26 couples whereby the male partner had been court ordered to attend a batterer's treatment program. Interestingly several of the fathers in the comparison group were excluded from the study as they were identified as also perpetrating domestic violence. Researchers examined the relationship between parenting stress, parenting competence and domestic violence, an area hitherto missing from the literature. The most salient finding was that domestic violence affected the parenting stress and competence levels of men and women differently. Men's reports of parenting stress were significantly lower than women's reports and were not influenced by their domestic violence perpetration. The authors postulate that since Latino men are raised to equate being a good father with being a good provider, they may not experience increased parental stress levels if they are economically providing for their families. They also found that mothers' parenting stress levels were significantly affected by physical abuse perpetration but not psychological abuse. However, the study found that the more psychological and physical abuse that men perpetrated, the less competent they felt as fathers. On the other hand, neither physical nor psychological abuse significantly predicted mothers' reports of parenting competence. The authors concluded that:

In the presence of domestic violence, women may feel overwhelmed by the abuse, but their sense of self-efficacy as mothers is not easily shaken. This finding is also consistent with research by Levendosky and Graham-Bermann (2001), suggesting

that for some women, violence in the relationship may increase their sense of competence as they focus attention on protecting their children. (p. 1152)

Although not the focus of the research, fathers who had perpetrated domestic violence indicated that they were aware of, and concerned about, the potential effects of their abuse on their children. Furthermore, the authors indicated that 70 per cent of men felt that they had no one to seek support or parenting advice from and many indicated a desire to participate in parenting classes. However, Harne (2002) cautions against the use of generic parenting classes for men who perpetrate domestic violence, as they are unlikely to be effective, since such classes do not attend to the perpetrator's underlying attitudes and behaviours central to his imposition of a pattern of abusive and controlling behaviour within the family domain.

Similarly Holden and Barker (2004) compared the self reports on the Child Abuse Potential Inventory of 56 fathers who perpetrated domestic violence with 39 fathers in a matched comparison group. Initially no differences between groups were found. However, after excluding 11 men from the comparison group upon discovery that they had also perpetrated domestic violence, statistically significant differences were found in relation to parenting stress, with violent men reporting less parenting stress than men in the control group. Analysis of data from 11 men who had high risk scores on the Child Abuse Potential Inventory showed that they engaged in less positive parenting activities, reported more anger and child externalizing problems, had more trauma symptoms, borderline personality organization and problems with alcohol and other drugs than the control group. This suggests variability in the parenting experiences and practices of men who perpetrate domestic violence.

In the most comprehensive study using multiple informants, Sternberg et al. (1997) sampled 38 Israeli families to examine the perceptions of violent and non-violent fathers regarding their awareness of the behaviour problems of their children and to compare the paternal responses with the responses from mothers, teachers, and the children themselves. A total of 110 children who ranged in age from eight to twelve years and their parents were recruited from the Department of Family Services in Tel Aviv and Jerusalem. A total of 38 Jewish, lower class, two parent families were involved in the longitudinal study, as were the teachers of the

children, and Departmental social workers. Parents, children, teachers and social workers were initially interviewed separately and were asked to describe any child behaviour problems using the Achenbach Child Behaviour Checklist. Informants were interviewed two to three years after the initial interview and asked to comment again on any child behaviour problems. The study found that violent fathers were no more likely to report child behaviour problems than non-violent fathers, even when maternal and child self reports indicated the presence of behaviour problems. The researchers highlighted that the findings may reflect a general lack of awareness of child behaviour problems on the part of all fathers sampled. The perceptions of children's behaviour problems varied substantially depending upon the informant's perspective. Mothers who were victims of domestic violence and mothers of abused children rated their children as having more behavioural problems, and particularly internalizing problems than any other informants. When fathers and teachers were informants there were no significant impacts noted in relation to internalizing or externalizing behaviour problems.

3.7 From the standpoint of women, children and young people

With the exception of research examining the abusive parenting practices of fathers who perpetrate domestic violence, there is very little written about mothers' reports of fathers' general parenting practices and beliefs. In a literature review, Holden and Barker (2004) located only one study (Holden & Richie, 1991) that assessed the fathering practices of men who perpetrate domestic violence based upon maternal reports. The authors conclude that few researchers have collected mothers' reports of fathers' child rearing practices and argue that this is reflective of the lack of attention devoted to the role of fathers in families generally.

Holden and Richie (1991) interviewed 37 women residing in shelters with their children and compared them with a matched control group of 37 community mothers who had not experienced domestic violence. All women had children between the ages of two and eight years. Women who had experienced domestic violence described their husbands as being more frequently angry at their children, less involved in child care and less likely to be affectionate or to use reasoning than the matched community mothers. Violent fathers were described as more aggressive and more likely to engage in a strict physical disciplinary style with their children than fathers who were not violent. These findings were corroborated in

other research (Holden & Richie, 1991; Jouriles & Norwood, 1995). However, when asked about fathers' use of physical punishment and power assertion in disciplinary situations, mothers' reports of the fathers' behaviour did not differ from the comparison mothers' reports. More than one third of mothers residing in shelters described their partners as 'average' or 'better than average fathers' (Holden & Richie, 1991). Similarly a U.K. study of 484 mothers and 171 service providers examined the experience of mothers involved in the interagency system, of which 12 women talked extensively about their experiences of mothering through domestic violence. Many of them described their violent partners as 'good fathers' who were 'adored' by their children (L. Radford & Hester, 2006), a view which is not out of step with dominant community attitudes, which separate the fathering and partnering of men who use violence against women.

Conversely, research in the U.K. found that mothers' perceptions of violent fathers' parenting practices prior to separation were characterized by a minimal level of emotional connection and involvement in child rearing and a high level of paternal abuse and neglect, especially during contact visits (L. Radford & Hester, 2001). Lack of paternal involvement was a theme in research conducted with 14 Latina women. One of the Latina mothers, who spoke of enduring domestic violence for years so that her children would have a father came to the realization that 'that's not a father ... He never knew what a school was. He never knew what a hospital was. He never knew anything about anything.' (U. Kelly, 2009, p. 291)

A central tenet of feminist understandings of domestic violence is that men who perpetrate domestic violence use a range of tactics to exert power and control over women and children. It follows that much feminist research has specifically documented the abusive fathering practices of men who perpetrate domestic violence (McGee, 2000; Mullender et al., 2002). For example, in McGee's qualitative study of 54 children and 48 mothers, many mothers described the tactics used by their partners to exert power and control over their children, which were similar to the tactics used by the same men to exert power and control over their partners. Fifteen mothers described their partners using techniques, which were generally arbitrary and based on what would have most meaning for that child. However some

common themes emerged such as not allowing children to play, controlling children's movements within the home, regimenting children's behaviours, and intimidating children (McGee, 2000). Many women in this study provided specific examples of behaviours used to control and dominate children including: not allowing children to make any noise; controlling food intake so that children could even have a drink of water if they were thirsty; not allowing children to go to the toilet; and padlocking children in their rooms at night.

Over the last ten years an increasing number of studies have examined the experiences of children and young people living with domestic violence by speaking directly with them. The majority of this research has been conducted in the U.K., where there is a strong tradition of utilizing phenomenological methodology to study complex issues such as domestic violence. A review of the literature by Humphreys et al. (2008) found many innovative studies of children's experiences of living with domestic violence, such as research by McGee (2000) and Mullender et al. (2002). These studies have shown children to be active participants or 'social actors' with valid views and with expertise about their lives, rather than passive 'witnesses' to incidents of domestic violence. Humphreys et al. (2008) argue that this construction of children is a recent phenomenon influenced by the 'sociology of childhood' and feminist approaches, as well as the child rights movement. Such research, which is based upon a commitment to engage with children's unique experiences of domestic violence, has contributed to increased understanding about the impact of domestic violence.

A body of qualitative research has elicited children's perceptions of living with domestic violence (Blanchard et al., 1992; Ericksen & Henderson, 1992; McGee, 2000; Mullender et al., 2002; Peled, 1998). However, Humphreys et al. (2008) argue that the topic of children's perceptions of their relationships with their abusive fathers, is less explored and they postulate that this may reflect adult imposed limits in setting parameters for what is considered 'safe' and 'appropriate' for children to discuss. However, in a recent study where children were asked to detail what researchers should ask children about domestic violence,

children identified that 'not naming and asking questions about fathers wasn't right, he was after all, the one who caused all this.' (Humphreys et al., 2008, p. 30)

When encouraged to talk about their feelings about their fathers a number of common themes have emerged across studies. The most common theme relates to children's pervasive feelings of fear. For example, in a study of 54 children and 48 abused mothers, children most frequently described fathers as making them feel scared, nervous, nery or frightened (McGee, 2000). All of the 13 children (aged four to twelve) in a Canadian qualitative study of children's experiences of domestic violence talked of their fear, which was described thus by a four year-old participant:

I'm going to tell the world like that, 'be careful, it's very dangerous if you see your father be mean to your mom. You know why it's dangerous? Cause what if the father took a knife and they fought with a knife and the mother took a knife and she would cut the father? She would cut all the fathers if they were mean. (Ericksen & Henderson, 1992, p. 1204)

Another common feeling reported by children and young people in the literature is sadness, with many describing missing their fathers post separation. Much research highlighted the multiple and complex emotions experienced by many children and young people. Mullender et al. (2002) describe children expressing love for their fathers but many concluded that their violence eventually 'killed' these feelings over time. This was expressed thus by a 14 year-old Australian male: 'I started losing respect for him gradually. As I say I've got absolutely no respect for him now. Cause he's not worthy of any respect.' (Irwin, Waugh, & Bonner, 2006, p. 118) Similar sentiments were expressed by a 15 year-old British female: 'I didn't talk to him that much after that (witnessing my father's violence). I felt he weren't worth talking to.' (McGee, 2000, p. 85) Father-child relationships in domestically violent homes were found to be a source of pain, resentment, disappointment and, above all, confusion and ambivalence among pre-adolescents (Peled, 2000). In a number of studies the violence filled their perception of their father and many children and young people disclosed strategies to completely avoid their fathers (McGee, 2000; Mullender et al., 2002).

Many children described feeling caught in a conflict of loyalties between both parents in a study conducted by Peled (1998). They expressed difficulty loving and supporting one parent

as they perceived that this led to the betrayal of the other. Many children discussed how they loved aspects of their father but hated his use of violence and control in the family (McGee, 2000). Other studies have corroborated these findings (Blanchard et al., 1992; Ericksen & Henderson, 1992; A. Saunders, 1995). Children who had lived in homes where there had been a separation or divorce discussed specific issues that were upsetting to them, such as feelings of loss and abandonment. Many children described feeling neglected and abandoned post separation.

3.8 Summary

The literature on the context and history of fatherhood scholarship provides a conceptual basis to understand changes in fathering practices associated with significant shifts in the religious, economic, political and social landscape. In recent times, there has been a surge of interest in fatherhood from a variety of disciplines (Lamb, 2000; Marsiglio & Cohan, 2000), which has occurred in the context of significant shifts in family life, gender relations, economic changes, and increases in both women's participation in the paid labour force and men's involvement as primary non-maternal care providers (Gerson, 1993). In this time the fatherhood scholarship has moved away from a narrow focus on social learning theory, which dominated much social science research in the 1960s and 70s towards a broader ecological perspective, which considers the influence of societal and cultural factors in shaping human development.

This perspective has seen a broadening conceptualization of fathering which includes examining the multifaceted roles many play and the direct and indirect patterns of influence they have on their children (Lamb, 2000). This has led to an acceptance that understanding fathers' behaviours, violent or otherwise, is a relevant area of enquiry in any endeavours to understand child and family relations and development (Guille, 2004).

However, the mainstream fatherhood scholarship has largely neglected the subset of men who perpetrate domestic violence. The limited research that does exist has focused on men's beliefs about the impact of domestic violence on their children, their parenting practices, views about fathering and abusive child rearing practices. This research has rarely been

based upon information provided by men themselves (E. Salisbury, K. Henning, & R. Holdford, 2009). Of particular interest to many has been the level of awareness that men who perpetrate domestic violence have regarding the effects on their children. Research findings on this topic vary from the minority of fathers acknowledging the effects on their children (E. Salisbury et al., 2009; Sternberg et al., 1997), to the majority of fathers in other studies (Baker et al., 2001; Fox et al., 2001; Rothman et al., 2007). These findings have cast some doubt on the frequently made proposition that men who perpetrate domestic violence will change their abusive behaviours once they learn about the impact of domestic violence on their children. Many of the men in these studies were aware of the impact yet did not change their abusive behaviours.

Researchers examining fathering from the perspective of men who use violence, have contributed a range of views on this subject. Some research highlights the abusive child rearing practices of violent men (Bancroft & Silverman, 2002; Harne, 2002, 2011; E. Salisbury et al., 2009), whilst other research focuses on the complexity of parenting for violent men who purportedly yearn to have positive relationships with their children but feel constricted by their beliefs and abusive parenting practices (Perel & Peled, 2008), whilst still other research emphasizes the significant shame, guilt and remorse reportedly felt by violent fathers (Fox & Benson, 2004; Fox et al., 2001). Still no study to date has examined the experiences and practices of Australian fathers who perpetrate domestic violence, from a feminist perspective.

A body of literature examining the experience of children and young people who live with domestic violence is also emerging. However, no research specifically examining children's reports of fathers' general parenting practices and beliefs was located. Instead, the existing research focuses on the overall impact of living with domestic violence and other forms of child maltreatment. In this literature, fathers' violence is central and they are represented one dimensionally as powerful and threatening figures that only hurt women and children. Missing from the literature is an analysis of any other role that they might play in the family or any scrutiny of their non-abusive parenting practices. Whilst this is understandable given the

atrocities that children and young people experience at the hands of violent fathers, research that examines the complex and multiple dimensions of the child-father relationship would benefit practitioners to develop a holistic view of the experiences of women and children living with domestic violence.

CHAPTER 4

METHODOLOGY

4.1 Overview

This chapter details the research aims and questions as well as the conceptual framework utilised in this enquiry by describing four inter-related elements of the research process outlined thus by Crotty (1998): epistemology, theoretical perspective, methodology and methods. The assumptions underpinning the selection of participants and site, data collection and analysis, credibility and limitations of the research, as well as ethical considerations are also discussed.

4.2 Research aims

This research explores the fathering experiences of men who are domestically violent. Specifically, the study examined the meaning participants ascribed to being a father, their associated experiences of fathering and understanding of the impact of domestic violence on their partners and children. This research questions perspectives, which place the responsibility for ending and ameliorating the impact of domestic violence on women. The research aims to have a transformative effect by contributing to the development of socially just interventions that redress gender blind practices, which exonerate men from accepting responsibility for their violence and its aftermath. This research could also contribute to the development of specifically targeted programs to address the fathering practices of men who perpetrate domestic violence.

4.3 Research questions

The central research question underpinning this enquiry is: what is the 'lived experience' of fathering for men who are domestically violent? The subsidiary questions are:

- What are the men's perceptions regarding the nature, extent and severity of domestic violence in their families?
- How do the men describe the impact of their violence on women and children?
- How do the men describe their fathering experiences and practices?

- How do the men describe their relationships with their children?

4.4 Philosophical underpinnings

a) Epistemological considerations

Epistemology is the branch of philosophy concerned with the study of the nature and limits of knowledge (Atkinson, 2011). Harding (1987) defines epistemology as a theory of knowledge delineating a set of assumptions about the social world – who can be a knower and what can be known. Nielsen (1990b) argues that epistemologies characterise particular historical periods and locations. The researcher's epistemological position underpins all aspects of the research process, from topic selection, question formulation, method selection, sampling and design (Collins, 1990).

This enquiry is underpinned by feminist epistemology, which Janack (2004) describes as a loosely organized approach drawing upon a diverse range of theories rather than a specific school or theory. This diversity reflects the multiple theoretical positions that have influenced feminist theory, gender studies and women's studies. Central to feminist epistemology is an examination of how gender contributes to our assumptions about knowledge, the knowing subject, the norms and modes of inquiry that enable egalitarian and transformative knowledge building. Feminist epistemologies share common aspirations that are connected in principle to feminist struggle (Sprague & Zimmerman, 1993). This struggle includes aiming to transform the basic structures of oppression and challenging knowledge that excludes women and other marginalized groups, including some men (Hesse-Biber, 2007). Multiple feminist lenses have interrogated long held and taken-for-granted assumptions and in so doing, have unearthed layers of sexist, racist, homophobic, and colonialist perspectives in science and the social sciences in particular.

A large body of feminist scholarship has critiqued the dominant positivist/empiricist epistemology within the scientific tradition, particularly when it is applied to the social sciences. Empiricism has a long tradition in western philosophy dating back to Aristotle, but is most often associated with the 18th century British philosophers: Locke, Berkeley and

Hume (Hundleby, 2007). Postmodern feminists have critically examined traditional science, as it emerged in the modern period, as inextricably tied to the Enlightenment project that endeavoured to supplant superstition and fear with truth and consent (Macey, 2000). Reason, the foundation of objective truth was seen as the foundation for all activity and the cornerstone of social order, alongside natural law. The grand narrative of the modern period is that reason can establish universal knowledge offering a platform for the emancipation of all people (Briskman, Pease, & Allan, 2009). Fundamental beliefs distinguishing modernity include: legitimate knowledge emanates from objectivity and reason, universal experiences and values exist and can be measured and/or categorized using the scientific method, and that science and societies are in a state of constant progression (Briskman et al., 2009, p 6).

Failing to attend to women's experiences, hiding behind the façade of scientific objectivity while engaging in sexist practices and androcentric knowledge building are central aspects of a postmodern feminist critique of science in the modern period. Spender (1981) argues that men have produced the vast majority of knowledge in western societies and that academia has generalized the findings of men's studies as human knowledge despite omitting women's voices. E. Anderson (2012) argues that various feminist epistemologists view dominant knowledge practices as having:

(D)isadvantaged women by 1) excluding them from inquiry, (2) denying them epistemic authority, (3) denigrating their 'feminine' cognitive styles and modes of knowledge, (4) producing theories of women that represent them as inferior, deviant, or significant only in the ways they serve male interests, (5) producing theories of social phenomena that render women's activities and interests, or gendered power relations, invisible, and (6) producing knowledge (science and technology) that is not useful for people in subordinate positions, or that reinforces gender and other social hierarchies. Feminist epistemologists trace these failures to flawed conceptions of knowledge, knowers, objectivity, and scientific methodology. (p. 1)

Feminist epistemic contributions have led to fresh conceptualizations of knowledge, knowers, objectivity and the referentiality of language, which Nielsen (1990a) argues have contributed to a paradigm shift in science. A fundamental idea within feminist epistemology is that the knower and knowledge itself are situated and embedded within social and cultural beliefs about gender. Code (1991) argues that classical epistemology conceives of the knower as disconnected and interchangeable, merely witnessing knowledge developing and reason as an autonomous quality existing independently of the knower. In contrast, feminist

epistemology conceives of the knower as particular, concrete and entangled in a web of social relations that are fundamentally gendered and hierarchical, embedded within culture and class at a particular time in history. The construction of the knower as a particular subject is particularly relevant to other epistemological problems such as objectivity and rationality (Janack, 2004).

b.) Theoretical perspective

Feminist research is a general term for a range of approaches and methodologies sharing an ideological commitment promoting women's interests and rights, to improving their lives, and to producing knowledge useful to these ends (Reinhartz, 1992). In this way, research does not have to be exclusively conducted by women, or with women, to be considered feminist in orientation.

Research from a radical feminist perspective is most often informed by feminist standpoint theory (Harding, 1987), which contends that members of oppressed groups have a privileged ability to understand an external reality, which non-members do not hold. Harding's perspective draws upon the work of Marx and Engels who argued for a proletarian standpoint. Feminist standpoint theory emphasizes that the location of the oppressed offers a distinctive 'logic of inquiry.' The standpoint is defined by Jaggar (1983) 'as a position in society from which certain features of reality come into prominence and from which others are obscured.' (p. 9) As such this approach privileges women's perspectives and draws upon their expertise in collaborating in the research process. Feminist standpoint approaches to research aim to empower oppressed groups and to produce knowledge to achieve feminist political goals including the development of a collective consciousness and the growth of sisterhood (Harding, 1987). However research in this tradition does not have to be limited to women, as Harding (2007) argues:

(M)en can make important contributions to feminist research and scholarship by starting off from their own lives as these have been framed by feminist accounts, to explore topics female feminists frequently ignore – such as the meanings of masculinity and/or male bodies to men. (p. 47)

In contrast to modernist notions of objectivity, which assume the existence of an objective, measurable reality, Alston and Bowles (2003) argue that postmodern feminist epistemology assumes that meaning is constructed rather than discovered. In this understanding of knowledge, it is clear that different people may construct meaning in different ways, even in relation to the same phenomenon (Crotty, 1998). Furthermore, an individual constructs or generates the world in which she/he lives and shares this construction through communication.

Cohler (1982) argues that 'human studies' involve the study of life history which is fundamentally subjective as it is an examination of meanings that persons attribute to their experiences and communicate to others. Rickman (1979) argues that human studies require research perspectives, which are not constrained by rigid empirical epistemological strictures since the complexity of our lived experience defies reductionist scientific objectivity. Garbarino (2000) argues that research which seeks to understand fathering experiences must attend to the means by which men make sense of their lives, roles and experiences and as such subjectivity must be considered as the most valid vehicle for understanding fatherhood.

4.5 Methodology

Undertaking feminist research with men who had perpetrated domestic violence produced a number of challenges that made it inappropriate to rely entirely upon a purely phenomenological approach. For example, 'adopting a purely phenomenological approach could have obscured the social context and processes that underpin domestic violence and risked rendering the survivors invisible.' (Perel & Peled, 2008, p 461) Taking this into account, I adopted an approach, which integrated feminist understandings of domestic violence, particularly radical, poststructural, postmodern and intersectional with phenomenological principles. Perel and Peled (2008) argue that such an integration provides room to explore the meanings attributed by men who perpetrate domestic violence to their lived experiences whilst simultaneously attending to the social context in which their relationships occur. This facilitated an examination of the participants' perceptions against a backdrop of gender, class and race considerations. This integration facilitated an approach which attended to 'the

processes, history and interaction that shaped and located' (Perel & Peled, 2008, p 461) the participants' narratives about their experiences of fathering and using domestic violence.

As the research is concerned with exploring the meanings attributed by men to their experiences of fathering and using domestic violence, the research primarily uses qualitative methods. Central to this analysis is a desire to invite the participant to freely and openly 'share their story' with the researcher. The qualitative method is therefore useful as it allows for a broad and expansive exploration of this under researched area. A primarily qualitative approach is considered appropriate when exploring a concept or phenomenon that has an unknown theory base and variables (Creswell, 2003). Morse (1991) describes when a qualitative methodology is preferred:

Characteristics of a qualitative research problem are: a) the concept is immature due to a conspicuous lack of theory and previous research; b) a notion that the available theory may be inaccurate, inappropriate, incorrect or biased; c) a need exists to explore and describe the phenomena and to develop theory; or d) the nature of the phenomenon may not be suited to quantitative measures. (p. 120)

Creswell (2003) asserts that contemporary research has moved away from viewing qualitative and quantitative research approaches as opposite ends of the spectrum. In contrast to this view it is more common to perceive of research practices lying somewhere on a continuum between the two (Newman & Benz, 1998). Creswell (2003) describes how it is more common to view studies as being more quantitative or qualitative in nature. Sarantakos (1993) argues that 'quantitative and qualitative methods are the tools of the trade of social scientists, who use them according to the circumstances, that is, according to the research question, the available resources, the research conditions and most of all the types of information required.' (p. 56) Qualitative research is extensively accepted as a legitimate method to produce knowledge (E.G. Guba & Y.S. Lincoln, 1994; M. Q. Patton, 1990).

Although the study is primarily qualitative in nature, some quantitative methods were also utilized in order to triangulate the data collection process. Triangulation, or the amalgamation of methodologies to investigate a phenomenon is often supported as an approach to strengthen research design (Denzin & Lincoln, 2013; M. Q. Patton, 1990). Given the sensitivities around obtaining narratives from violent men about behaviour that could portray

them in a negative light, as well as the tendency of many male perpetrators of domestic violence to deny, minimize and externalize blame to other sources, for their abusive and often times criminal behaviours (Baker et al., 2001; Dutton & Hemphill, 1992; Heckert & Gondolf, 2000; Sugarman & Frankel, 1996), a triangulated approach to data collection was utilized. Furthermore, Barnett, Miller-Perrin, and Perrin (2011), question the complete reliance on self reports from perpetrators of domestic violence given the unacceptable nature of their crimes and their potential associated anxiety around possible legal and social sanctions.

Feminist research highlights the centrality of the researcher-participant relationship in creating meaningful knowledge, which is based upon collaboration, respect and equality. Primacy is afforded to the premise that the research participant is the expert in understanding their experience and the researcher's role is to facilitate a shared process of discovery. Reflecting on, and attending to, perceived imbalances of power that may have arisen in the interactions between researcher and participant occurred throughout the research process. In contrast to positivist research traditions dictating strict objectivity and researcher detachment, I attempted to place myself in the research and to redress perceived imbalances in power. For example, the adoption of qualitative methods including the use of semi-structured interviews loosely guided by anchor points, enabled flexibility. As a result, the direction of the interview was not rigidly controlled by the researcher, and although the conversation was purposeful, participants also had power to tell their story in their own way and at their own pace. This approach can redress perceived power imbalances between the researcher and participant. Furthermore, the researcher communicated with all research participants prior to the interview, outlining the purpose of the research, format of the interviews, and the anchor points or areas that would be likely discussed, as well as, aspects of confidentiality and informed consent. Conveying this information openly and transparently was another strategy employed to redress any perceived imbalances in power between the researcher and the participant.

The adoption of a non-judgemental, respectful and curious stance, which invited each participant to share his story was a feminist research principle which underpinned the

qualitative interviews. Furthermore, in concert with feminist methods, the researcher was committed to giving a voice to people who had been previously marginalized. The majority of the research participants, despite being privileged as men, were marginalized through their economic, health, and cultural location in society. Most men had been diagnosed with mental health problems and substance abuse dependencies, were from economically disadvantaged backgrounds and some were from cultural backgrounds marginalized from the mainstream. In this way, although the men were oppressors in their domestic environments, they could simultaneously be viewed as being oppressed in other ways. The nature of the men's narratives, particularly in relation to their descriptions of their oppressive attitudes and actions towards their partners and children, were offensive and repulsive to hear. However, I attempted to adopt a non-judgemental, non-confrontational stance, focusing on enabling each man to tell his story. Adopting such a stance did not equate with adopting a value neutral stance however. Although it would have been unethical and inappropriate for the researcher to 'confront' men about their oppressive attitudes and behaviours, direct questions which, required men to consider the ramifications of their attitudes and behaviours on women and children challenged oppression and conveyed my valued stance in regards to the issue of violence against women and children.

4.6 Ethical considerations

Ethical considerations included ensuring that participants: gave informed consent in relation to their participation and the dissemination of any research findings, understood the parameters of confidentiality, were treated with dignity and respect, were not harmed as a result of their voluntary participation and that others were not harmed either. To this end, the research methods were designed to attend to these ethical issues and complied with contemporary ethical research standards. For example, this study was conducted with the approval of the Human Research Ethics Committee of the University of Sydney (Appendix 5) and in concert with the ethical provisions outlined in the Australian Association of Social Worker's Code of Ethics.

a.) Informed consent

The study used a purposive sample of fathers who had perpetrated domestic violence. Participants were recruited through LifeCare, an agency in Sydney, Australia, which provided therapeutic services to men who had perpetrated domestic violence against their intimate partners. An introductory letter and advertising flyer were sent to the agency identifying the aims of the research and selection criteria (Appendix 6), which included that in order to participate in the study, men must:

1. be fathers who have resided in the home with their child(ren) and the child's biological mother for a period of at least one year. The men must be involved or have been involved in the parenting of their child(ren).
2. acknowledge that during the period of co-habitation, they were physically, sexually and/or emotionally abusive on at least one occasion to the child's biological mother,
3. be over 18 years of age.

The researcher met with the Program Manager and two LifeCare counsellors who were facilitating the '*Facing Up*' program to describe the research project, including the background, aims, methodology and research design. The LifeCare counsellors were highly supportive of the research and volunteered to describe the project to their clients, both in individual counselling sessions and during a therapeutic group session. The counsellors emphasized the voluntary nature of participating in this independent study and the fact that participation would have no bearing on their receipt of services. LifeCare counsellors provided men with a copy of the advertising flyer and Participant Information Statement (Appendix 7) and instructed men to contact the researcher directly if they wished to participate. The decision to participate or not was confidential and the LifeCare counsellors did not necessarily know whether or not their clients had decided to participate. This method afforded men anonymity and removed the therapist from the research process.

When interested men contacted the researcher, a short telephone interview was conducted in which the research aims, design and eligibility criteria were again discussed. If the eligibility criteria were met and the man wished to proceed autonomously and as a result of his own free will, then arrangements were made for a face-to-face meeting to occur. In the face-to-

face meeting, methods for ensuring, and the limitations of, confidentiality were discussed, as were the details of the 'Participant Consent Form' (Appendix 8). If the man wished to proceed as a research participant, he was invited to sign the 'Participant Consent Form' and to keep a copy of the 'Participant Information Statement.' Men were also informed that they were free to withdraw their consent and discontinue participation at any time without prejudice. In this way, informed consent was obtained from the participants and no deceptive practices occurred at any stage of the research process.

b.) Confidentiality

Each participant was allocated a code number and pseudonym to conceal his identity and all data relating to each participant was coded, recorded, and stored by this non-identifying number and pseudonym. Similarly, pseudonyms were allocated to all family members identified by the participants in order to conceal their identities. The data was stored in a locked filing cabinet accessible only to the researcher and all data stored on the researcher's computer was password protected. Participants were informed that the data would be retained for a period of seven years after the completion of the study, at which time all audiotapes would be erased, data stored on CD roms, discs or the hard drive of the researcher's computer would be deleted and the results of the study would be written in the form of a dissertation to be submitted to the University of Sydney. Men were also informed that their identity would be concealed in any future publications arising from the research. Through these procedures, client confidentiality and privacy was maintained.

c.) Beneficence and non-maleficence

Participants were informed that there was no guarantee that they would benefit personally from the research. However, they were informed that the research could contribute to the further development of knowledge and interventions to assist families experiencing domestic violence. Some men indicated that their participation was predicated on a desire to enhance knowledge and improve practices in this area in order to 'make amends' for their oppressive behaviours. Men who adopted this view may have experienced the research process as beneficial, although that was not the primary aim of the inquiry. The project also had the

potential to give the participants a voice, which has been missing from the research carried out in this area.

Whilst no guarantees were given in regards to any potential benefits associated with participation, procedures were actively constructed to minimize the potential risk of harm that could be associated with participation. In addition to adhering to the values and ethics underpinning social work practice and research generally, such as respect and dignity for individuals, specific measures were also put in place to address any potential distress experienced by participants. As the research had the potential to induce psychological or physical stress in the participants, in that they may have experienced feelings of guilt, anxiety or stress associated with the sensitive nature of the topics discussed, arrangements were made for participants to debrief with professionals with whom the participants had an existing relationship. This was important as it obviated the need for the participant to disclose distressing personal information, which may have been a source of shame and anxiety to yet another, additional person. The LifeCare counsellors, who were well known to the participants and had specialist expertise in working with men who are violent to their partners, agreed to be available to provide a service to any participant who felt distressed and wanted to debrief. It was considered essential to draw upon the LifeCare counsellors as they had a dual perspective which simultaneously focused on 1) providing support to men who are violent to their partners and 2) assessing risk and promoting safety to the men's family members, with whom many had a pre-existing working relationship. An independent counsellor with no knowledge of the participants' historical use of violence nor of his potential for further violence to his family members would not have been in a position to maintain this essential dual perspective. In this way, measures were put in place to minimize the potential for harm to occur to either the participant himself or any member of his family, as a result of participation in the research study.

Participants were also informed of the researcher's ethical and legal obligations to report any concerns for children and young people considered to be at risk of significant harm in accordance with Section 23 of the Children and Young Persons' (Care and Protection) Act

1998. Furthermore, participants were informed of the researcher's ethical obligations to report to the relevant authorities any information indicating that the participant intended to harm himself or another person.

4.7 Research design

The research design delineates a framework for linking theoretical paradigms with relevant strategies of inquiry and methods of data collection (Denzin & Lincoln, 2013). The next section explains the procedures that were used to address the research questions within the context of a critical feminist perspective. Specifically, the pilot study, interview schedule, sampling technique, location of interviews, risks to the researcher, as well as, data collection and data analysis considerations will be described.

a.) Pilot study

A pilot study was conducted with the approval of the Human Research Ethics Committee of the University of New South Wales. Eight men who were participants in men's behaviour change programs in Sydney were interviewed for the purposes of the pilot study. Seven of the men were participants in a program auspiced by a non-government organisation in central Sydney and the additional man was a participant in a program auspiced by a government organisation located in Sydney's lower north shore. The research methodology and methods used in the pilot study were similar but refined for use in the final study. For example, the qualitative data was obtained through informal semi-structured interviews loosely guided by desired categories of information pivoting on the participants' experience of fathering, use of domestic violence and perception of the impact of domestic violence on children and partners. The same instruments used to obtain quantitative data such as the demographic questionnaire (Appendix 1), Violence Assessment Index (Appendix 2), Injury Assessment Index (Appendix 3), and the Controlling Behaviours Index (Appendix 4) were used. Conducting the pilot study provided a context for critical reflection on a range of issues including the challenges of cross gender research with men who abuse women and children, research methodology and design, and theoretical approaches to understanding domestic violence. Personal reflection and discussions with my academic supervisor and colleagues in

the field, enabled me to improve my research skills and refine my data collection and analysis methods.

b.) Research Instruments

The Qualitative Research Instrument (Appendix 9) was developed after an extensive literature review was conducted. Consultations with my academic supervisor and other professional colleagues were also influential in developing the qualitative research instrument and identifying complementary quantitative research instruments. Experience gained through the pilot study also helped me to refine the qualitative research instrument and improve the procedures for collecting data from the quantitative research instruments.

The qualitative data was collected using semi-structured in-depth interviews (M. Q. Patton, 1990). In-depth interviews are one method used by qualitative researchers to encourage participants to communicate their thoughts, feelings and actions using their own words (Marsiglio et al., 2000). The in-depth semi-structured interviews were loosely guided by the following categories of desired information: 1) relationship with child(ren), 2) views on fathering 3) understanding of the impact of domestic violence on women, children and the father-child relationship. A number of anchor points guided the discussion of each category (Appendix 9).

The quantitative data was obtained via three standardized instruments administered at the conclusion of the face-to-face interview. The following instruments developed by R. Dobash et al. (2000) to complement qualitative methods were used to triangulate the data. These tools, which are underpinned by feminist understandings of domestic violence, defining domestic violence broadly as a constellation of coercive controlling behaviours, were designed to elicit information about people's perceptions of the nature, severity, frequency and impact of domestic violence. The indices used are known as:

- The Violence Assessment Index (Appendix 2)
- The Injury Assessment Index (Appendix 3)
- The Controlling Behaviours Index (Appendix 4)

These indices enabled measurement of the severity and frequency of specific acts of violence and controlling behaviours throughout the life of the relationship and in the 12 months prior to the interview. The quantitative data was analyzed according to the protocols employed by the authors (R. Dobash et al., 2000). In addition, basic demographic data was collected in relation to factors like age, gender, income, education, employment and cultural background. Although a gender analysis was central to the research process, attending to the intersection of gender with other factors such as culture and class was considered important in any attempts to understand men's fathering experiences and practices.

c.) Obtaining the sample

As the study was exploratory in nature and as the data generated particularly from the in-depth interviews was expected to be rich in narrative text, a small sample size was considered acceptable. A qualitative methodology enables an exploratory approach to this under researched area of study. M. Q. Patton (1990) states that qualitative methods typically produce a wealth of detailed data about a much smaller number of people and cases.

In total 22 men participating in the '*Facing Up*' program volunteered to participate in the study, of whom 17 men followed through with their agreement to participate. As this was an exploratory, qualitative research inquiry, generalizability of findings was not a goal. With this in mind, ensuring a representative sample was not a priority, rather locating a purposive sample of men who were willing to discuss their experiences of using violence and fathering was the primary consideration. However, it was still considered important to attend to diversity. As a result, in the later stages of the recruitment process, a sequential sampling approach (Teddlie & Yu, 2007), which involved beginning with an initial sample and gradually adding to that sample was used. This occurred through the researcher's ongoing communication with the LifeCare counsellors, requesting that they inform and invite men from diverse backgrounds to participate. In the end, the sample included a variety of men from different cultures, socio-economic statuses, as well as, some men who identified as having mental and physical disabilities. However, the majority of participants lived in the same

geographical area and were from a low socio-economic group. Detailed information regarding the demographics of the participants will be described in the next chapter.

4.8 Data collection

In order to collect the data, a number of activities occurred including: making initial contact with potential participants, securing an appropriate location for the interviews to occur, establishing rapport, developing a working relationship with the participant conducive to sharing sensitive material of a personal nature and attending to issues of researcher safety. These aspects of the data collection phase will be discussed below.

a.) Initial contact

All initial communication occurred over the telephone. As men frequently made contact shortly after receiving information about the research project from LifeCare counsellors, most had a clear understanding of the purpose of the research project. As such, they asked relatively few questions and were often task-focused on negotiating an appropriate time and place for the interview to occur. Some men indicated that a desire to 'make amends' catalyzed their participation in the study.

Five men who had made initial contact and arranged to meet in order to participate in the study, did not present for interview. Two men did not present on more than one occasion, after repeatedly agreeing to attend the interview and being aware that the researcher had to travel three hours round trip for the interview.

b.) Location

The interviews were conducted at the LifeCare counselling centre. This was a space, which offered familiarity to the men and a sense of safety to the researcher. The interview rooms provided a comfortable and relaxed atmosphere. All men were familiar with this space, as they had previously attended either counselling sessions and/or had attended a screening interview for the '*Facing Up*' program in these rooms. The majority of interviews occurred during office hours, although a few occurred after hours due to the participants' work commitments. After repeatedly failing to attend previously organised interviews, two men

agreed to be interviewed over the telephone. These interviews were conducted via 'speaker phone' behind closed doors, in an interview room, at the LifeCare centre in order to ensure confidentiality and privacy.

In the initial telephone contact with potential participants, a number of men requested that the interviews be conducted at their homes. Although participants may have felt more comfortable and relaxed in their own homes, for safety reasons such offers were declined. As all men had a history of violence against their female intimate partners, and some men had a history of violence against men and women in general, it was considered essential to interview the men in a controlled environment where safety precautions could be put in place.

c.) Information provision

Participants were initially greeted by the researcher in the waiting room and invited into an interview room. Men were then thanked for agreeing to participate, re-acquainted with the aims of the study and the proposed interview format, and permission to audiotape the interviews was sought. Procedures to ensure confidentiality were again described and participants were informed that the interview would be stopped at any time, if they so desired. Procedures for obtaining professional debriefing if they so desired, were also described. In addition, the Participant Information Statement was discussed, after men had read it. The Participant Consent Form was then signed. All men gave consent for the interviews to be audiotaped and all men signed the Consent Forms. Participants were then given a copy of the Qualitative Research Instrument (Appendix 9). This was described as the 'proposed format of our time together' and participants were asked if they were comfortable with proceeding in the proposed manner. All men indicated that they agreed with the proposed format. Giving participants a copy of the Qualitative Research Instrument was considered an important method to address any perceived power imbalances between researcher and participant. Similarly, explaining that the instrument was developed as a guide only, and that the goal was to engage in a conversation, albeit with a purpose, lessened the formality of the interview.

d.) The interview process

The interview generally followed the process described in the Qualitative Research Instrument, beginning with conversation focused on father-child relationships, moving to a discussion of their perceptions of being a father and then onto an exploration of domestic violence and its impact on women and children. The face-to-face interviews lasted between 29 and 94 minutes, with an average length of 68 minutes. The quantitative data was obtained via three standardized instruments administered at the conclusion of the face-to-face interview. The majority of men completed the forms independently. Two men however, required assistance to complete the forms due to their functional illiteracy. After participants completed the quantitative data instruments, the interviewer reconvened with them to establish if they had any additional comments about their experiences of fathering or regarding the interview process itself. The quantitative data collection took 30 – 45 minutes to complete. A number of men indicated that they were unable to stay to complete the questionnaires due to time constraints. All committed to completing the forms and returning them to the centre for collection. None followed through on this commitment. Despite numerous assurances from the participants to provide the forms, none were returned and as a result, quantitative data in relation to two men is missing.

At the beginning of the interview, many men expressed that they had been preoccupied in the days and hours before the interview with trying to anticipate the kinds of questions that I would be asking. Many of the men who expressed this view seemed to have prepared answers to anticipated questions and established control over the direction of the interview. They frequently began by articulating the questions they had anticipated and then providing a response to those anticipated questions, which generally related to their perceptions of domestic violence in their relationship and their beliefs about its impact on children. In many circumstances, it seemed as if they needed to justify, deny or minimize their abusive actions. They frequently talked about their involvement in the '*Facing Up*' program and made statements comparing themselves to other group members and concluding that they were 'not as bad' as others.

Problematizing the nature of the relationship between researcher and participant is the subject of much attention in the field of qualitative feminist research. Given that the bulk of feminist research has been conducted by women in collaboration with women, many argue that the researcher's attributes, for example her experiences of being a woman at a certain time and in a certain location, should enter the research interaction (Andrews, 2002). Whether the female researcher should be a neutral objective party or a partner in the research process with other women has been the subject of much debate. Less attention has been given to what this relationship should look like in cross gender feminist qualitative research. Some tenets of feminist research, such as the conceptualization of the researcher as a believing, supportive partner with a shared history were not appropriate to adopt in this inquiry and the adoption of such a position, could have led to a replication of oppressive power structures already experienced by the participants' partners and children.

However, it was important to develop a 'working relationship' with the research participants, which would enable a space for the disclosure of personal and private material. In order for this to occur, it was important for participants to feel that they were not being judged and that I could be trusted to receive their narratives concerning their worlds. My training and experience as a social worker provided the most useful grounding in my attempts to carve out my identity as a feminist researcher working with violent men. In particular, a commitment to the values and ethics of social work, including a recognition of the worth and dignity of all people, even those who commit atrocities against women and children, guided my efforts to attend to the participants' narratives, simultaneously questioning their shifting locations as oppressors and oppressed. However, to imply that this project was easy would be facile as there were numerous complexities and uncertainties that produced dilemmas throughout the research process that destabilised glib attachments to previously unquestioned social work values.

4.9 Risks to the researcher

Given the participants' history of violence, a number of precautions were employed to reduce the risk to the researcher including: having at least one member of the LifeCare staff present

in the building during the interviews, using a pre-purchased mobile phone specifically for telecommunication with participants, being safety conscious in relation to the physical environment, assessing the participant's emotional affect and responding to perceived threatening behaviours.

Interviews conducted during working hours when more staff were present in the centre created the impression of increased safety. It was previously agreed that at least one staff member would stay in the building for the duration of any interviews conducted after hours. Despite planning for such safety precautions, on one occasion when conducting an after-hours interview, staff members inadvertently left the building, leaving the researcher and a participant alone. This created a difficult situation, as I could hear the staff members leaving and felt an internal conflict between wanting to demonstrate trust to the participant in order for him to trust me enough to share his story, but at the same time, feeling concerned for my own safety.

As discussed, for ethical reasons all men who were interested in participating in the study were asked to contact the researcher by telephone. An inexpensive mobile phone was purchased and used to receive these calls and for when further telecommunication occurred. This phone number was freely given to participants and all telephone contact occurred via this phone, with the exception of the two telephone interviews, which were conducted at the LifeCare Centre using a landline. The use of the research specific mobile phone obviated the need to release personal contact details. Similarly, safety precautions were taken in respect of the details provided on the advertising flyer, which contained details of a work phone number and email address at the University.

Safety was also attended to in relation to aspects of the physical environment. This included ensuring that there were no obstructions in front of the doorway, which would prevent a quick departure, if the need arose. Similarly, attention was paid to the location of the furniture and chairs were situated in such a way to alleviate a situation whereby the researcher could be 'cornered'. Chairs were positioned at an angle with a coffee table in-between the

researcher and participant and the researcher's chair was always positioned closest to the door.

On a number of occasions, it appeared that the participants' anger and agitation levels were elevating during the course of the interview. The speed of their speech increased, the skin on their face and neck reddened, some men closed their fists and punched into their other hand when describing incidents of physical abuse they had been involved in. On two occasions, men leaned in towards me and had a menacing grimace on their face. On both occasions, they were describing how they perceived that women had maligned them. From professional experience the researcher was highly attuned to these signs and when they occurred, efforts were made to subtly move the conversation away from emotive issues to more neutral subjects of conversation. The use of strategic breaks was also employed as a strategy to de-escalate these situations on occasion. Whilst this may have resulted in deterring the participant from sharing important information about their use of domestic violence, which could have assisted in better understanding their perception of events, a decision to privilege safety over data collection was always made. In the context of a different kind of relationship, for example in a therapeutic relationship, it may have been appropriate to challenge and confront overt acts of intimidation and/or oppressive articulations, however in this context my priority was to enable the participant to express his views, however disturbing they may have sounded to me.

Many times during the course of the interviews, I felt indignant, sad, and affronted by the oppressive attitudes and behaviours described. For example, on one occasion, I was moved to tears upon hearing one man's callous admissions of his repeated abuse of his step-son and the devastating impact of these events on that young boy. Maintaining a 'neutral face,' which tried to convey a non-judgemental attitude in order to elicit detailed information about the victimization of women and children felt wrong and inauthentic. Being able to debrief with colleagues, my academic supervisor and other people close to me was essential throughout the interview process. The process of writing my impressions after each interview was

another important method of collecting data, as well as, enabling me to interrogate my emotional responses to the emergent material.

4.10 Data analysis

Details regarding aspects of the data analysis process including transcription and data management, coding and theme development and methodological issues are addressed below. Qualitative research is underpinned by a commitment to see the world through the eyes of the people being studied and to probe beneath the surface to uncover the meaning that people attribute to their lived experience (Bryman, 2012).

Against this backdrop, the perspectives of the people participating in qualitative research are the central point of departure, which leads many writers to argue that data analysis techniques are more appropriately aligned with 'abductive reasoning than 'inductive reasoning.' (Bryman, 2012) Abductive reasoning is concerned with 'grounding a theoretical understanding of the contexts and people (being studied) in the language, meanings and perspectives that form their worldview.' (p 401) This type of analytic approach relies upon the participant's explanation and understanding of their experience. In keeping with feminist qualitative research principles, the data collected was rich in thick descriptions and detailed information about the social world under examination (Geertz, 1973). This provided the opportunity for an in-depth consideration of the social context in which the men's experiences and particularly, of their violence, took place. The data analysis techniques were premised upon the principle that participants' behaviours, values and beliefs could only be understood in context. Taking this into account thick descriptions were obtained of social settings, events and individuals (Bryman, 2012).

a.) Transcription and data management

The 'NVivo' software program was employed to assist in the management and analysis of both the quantitative and qualitative data. Each participant, and their family members were assigned pseudonyms to ensure that their privacy was maintained. Each participant was also assigned a 'case number' for the purpose of managing and analyzing data using the 'NVivo'

program. All data (quantitative and qualitative) for each unit of analysis or 'case' was coded within a 'case node.' Schwandt (1997) argues that 'in the sociological and anthropological literature, a case is typically regarded as a specific and bounded (in time and place) instance of a phenomenon selected for study.' (p. 12) In this study, fathers participating in a domestic violence treatment program comprised the cases, or units of analysis. All data obtained including qualitative data from the semi-structured interviews and quantitative data from the Demographic Questionnaire, Violence Assessment Index, Injury Assessment Index, and Controlling Behaviours Index was recorded in individual nodes, within the case nodes. Coding the data in this way facilitated a convenient data management and retrieval process. This system also enabled cases to be internally analyzed and/or compared with other cases in a manageable fashion. This was very important given the significant amount of data that was gathered throughout the life of this research project.

I transcribed each audiotaped interview verbatim and imported it into the 'NVivo' software program as a word document. Although transcription was a time consuming task, which for that very reason is often outsourced, I felt it was beneficial to undertake this task personally as it enabled me to immerse myself deeply in the data. The process involved actively listening to the audio-taped interviews two or three times before transcribing them onto a computer. The 'first listen' occurred as soon as possible after the interview (usually the same day), while the details of the interview were recent. On this occasion, I listened intently and took notes, attending not only to the spoken word but also to the more subtle nuances of the interview. In particular, I was attuned to the participant's tone of voice, speech patterns, use of pauses, displays of emotion, body language, etc. I made notes about these aspects of the interview and recorded them within the case nodes under the heading of 'impressions of interview.' An independent transcriber would not have been able to attend to these subtle nuances, which were important aspects of the interview. Within three days of the interview, the audio-tape transcription occurred. In concert with Bazeley (2013) my 'goal in transcribing (was) to be as true to the conversation as possible.' (p 45) Prior work experience, which required the recording and transcribing of interviews for evidentiary purposes had equipped me with skills and knowledge regarding the importance of ensuring accuracy in transcription.

b.) Coding and theme development

The qualitative data collection and analysis occurred throughout the research process in order to organize data into themes contemporaneously. Qualitative data analysis was conducted according to techniques derived from thematic analysis (Norman, Denzin, & Lincoln, 2003). Thematic analysis as described by Willms et al. (1990) involves reading all interviews and field notes as a whole and beginning to organize the data into topics and files, reflecting on the data in order to identify themes. Miles and Huberman (1994) suggest that researchers start with some general themes derived from reading the literature and add more themes and subthemes as they progress. Bulmer (1979) lists ten different sources of themes including literature reviews, professional definitions, local commonsense constructs, and the researcher's values and prior experiences. He also notes that the investigator's general theoretical orientations, the richness of the existing literature and characteristics of the phenomena being studied influence the themes that researchers are likely to find.

Coding is a crucial stage in qualitative research, enabling the researcher to search for and uncover meaning from the copious raw field notes and verbatim transcripts that 'reflect the undigested complexity of reality.' (M. Patton, 2002, p 66) Strauss and Corbin (1998) describes a code as an abstract representation of an object or phenomenon. Coding was used as a way to link data to ideas and ideas back to supporting data (L. Richards & Morse, 2007) rather than a process of 'simply reducing experiences, characteristics or attitudes into numeric codes.' (Bazeley, 2013, p. 66)

A coding schedule for each case was developed, which recorded descriptive information about each case. This descriptive information included demographic details as well as other categorized information and was stored in the form of attributes using the 'NVivo' program. Demographic details, such as age, ethnicity, education, income, employment, marital status, number of children, age of children, family composition and contact with children was recorded for each case. Other descriptive information, which was categorized included information pertaining to alcohol and other drug usage, mental health issues, criminal justice involvement, domestic violence perpetration and participation in the treatment program.

Data in relation to each of these attributes was coded by assigning an 'attribute value' or code to categories subsumed under each attribute.

The next aspect of the data analysis involved analyzing the content of the transcripts. Coding of each transcript was completed on computer using the 'NVivo' program. This involved reading and re-reading each transcript and categorizing the text into emergent categories and sub-categories. Broad thematic categories or concepts were identified and coded as 'nodes.' As this enquiry related to an area that is under researched the codes were primarily 'in vivo or derived directly from the data as opposed to a priori codes, which are derived from prior experience or are grounded in a strong literature base.' (Strauss, 1987, p 76)

Each transcript was scrutinized and the content was categorized and sub-categorized. This involved exploring the text to identify 'local terms' (M. Patton, 2002) used by participants to describe particular concepts, as well as the frequency with which certain words, subjects and themes occurred (Bryman, 2012). When each transcript had been scrutinized in the described manner, a number of recurrent categories emerged. The transcripts were then re-examined in light of these categories. Scrutinizing each transcript and then comparing and contrasting the transcripts was a time consuming, yet necessary part of the data analysis process.

Qualitative data in relation to each case was also recorded in document memos. These memos enabled storage of field notes including impressions, developing concepts, and thoughts about each case. These memos were particularly useful as they provided a means for diarizing the development of ideas about the data. In addition, the memos became the location to store thoughts that emerged out of the space of critical reflection. Critically reflecting upon experiences of the research process from an intersectional feminist perspective enabled me to interrogate my perceptions and actions of cross gender research with men who had used violence against women. As a feminist researcher this critical reflection was important as it allowed for an exploration of the dynamics and complexity of power within this particular research process. For example, many memos or field notes were

devoted to considerations of my location and identity as a well educated, middle class, white woman conducting research with primarily blue collared, under educated, economically disadvantaged men, many of whom had significant mental health and substance usage issues and all of whom had used violence and other tactics to oppress women and children. These memos were invaluable reminders of the multiple and diverse experiences that resulted from these social locations and how these positionings generated standpoints which partially shape how we make sense of the world (Briskman et al., 2009).

4.11 Limitations

As this enquiry was based upon a purposive, rather than a random sample, the results are not generalizable. Taking this into account, it is acknowledged that the men who participated in this study may not be representative of other men who perpetrate domestic violence. As this was an exploratory study of an under researched area, much more research is required to build a firm knowledge base about the fathering of men who perpetrate domestic violence. Furthermore, given the small sample size (n=17) and fact that the majority of men resided in the same geographical area, it could be argued that the conclusions drawn from this enquiry are only applicable to the participants. However, despite these sampling limitations, the enquiry achieved the desired goal of eliciting a wealth of rich data in an under explored area, which is entirely commensurate with the standards and goals of qualitative exploratory research. Bryman (2012, p. 409) argues that 'qualitative research aims to achieve contextual understanding whilst quantitative research seeks to achieve generalizable findings across relevant populations.'

4.12 Reliability and validity

The use of the concepts such as reliability and validity, which have a 'stronger tradition in quantitative research, to establish and assess the quality of research for the qualitative researcher' is a contested area (Bryman, 2012, p 389). Some argue that concepts such as reliability, validity and generalizability can be employed in roughly the same manner in qualitative and quantitative research to assess the quality and rigour of the researcher (Mason, 2002), whilst others have adapted these concepts for use in qualitative research (Le

Compte & Goetz, 1982). Still others argue that different criteria should be used altogether to evaluate qualitative research given that it is not possible to obtain a universal absolute version of social reality (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

The most appropriate criteria upon which to assess qualitative research is another contested area. E. G Guba and Y. S. Lincoln (1994) propose that trustworthiness and authenticity are the two main criteria that should guide such assessments. Trustworthiness is concerned with assessing the credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability of the research. Each of these aspects will be discussed below.

Given that there are multiple accounts of social reality, assessing the credibility of the participants' accounts is an important aspect in assessing the quality of the research. Triangulation, in the tradition of Webb, Campbell, Schwartz, and Sechrest (1966) was the technique employed in this study to consider the credibility of the participants. Triangulation in this way meant employing multiple methods including both quantitative and qualitative, in the collection of data about the same phenomenon. However, as the research was not concerned with verifying 'truth' but rather with understanding the meanings that the participants attributed to their fathering experience and use of violence, further techniques to assess credibility such as respondent validation or using multiple informants were not utilized. These techniques were also ruled out on the basis of the potential risk of harm to the researcher and/or family members of the violent men. For example, as Bryman (2012) argues 'respondent validation can occasion defensive reactions and censorship on the part of the participant.' (p. 391)

Another technique to assess the trustworthiness of the research involved the notions of dependability and confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Dependability involved maintaining accurate and full records of all aspects of the research process and sharing these details with my academic supervisor throughout the life of the project. Confirmability involved using techniques such as reflexivity to interrogate researcher biases to ensure that personal values or assumptions did not manifestly influence the research findings. Reflexivity involved being

cognizant of the implications of methods, values, biases and actions in relation to the analysis of information of the area under study (Pink, 2001). In this way, the knowledge generated from any qualitative research must be viewed as being located within a certain social space and at a certain time in history. Reflexivity was facilitated throughout the research process and is documented in the extensive 'memos' or field notes that were documented.

Authenticity involved considering issues of fairness and the practical application of the research findings. Fairness in this sense is concerned with the degree to which the research fairly represented the participants' viewpoints. Through triangulation, rigorous data collection and analysis methods, and reflexive practice, every effort was made to represent the essence of the participants' perspectives, rather than those of the researcher. Although the research was not primarily concerned with ontological, educative, catalytic, and/or tactical authenticity, some men did comment that they felt that the research experience helped them see how domestic violence may have affected their children. Some men indicated that as a result, they wished to remedy the impact of their violence on their children.

4.13 Summary

Details of the methodology used in this study have been presented in this chapter. In particular, attention has been given to delineating the research aims and research questions, epistemological and theoretical underpinnings, methodology, ethical considerations, data collection and analysis methods, and methodological issues. The following chapters will detail the findings of the enquiry.

CHAPTER 5

INTRODUCTION TO THE RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

5.1 Introduction

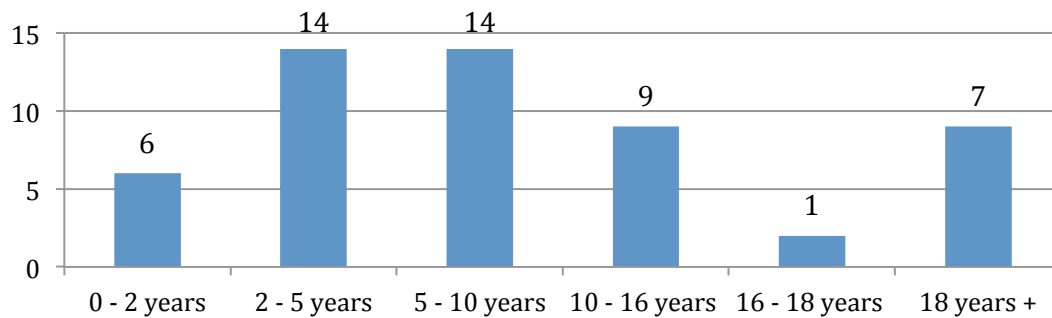
The men who participated in the study and details of their use of violence and other coercive controlling tactics will be introduced in this chapter. This information is provided to locate the accounts of their fathering experiences and practices within a wider context attending to the diversity of their lived experience.

5.2 Demographics

Seventeen men from an outer city region of New South Wales participated in this study. They ranged in age from 26 to 46 years, with a mean age of 35 years. Seventy-one per cent of participants were aged between 26 and 39 years. Of the 15 men who identified their ethnicity, three (20 %) identified as Aboriginal, eleven (73 %) as non-Aboriginal/Australian born, and one as overseas born.

In relation to marital status, six reported being in a de-facto relationship, three as married, four as separated, and four as single. The 17 men described being the biological fathers to a total of 45 children, two of whom had died in two separate families. In relation to fatherhood status, each participant was currently the biological father of at least one living child. Four men identified themselves as step-fathers to a total of six other children, who were children of their current partner whereas three others did not identify themselves as such despite cohabitating with their de-facto partners and their child(ren). The 51 children (45 biological and 6 step-children) ranged in age from three months to 22 years. A frequency distribution of their ages can be seen below.

Table 5:1 Frequency distribution of children's ages



Most participants described having minimal formal education, with 47 per cent identifying their highest educational level attained as year 10 or below. Four men had obtained a trade certificate, two had fulfilled the requirements of a high school certificate and one had completed an undergraduate degree. Two men did not provide details of their education, employment nor income levels.

A relationship between education, employment, ethnicity and income was noted. The six unemployed men had attained the lowest educational and income levels. Only one unemployed man had completed year 12, the remaining five had completed year 10 and two had completed a certificate course at a vocational education facility. The unemployed men also recorded the lowest income levels with five indicating that their annual income was less than \$20,000 per annum and one reporting an income level of \$20 – 40 000 per annum. It is noted that the average weekly total earnings for all persons in NSW at the time of this study was \$968.00 (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2010).

Two of three men who identified as Aboriginal recorded their highest educational level as year 10, were unemployed, and reported receiving less than \$20 000 per annum. The remaining man indicated that he was currently enrolled in a vocational education program, worked part time and earned between \$20 and \$40 000 per annum.

The six employed men worked on a permanent full time basis, and also recorded the highest annual income and educational levels. Two men indicated that they had completed year 12, two had received trade certificates, one completed year 10 and the remaining man did not complete the questionnaire. This group recorded the highest income levels with one man

reportedly earning between \$80 – 100 000 per annum, two between \$40 – 60 000, one between \$20 – 40 000, one earned less than \$20 000 per annum and the remaining man did not answer the question.

Four men were employed on a permanent part time basis, of whom two had completed year 10 and one a trade certificate. Three recorded earning between \$20 – 40 000 per annum. The remaining man was the only person in the group to have completed an undergraduate degree. His reported per annum earnings were less than \$20 000 but were over reportedly \$100 000 prior to separation.

The ten employed men worked in a variety of predominantly blue collar jobs. The six full time employed men worked in the following areas: building, services sector, retail, and law enforcement. The four part time employed men worked in the following areas: welfare, landscape labouring and auto-mechanics. Another man worked on a contract basis in telecommunications. Half of the unemployed men had previously held jobs within the building industry and hospitality sector. Two men indicated that they were studying part time in the human services sector. Thirteen men provided details of the occupational status of partners or ex-partners. Six (46 %) indicated that they performed 'home duties' whilst seven women were employed in the following areas: real estate, health and human services, clerical duties, banking and retail.

The data obtained from the demographic questionnaire is summarized in Appendix 10.

5.3 Health and welfare indicators

Of note was the high percentage of men who described substance abuse dependencies, mental health issues and/or involvement in the criminal justice system. The next section will discuss these aspects of the men's narratives.

a.) Alcohol and other drug usage

Ten of 17 men described long standing substance abuse dependencies that adversely affected their, and their family members' daily lives. This section provides quantitative data regarding the type, quantity and frequency of substance usage. Qualitative data regarding their perceptions of the relationship between domestic violence and substance use, and the impact of substance use will be discussed in later chapters.

Four of ten men described being dependent upon a single substance, which in all cases was a depressant. Three of four described chronic marijuana dependence, while the remaining man described alcohol dependence, which spanned over two years and consisted of drinking approximately a carton of beer daily. Two men reported using between one and two grams of marijuana daily over an eight-year period. Another man reported using a 'cone' weekly for an unspecified length of time.

Six of ten men described a history of poly-drug usage with three regularly using a combination of depressants including alcohol and marijuana (2); heroin, alcohol and marijuana (1) and three others using a combination of stimulants and depressants including heroin, speed and alcohol (1); ecstasy, cocaine and alcohol (1) and ecstasy, alcohol and marijuana (1). Five poly drug users described the frequency and duration of usage. They described using substances individually or in combination over the following time periods:

Table 5:2 Frequency and duration of substance usage

Drugs Used	Frequency	Duration
Alcohol & marijuana	Daily	14 years
Heroin	Daily	6-7 years
Replaced with Alcohol & marijuana	Daily	8 years
Heroin, speed, alcohol	Daily	13 years
Cocaine, ecstasy, alcohol	Daily	17 years
Ecstasy, alcohol, marijuana	Daily	13 years

All men claimed to have addressed their substance abuse dependencies. Eight of 10 men described the length of their sobriety, which ranged from 44 days to five and a half years (mean = 2.1 years). Five men claimed to be in the early stages of recovery, having been 'sober' or 'clean' for under one year (mean = 7 months).

Two men described recovering from their dependence on what they termed 'hard drugs' such as heroin and speed by replacing them with 'soft drugs' like alcohol and marijuana. For example a man who described being 'off' heroin and speed for about a year reported drinking large quantities of alcohol on a daily basis (nine 'long necks' or 750 ml bottles of beer) up until nine weeks prior to the interview, at which point he claims to have ceased drinking alcohol altogether, due to grave concerns for his health related to Hepatitis C.

b.) Mental Health Issues

Five of 17 men claimed to have received a mental health diagnosis by a general practitioner, psychiatrist or psychologist. This section will provide quantitative data regarding the types of mental health diagnoses reported. Qualitative data regarding the men's perception of the relationship between their mental health issues, fathering experiences and use of violence and other coercive controlling behaviours will be discussed in subsequent chapters.

Three of five men claimed to have been diagnosed with mood disorders by their general practitioners, which was Clinical Depression in two cases and Bi-Polar Disorder in the remaining. All had been prescribed anti-depressant medication, and the man diagnosed with Bi-Polar Disorder had been prescribed additional pharmaceuticals. The remaining two men were diagnosed with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder by a psychologist and psychiatrist respectively and had been prescribed anti-depressant medication. One of these men had also been previously diagnosed with Clinical Depression and Drug Induced Psychosis.

Three of the five men who had received a mental health diagnosis also described a history of substance abuse. In two cases this involved chronic, long-term poly-drug usage and one involved chronic, long-term marijuana usage.

c.) Criminal justice involvement

Eight of the men (47 %) reported that they had a criminal record for domestic and non-domestic violence related offences. Eleven men reported that they were currently, or had been previously, the subjects of civil domestic violence protection orders (AVOs). Five indicated that they were the subject of current AVOs, of whom two had also been the subject of previous AVOs, which had since expired. An additional six men indicated that they had been the subjects of previous AVOs.

Five men described being charged with Breach AVO and Assault for perpetrating violence against their partners and/or ex-partners. In response, two were convicted, two matters were currently on adjournment and the remaining man did not describe the outcome of court proceedings. Of the two men convicted, one received a custodial sentence, while the other was granted a Suspended Sentence and ordered to attend domestic violence counselling and alcohol and/other drug rehabilitation, which he claimed to have completed. This man pled guilty on two previous occasions in relation to charges of Breach AVO and Assault on his ex-partner.

In relation to the two matters currently on adjournment, one man had been charged with Breach AVO and two counts of Assault, one on his ex-partner and the other on her neighbour. In this family, he had previously been charged for Assault on his ex-partner but reportedly police did not pursue the matter. He perceived that this was due to the victim's 'non-cooperation' with police action. In the other matter, the man was charged with Assault on his ex-wife's neighbour, who had come to her assistance during an incident where he was assaulting his ex-partner. This man had previously been convicted of Assault and a warrant for arrest was pending in relation to his non-compliance with the conditions of a Community Service Order.

Four men had been charged with Assault following physical attacks on partners and ex-partners. Following conviction, one man had been sentenced to weekend detention. The other two matters had been adjourned whilst the remaining matter had been dismissed.

Two men had received custodial sentences in relation to a range of violent and non-violent offences. One man had served five and a half years in prison in relation to convictions for fraud and theft charges. Another man had served two sentences, each of six months duration, following conviction on a number of charges including, Assault Police, Larceny, Stealing a Motor Vehicle, and Break and Enter. This man was currently the subject of two Good Behaviour Bonds.

Another man had been charged with Assault Occasioning Actual Bodily Harm in relation to an incident where he had punched a work colleague in the face and broke his nose. This matter was adjourned before the court. This man and another man had also been previously charged with Possess Prohibited Drug.

5.4 Participation in the '*Facing Up*' program

Men described multiple reasons for participating in the '*Facing Up*' Program, which are summarised below. Six men claimed to be participating on a purely 'voluntary basis,' but described contextual factors that may have contributed to their decision to participate. For example, two men were the subject of court proceedings in the District Court in relation to Assault charges and were facing potential custodial sentences. Participation in a behaviour change program is a factor which would be considered in the judicial decision making process. Four men desired to reconcile with partners who had urged them to seek counselling. Of the eight men who were mandated to participate in the group by Community Services, two were involved in Children's Court proceedings seeking parental responsibility of their children. The remaining six were complying with Community Service's undertakings in relation to Restoration Plans. Two men were participating in order to comply with orders made in the District Court. One man was referred to the program by his Probation and Parole Officer and participated pursuant to the requirements of a Community Service Order, while the other was complying with Bail Conditions. One man indicated that he was participating as a result of his wife's ultimatum that she would 'leave him' unless he addressed his violent behaviour. Her position was fomented after a violent incident where he threatened to kill her and their two children.

Four men had attended one assessment interview with a therapist and were waiting to commence the next course. Five men had participated in four sessions while three men had participated in 18 sessions and continued to have 'follow up' counselling thereafter. One man had attended the assessment interview, expressed a desire to participate but did not make further contact. Given that the program did not specifically address fathering, it is perhaps not surprising that no relationship was noted between stage of completion and men's descriptions of their fathering experiences and practices.

5.5 Family composition and contact with children

Men lived in a variety of family compositions, which were often quite complex. Numerous blended family arrangements were noted and many men had children who were residing in out-of-home-care, often as a result of chronic exposure to domestic violence.

a.) Fathers living in nuclear or blended families

In four families fathers resided with partners and the biological children from those relationships. Only one family could be described as a traditional nuclear family unit consisting of a mother and father residing with their biological children and with neither parent having any other children. In another family the mother and father were currently residing with their three biological children, whilst another child from the mother's previous relationship was in the temporary care of Community Services with restoration pending. In both of these families, the father was unemployed, receiving benefits and had limited formal education. In the remaining two families, fathers lived with one biological child and one step-child and in one of these families the father also had an estranged child from a previous relationship. In both of these families, fathers were employed on a permanent full time basis.

b.) Fathers living with step-children and their mothers

In two families, men resided with female partners and her children from a previous relationship. In one family, the man lived with his de-facto partner, her young adult daughter and the young woman's one year-old son. Three biological children from his relationship with a de-facto partner had been placed in long term out-of-home-care. In the other family the

father had recently moved in with his de-facto partner and her three children but did not identify himself as a step-father. His biological daughter resided with her biological mother, his ex-wife, but stayed with him and his 'new family' on a fortnightly weekend basis. Both men were employed, one on a full time basis, the other on a part-time basis.

c.) Fathers having primary care of their biological children or having daily contact

In two families, fathers resided with their biological children and their parents, who were the people granted parental responsibility of their grandchildren by order of the NSW Children's Court. In another family both parents had daily contact with their son who was in the temporary care of his maternal grandmother. In both of these kinship care arrangements the families were Aboriginal. In one family, the child, who had been removed from the care of his biological mother due to concerns about her drug and alcohol usage, had been legally restored to his father's care. This was despite the fact that the mother's drug and alcohol usage was described as developing in the context of the domestic violence that she had been subjected to at the hands of the child's father. Prior to the recent restoration, the father had, had ongoing daily contact and care of his child anyway, as he resided in the same home where his son had been placed by child protection authorities. At the same time, the child's mother was only allowed minimal supervised contact with her son, which was organized by the father. In the other situation, a four month-old girl had been restored to the care of her father, whilst his two older daughters remained in the care of his parents and there was a restoration plan in place in relation to these two children. In this situation, the father resided nearby his parents and had ongoing daily care and contact with his older daughters, whilst the mother had no contact or involvement with her children. In these two families, one father was unemployed, receiving benefits, while the other father was employed on a part-time basis.

In the other family, a two year-old boy had been placed in the temporary care of his maternal grandmother, pending the outcome of Children's Court proceedings due to exposure to domestic violence and concerns about parental drug and alcohol usage. The order stipulated

daily contact between the child and his parents, which was supervised by the maternal grandmother.

d.) Fathers who lived independently but had regular contact with children

Four men who were separated from partners lived independently but reported having regular and ongoing contact with their 11 biological children. None of the men in this group had any step-children and two of the men had children from previous relationships. One man had four children from two previous relationships, while the other had three children from two previous relationships. Three of the men in this group indicated that they were seeking reconciliation with their partners and wanted to return to the family residence. The remaining man reported that he had no desire to reconcile with his ex-partner and was contemplating initiating legal proceedings to have one of his three daughters placed in his care, against the wishes of her mother. Three out of four of these men were employed.

e.) Fathers who had minimal contact

In three families, 12 children who were in the long term care of Community Services until 18 years of age had minimal contact with their fathers and there were no plans for restoration. Ten children from three families were residing with non-familial, out-of-home-carers, whilst two children from one family resided with maternal grandparents. In two families, the Community Services case plan included monthly, supervised three-hour contact visits but both fathers indicated that these visits were frequently cancelled. In the other situations, the children had three monthly, supervised visits with their father. Two of three fathers were employed on a full time basis while one was unemployed.

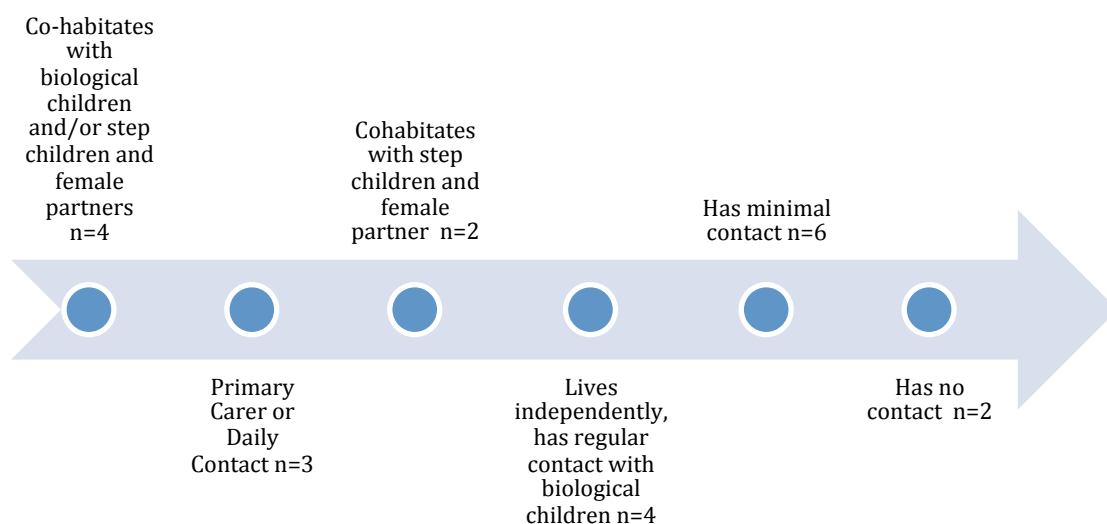
In three other families, a total of six children were awaiting final orders from the Children's Court regarding their future care arrangements. In one family, where an 11 year-old boy was placed in temporary care following a suicide attempt, his step-father was denied contact but the child's mother was granted regular contact. In another family, both parents were encouraged to have twice weekly, two-hour contact visits with their children whilst another father was granted weekly three-hour contacts.

5.6 Continuum of contact

The amount of contact that men had with partners, ex-partners, children and/or step - children differed and could be placed on a continuum (See Diagram 5:1) with the first three groups described above having frequent, daily, face-to-face contact and the last group having minimal, structured, supervised contact with children.

It should be noted that four men have been included in two separate groups as their situations were somewhat complex. For example, one man who cohabitated with a partner, and their biological children but was denied contact with his step-son pursuant to a Children's Court Order. Another man cohabitated with a partner, biological child and step-child but had no contact with another biological child who resided with her mother. Another man resided with a partner, step-child, and infant grandson but had minimal contact with his biological children who were in the care of Community Services. The last man cohabitated with his wife and children but had no contact with his daughter from a previous relationship.

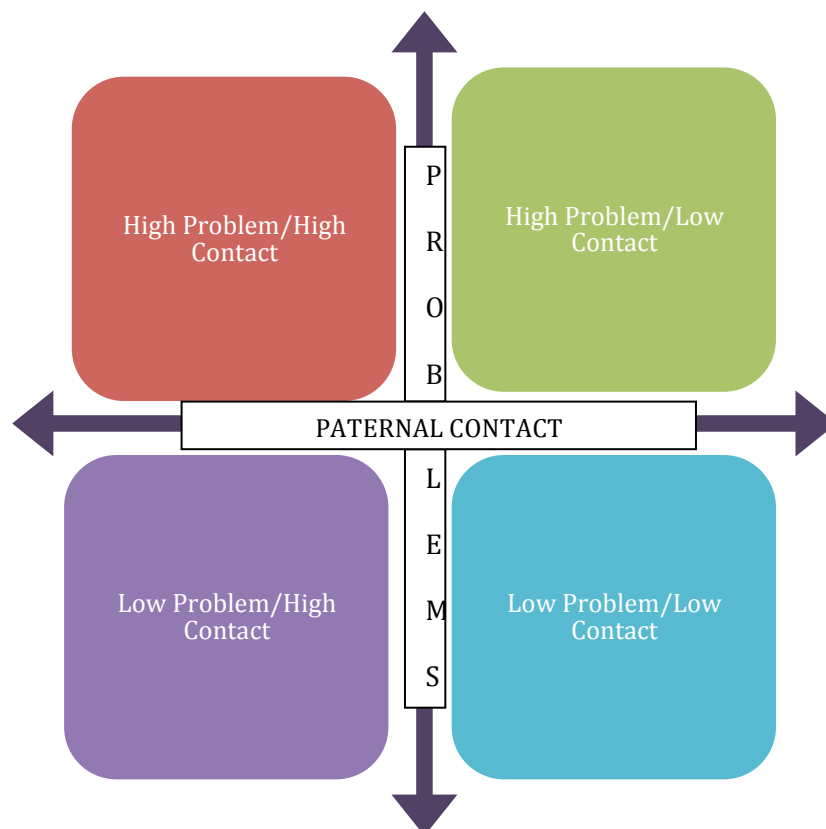
Diagram 5:1 Continuum of contact arrangements



5.7 Contact and paternal risk/problem

When the amount of paternal contact was compared with the magnitude of the social problems (for example, substance usage, socio-economic disadvantage, mental health problems) reported by men, four groups emerged:

Table 5:2 Paternal contact and social problems



a.) High Problems/High Contact

Four men described having a high level of contact with partners, children and/or step-children and having multiple, significant and chronic problems. All men resided in the home with women and children with whom they had ongoing daily contact. Three of four men had significant substance abuse dependencies, and were in the early stage of recovery from these addictions, whilst one man claimed to have recovered from his dependency. Two unemployed men had been diagnosed with mental health issues and substance dependencies. Both had involvement in the criminal justice system and both spent large amounts of time at home with very young children. One of the men who had a long standing history of subjecting his partner and children to severe and frequent domestic violence which

had resulted in the removal of his biological children, had ongoing daily contact with his step-daughter and her baby, as they lived in the same residence. Two men were included in this group as well as the following group since their level of contact with children differed. For example the man described above had high contact with his step-daughter and grandchild but little contact with his biological children who lived with foster carers, whilst another man had high contact with his step-children but minimal contact with his biological daughter.

b.) High Problems/Low Contact

Four men described having minimal contact with their children but having multiple, significant and chronic problems including unemployment, substance dependency, mental health problems, and criminal justice involvement. All men had children who were in the care of the Community Services. In two situations children were in long term care and supervised contact occurred monthly and quarterly. In the other situations, children were in temporary care pending the outcome of Children's Court proceedings.

c.) Low Problem/High Contact

Seven men described having high contact with their children and/or step-children, with five men residing with them. Men claimed to have minimal problems or to have rectified past problems and five of seven men in this group were employed. Two men had children who had been placed in the care of their parents but who had been recently restored to their primary care. Both of these men had a history of long-term poly-drug usage.

d.) Low Problem/Low Contact

Four employed men did not report mental health problems, substance abuse dependencies or criminal justice involvement but did describe having minimal contact with their children. One man in this group was also included in the previous group as he had high contact with one of his children but low contact with two other children.

5.8 Descriptions of violence and other coercive controlling behaviours

This section provides an overview of the men's accounts of their use of violence and other controlling behaviours. It also details the men's perceptions of the actions taken by women and children in response to domestic violence. These accounts provide further details of the

context in which their fathering occurred. The nature and pattern of domestic violence that men perpetrated is described for a number of reasons. Firstly, it provides a context for their participation in the '*Facing Up*' program. Secondly, as the attitudes and beliefs supporting the men's use of domestic violence pervade every aspect of family life, including the way in which power is used and the way in which relationships are conducted, they are vital to understand as they provide the context in which mothering, fathering and child development occur.

A.) Physical violence

The quantitative and qualitative data obtained in this enquiry regarding the perpetration of physical violence will be described below in order to set a context for a discussion of the men's fathering practices and experiences.

Sixteen of 17 men described physically assaulting partners and/or ex-partners and seven located the occurrence of these assaults to within the last 12 months. Four men who described physically assaulting partners in the last 12 months reported that they were currently cohabitating with these women and their children. Three had recently separated and two had ongoing contact with ex-partners and children. The remaining man had minimal contact with his ex-partner but was seeking to have their child restored to his care in proceedings adjourned before the Children's Court. Fifty-nine per cent of men reported that children were present and visually witnessed these assaults on their mothers.

Quantitative data regarding violent acts was obtained using the Violence Assessment Index. Men reported using a variety of methods to physically abuse partners and ex-partners. Although most violent episodes contain a combination of physically assaultive acts (R. Dobash et al., 2000), in descending order of frequency women were pushed, grabbed and shoved, restrained, slapped in the face, body, arms or legs, assaulted with objects, punched in the face, body, arms or legs, strangled, smothered or held under water, kicked on the body, arms or legs, had arms twisted, kicked in the face, dragged or pulled by the hair, kicked or punched in the stomach when pregnant, and choked.

In relation to frequency, 14 men described perpetrating repeated physical assaults on women. Thirteen men estimated the number of times that they had physically assaulted partners and ex-partners. Qualitative data regarding the men's descriptions of their physical violence was also obtained. Whilst it is accepted that children need not visually witness physical violence to be deleteriously affected, it is noted that many children in this study did visually witness severe and frequent assaults, some of which are described below. The following narratives also provide insight into the men's attitudes and beliefs, (especially apropos their sense of entitlement), as well as their justifications and minimizations in relation to their use of violence and its effect on women and children.

Keith: *... I just lost it and just bashed her you know like a few times like so it wasn't pretty, ... her face was, it wasn't she didn't break any bones or anything like I wouldn't have hit her like I'd hit a man ... but I, I didn't just slap her like I say it wasn't pretty I think I head butted and hit her a few times yeah.*

Interviewer: *was your son around at that time?*

Keith: *Ah he was probably in bed I'd say like again like I barely remember ...*

Angus: *And I walked in I wanted beer and she stood in front of the fridge and said you're not having any more to drink I said if I want a beer get out of the road and she wouldn't so I've grabbed her by the throat and I've basically thrown her across the um kitchen, not thrown her, thrown her but like pushed her.*

Interviewer: *And what happened to her on that occasion?*

Angus: *Um like she just went walking backwards sort of thing, didn't hurt, get any physical damage apart from a bit of a red mark around her neck ... Get out of the road, thanks dear don't get in front of me fridge if I want a beer I'm having a beer ... Nelson seen it and um he was pretty upset with it*

Jack: *I was holding Stan in my arms and she got in my face and I, I pushed her out of the way and she fell back onto our lounge and cracked her head open on the window sill which was right up against the back of the lounge and she had to go to hospital so the police were called.*

Ken: *I was physically punching her in the head and in the body ... (the children) were in their rooms hiding ... they could hear and then they ran off.*

More than a third of men reported that they had physically assaulted pregnant women and unborn children. Many of these assaults were potentially life-threatening as the following accounts illustrate:

Keith: *... we had an argument on the way home I don't know why or what it was about but I pulled the hand brake on as we were driving along and the car spun around a few times you know and I'm thinking shit she's pregnant with me child – what a dickhead (laughs)*

Anthony: *I pushed her up against a cupboard when she was pregnant and knocked it down on her.*

Trevor: *... when she was about eight months pregnant she started bleeding we had a big argument, she was drinking at the time through her pregnancy, I said you can't be*

drinking, led into an argument, she pushed me, I pushed her back ... so I ended up leaving then Linda went to the hospital.

Angus: ... I pushed her and um she like we were having an argument she said something to me and I've just gone on the chest (makes shoving motion) and she went like she was pregnant with Todd she went out the back screen door.

Jeff: so I got arrested for assaulting her when she was probably only four months pregnant with Trina ... I didn't lay a finger on her they said that she'd fallen, she attacked me, I had a chair up she's coming at me with a knife I've got a chair up to stop her from stabbing me with the knife and I've pushed the chair and she's fallen over.

Most men denied using physical force against children. Men who reported using physical force against children described the precipitating events and their related feelings after the events. One man described physically assaulting his young son for a minor infraction of his rules and claimed to feel remorse about his actions:

Dennis: and I remember just pulling my strap out and telling him to lay across the bed and I strapped him and um cause that's what that's what was done to me and I just remember I saw the marks on his backside and I went I'll never do that again you know I remember just hitting him four or five times and with the belt going and you know it was just like it was just out of frustration and for myself and for rage not because what he did was deserving of that, it was just something, shit something minor I told him not to touch something a toy or something and then he lost it.

Another man described how he felt provoked by his 11 year-old step-son and did not appear to recognise the paradoxical bind that he placed the child in. This child, like many others, was actively taught to disrespect and abuse his mother. By siding with his step-father, and supporting his view of the mother as 'useless, lazy, stupid and incompetent,' he was intermittently rewarded and protected. At other times however, this placed him at risk as his step-father punished him for failing to demonstrate respect for his mother:

Angus: ... he calls his mother a fat whore and I ark up at him about it – I'd prefer to be a fat whore than a dumb ass like you and things like that other things that I don't know what I'm saying when I'm angry so ... I normally like I've had to walk out of the house and jump in the car and take off for a couple of hours cause he's had me at the point where I just really want to do some harm to him – it's come close to me punching him in the mouth a few times ... but I haven't like I'll walk past and I'll shoulder barge him and if he's like standing in me road trying to pee me off, he'll um stand there and just get in me face and call me names and that so I'll just drop the shoulder in as I'm walking past stuff like that ... I've grabbed him a few times if he hasn't done what he's told I've grabbed him by the arm and or by the ear and dragged him in his room and shut the door ... I've smacked him probably five times in seven years.

Other men also described adopting this inconsistent approach and seemed equally unaware of the bind that they placed their children in.

Numerous other men described assaulting people in front of their partners, ex-partners and children. Some acknowledged that this contributed to the fear that they felt towards them, although others minimized the potential impact:

Dave: ... *I bit, just arguing and yelling back at her and then the next door neighbour came over and he said "oh what's going on here?" and he grabbed me so then I've assaulted him and then ...*

Interviewer: *what did you do to him?*

Dave: *bashed him.* (laughs)

Interviewer: ... *what happened to him?*

Dave: *ahh, just swollen nose, cut, bit of blood, and couple of grazes and that's about it, nothing serious.*

Although women and children were not always present on the occasions when extra – familial assaults occurred, these situations potentially exacerbated their level of fear, especially since many men inflicted severe injuries on people. For example, one man described how he had assaulted a colleague, breaking his nose and knocking him unconscious. Similarly, another man described assaults on police, many of which resulted in the officers sustaining significant injuries. Another man, an ex-police officer, described how he calmly and savagely assaulted two men in front of his partner, in the early stages of their relationship. He acknowledged the terror, confusion and submission that this created in his then girlfriend, (now wife) and the long-term implications:

Dennis: ... *I remember grabbing one and by the arm and next thing the other ones jumped on my back and he's tried to grab my gun and this was in the middle of a shopping centre and um this is in front of my girlfriend and I'm there going, Ahhh this is great so I remember this one here I remember having to grab and I threw him through a shop window and um and then the other bloke I remember just grabbing his hand and elbowing him in the face and then just picking him up and slamming him head first in the concrete, fracturing his skull and knocking him unconscious and then just kicking the other bloke in the face, well how bad it was to everyone else there was that um the police recording of the phone call was that 'there's a policeman fighting two robbers ohhhh, I think he's just killed one'. And I remember this, Carol was fainting at the site of this bloke unconscious with yellow ooze coming out of his ears and blood just pooling from him and me walking calmly over to him and going are you okay? And she just didn't understand where that came from and me just going well that's what happens and umm you better go and pay for the fridge before the shop shuts I'm going to be a couple of hours and so yeah, I think from that moment in time when she saw what I was physically capable of doing yeah she is scared.*

Whilst acknowledging that any physical assault has the potential for fatality, many men described severe physical assaults, which women and children were fortunate to have physically survived. Using data collected from the Violence Assessment Index, three men indicated that they had attempted to strangle, smother or drown their partners and one man

indicated that he had choked his partner and held his hand over her mouth on repeated occasions. It is noted that attempted strangulation is a significant risk factor for domestic homicide (Campbell, Glass, Sharps, Laughon, & Bloom, 2007).

Jake: So then I got up out of the bed and just grabbed her held her like that (shows hand around neck) she reckons I held her around the throat I thought I just pushed her on but anyways same thing um and held her against the wall and then um she ran out and called the police and I got told to nick off ...

Interviewer: Where were the kids on that occasion?

Jake: Larry was out with um Georgia was a baby, Larry was out with his the other sister that lives there ... he probably heard the arguing I mean Trish was yelling at me at the top of her lungs so ...

Trevor: (describing his partner's response to being restrained in a room) ... and then she placed Sabrina down on the ground and after that she jumped out the window and I looked out the window and there was blood everywhere.

Angus: ... I'd been out drinking all day and mixing me drinks and that, I had a sip of someone's drink that had something in it. I don't know what it was but I ended up coming home and went to bed and about half an hour later I woke up in the horrors thinking that people from me past were in me roof and I was throwing knives through the roof and going a bit silly... The police got called and I was walking with a half pool cue swinging it around – she was scared that night.

B.) Sexual violence towards women and children

Given the taboo and criminal nature of sexual assault, it is not surprising that no man volunteered information about sexually assaulting partners, ex-partners and/or children in the face-to-face interviews.

However, two men reported on the Violence Assessment Index that they had 'forced their partners to having sex or sexual activity' and one had sexually assaulted her in the last 12 months. In terms of frequency, one man reported that he had sexually assaulted his partner 50 times over the course of their relationship, including 20 times in the last 12 months and the other reported that he had sexually assaulted his partner five times. Four men indicated that they had 'demanded sex when their partners didn't want it.' Another man who did not complete the VAI nor the IAI, described in the interview how he had perpetrated all forms of abuse on his partner except physical, financial and spiritual abuse. Men did not identify the whereabouts of children during these assaults.

Another man described how he made physical advances to his partner, shortly after he had attempted to strangle her. He did not classify this as an act of sexual assault. He also described subjecting her to severe and frequent assaults in the past, including abuse during pregnancy and attempted murder.

Trevor: I just couldn't handle it anymore, grabbed her by the throat and put me hand over her mouth and I said shut up you're gonna wake Sabrina up ... and then I let her go and then she started rambling on again like went crazy in the eyes, she bit me on the finger and I just grabbed her by the throat again and I held her down on the ground and I had my hand over her and I said you want to listen, you're gonna listen and just sort of said what I had to say I said, I bloody love you, stop doing this and then I hopped up and then she was probably scared and went off to bed and I slept on the lounge and went in half way through the night and sort of cuddled her and she said don't touch me and I said but I love you and said I don't want you to touch me you can stay in the bed but don't touch me ... (He did not describe how he responded to her requests to be left alone.)

Two men described allegations of child sexual abuse. One man indicated that his partner had approached Community Services and Police to report her belief that he had sexually abused their infant daughter and his step-daughter. He reportedly was not charged in relation to these allegations, which he dismissed as further proof that his ex-partner was 'mentally ill' (although he stated that the professional opinion was that she not have any mental health issues). The other man indicated that his father had been charged with, and pled guilty to, sexual assault of a minor. The sexual assault occurred in the participant's house and his child was present in the home at the time of the assault. Despite his father's guilty plea, conviction and sentencing the participant constructed the teenage victim as manipulative and deceitful:

Jamie: ... my father had um been convicted on a sexual assault charge many years ago ... um she was 15 and made out she was older and and um it was actually the worst part of it was it did happen in our house, my dad showed up ... was really drunk like nearly put the car through our side fence so we took the keys ... then one of our friends a few hours later showed up really drunk carrying on so we put them in separate rooms away from each other and we went to bed ourselves with the little one yeah we never heard a peep ... Yeah, we never heard nothing a couple of weeks later apparently he was getting charged with it we think it was more just a way she covered of not coming home to her parents so she didn't get into trouble.

C.) Other coercive controlling behaviours

Men who physically and sexually assault women and/or children frequently use a range of additional tactics to control and intimidate, which are integral in the creation of an

environment of fear and uncertainty (R. Dobash et al., 2000; Herman, 1992). Drawing upon extensive research and literature highlighting a constellation of violence, the range of tactics commonly used by men who perpetrate domestic violence have been visually represented in the Power and Control Wheel (Appendix 11), an educational tool used in the context of pro-feminist awareness building. Indeed, this tool is used in the 'Facing Up' program and many of the men interviewed were familiar with its concepts. One man described his surprise at learning how common it was for men who perpetrated domestic violence to use similar and multiple tactics to gain power and control of family members:

Hank: *I can't believe someone's written it all down like when I've read through something (Power and Control Wheel) I've thought every single one of them is me ...*

Some of the tactics described by men included using threats of physical violence, homicide and suicide, destruction of property, verbal abuse and maternal sabotage.

i.) Threats to use physical violence

Men who had effectively used physical violence in the past, described using threats of physical violence to gain desired results. Given that women and children had already experienced the trauma resultant from severe and frequent violence in the past, these threats held much gravitas:

Angus: *Um yeah it's sort of yeah to like say like basically don't piss me off too much or I will turn physical.*

Ken: *I threatened to hurt her in front of the kids and then they all started crying and she started crying and she rang the police and I got arrested.*

Dennis: (recalling his conversation with his son over the phone on his daughter's 18th birthday) *... I said you'll never be big enough and if you keep going like that I'll drive right round to where you are now and we'll sort it out. I said mate if I get there and I turn up I'll knock you ass over head and his response back to me was well I'll call the police and I said well make sure you get a truck load of them cause you'll need them ... but the anger had got to that stage I really felt like I was out of control and I know had he been in front of me I would have done it.*

ii.) Threats to kill women, children and other family members

Three fathers reported on the Violence Assessment Index that they had threatened to kill their partners. In relation to the frequency of homicidal threats one man claimed to have made them once, another seven times and another 50 times. Some fathers described threatening

to kill partners and children:

Hank: *Yeah I threatened to burn the house down ... Marcus probably heard that I'd say just imagine hearing your father say, ' I'm gonna burn the house down,' that's gonna do a lot for you isn't it?*

Interviewer: *... Have you made threats to her in the past?*

Hank: *Yeah ... Oh, not to burn the house down but I've probably threatened to kill her before.*

Interviewer: *Would the kids have heard that?*

Hank: *Probably not, well, no, actually what am I thinking about, they probably have.*

Two men disclosed that they had threatened to kill extended family members. In one family, the man believed that the child's maternal aunt caused problems in his life, which justified his homicidal threats:

Jeff: *Um after she took my daughter I never got along with the sister and I basically said to her you come anywhere near my family and I'm gonna, I my exact words were I think I'm sending a group of bikies round to spray your house full of bullets which um if you know me I really don't know many bikies but I spent five and a half years in prison when I was a kid so I sort of use that as a bit of a angle to piss people off.*

In the second family, the father believed that his daughter's step-father had physically abused his daughter and he perceived that his homicidal threats reflected his desire to protect his daughter:

Ross: *I threatened to put him in his little spot (Interviewer: Like a grave?)*

Ross: *Yeah ... Yeah cause I know plenty of people that will do it for me.*

iii.) Suicidal threats and attempts

Eight fathers indicated on the Violence Assessment Index that they had threatened to commit suicide, with six indicating that this had happened on more than one occasion. One man described how he had repeatedly exposed his children to anxiety provoking displays such as when he jumped out of a moving vehicle:

Seb: *... the kids have witnessed quite a few time – probably three times – um Eleanor, Eleanor just going and going on and on and on about me and my mum or whatever ... you know just bitching and bitching and bitching about my mum ... so much so that I just couldn't cope with it anymore and I just jumped out of the car ... while it was still moving ... I've done that three times in our relationship and I think the kids were in the car two times when I've done that but probably asleep in their baby seats in the back ... probably 20 km/hr or maybe faster than I could run I was actually quite surprised on one occasion that, that I think the first time that I did it that we were going as fast as we were I remember going oh shit that was faster than I thought (laughs)...*

iv.) **Acts of intimidation – ‘I’ve become a pretty good gyprocker’**

Many men described terrorizing women and children with intimidating displays of aggression and force, which involved damaging the family home or other familial property. This was a common tactic reported on Violence Assessment Index. Eleven men indicated that they had thrown things at their partners or about the room at some stage in their relationship with ten indicating that they had done this in the past 12 months. Five men reported that they had punched or kicked walls or furniture at some stage and four had done this in the last year.

Many men described destroying familial property, sometimes because they felt entitled to obtain what they believed was rightfully theirs, regardless of the impact on those around them:

Jake: *Well the third one I got (AVO) I kicked, I kicked in the back door cause she wouldn't let me have the kids one afternoon when it was my turn to pick them up and so I just kicked the back door in and grabbed them.*

Other men described smashing property because they were angry and/or wanted to send a warning to partners and/or children:

Martin: *Yeah, I got real angry with her and went outside and kicked the hell out of me car.*

Interviewer: *And did they see that?*

Martin: *Yeah, yeah they started crying and that's sort of when I thought that yeah, enough's enough.*

Seb: *Well I hit the wall and I put a hole in the wall with my hand.*

Angus: *I've smashed windows in caravans and stuff like that but cause I'm always renting and stuff it's like nope but um where we were in housing commission that's where I threw the knives through the roof and had a couple of holes in walls.*

Some fathers described smashing precious objects that held sentimental value to their children:

Interviewer: *Wh't's the worst thing you think she's experienced?*

Jamie: *Um, I don't know ... maybe getting really angry punching a hole in the wall but um I think once they got for Easter these little cups that came with eggs in just um in an argument one day I got her just threw the cup not at anybody pacifically (sic) but it was just a way just yeah, smashing the cup, um yeah really sort of scared her made her upset.*

Interviewer: *And I guess it would have had like some sentimental value to her?*

Jamie: *Yeah to her, think it was um like from her grandparents or something like that, bought it for her for Easter.*

v.) Verbal Abuse – ‘If you can’t chop a tree down one way you chop it down another’

Many men described using verbal abuse in concert with other tactics to lower the self-esteem of partners and children. Many believed that verbal abuse was a very potent form of domestic violence that was effective in creating a tension filled, anxiety provoking environment:

John: Domestic violence like getting punched in the head is painful but I could break you ten times easier than words. Lots of people in the group are saying that I’d rather be smacked in the head, cause calling names putting partner down in front of the kids is worse.

Data obtained from the Violence Assessment Index indicated that all 15 men who completed the questionnaire responded affirmatively to the descriptor of ‘swearing at her and calling her names’ and all but one of these men indicated that they had ‘shouted and screamed at her’ over the course of the relationship. Nine men indicated that they had verbally abused women over the last 12 months. Five also indicated that they had shouted at or threatened children at some stage.

In relation to the frequency of this form of violence, verbal abuse was the most frequently repeated. The prevalence and incidence of verbal abuse were both high with most men indicating that they had used this tactic hundreds, if not thousands of times during the course of their relationship with partners. Many men minimized the potential impact:

Martin: I was referred by me solicitor ... cause I’ve got a bit of difficulty understanding how yelling and arguments is a class of domestic violence
Angus: ... most of it’s just abuse ... like verbal abuse.

Verbal abuse was identified as a practical and effective strategy to enable men to attain desired goals and many disregarded the impact on the victims:

Interviewer: Yeah and when you talk about sort of using emotional abuse why do you think you’ve done that?

Ben: Because something, another way wouldn’t have worked if I can’t it’s well if you can’t chop a tree down one way you chop it down another do you know what I mean so if you can’t get your point made one way then you’ll try and find another avenue if that doesn’t work you’ll try and find another avenue and you keep going until you find one that hits a nerve that makes em, makes your partner or whoever you’re having an argument with just stop and listen to what you’re saying ... so it’s almost like it doesn’t matter how it gets heard, as long as it gets heard.

Some men described using their imposing physical size relative to partners and children in conjunction with verbal abuse to exacerbate the fear experienced by women and children. It is noted that many participants had extremely muscular physiques and were physically imposing, which would only have added to the physical threat directed at partners and children.

Ben: There are times where we'll have verbal or swearing or verbal argument and it sort of because I'm six foot four and she's only like five foot three or something I'll use my voice to and I'll she says I can make someone whose 12 foot tall two inches tall just by raising me voice and the look on me face.

Ken: they were petrified yeah ... and I'm not a little bloke so ...

Men described targeting aspects of their partner's identity that they cared deeply about and/or that contributed to their feelings of self-esteem and self-worth. Men described frequently verbally abusing women in front of their children. The verbal abuse was gendered in nature, with the subject of many tirades pivoting on the women's perceived failings to meet stereotyped standards of femininity. The aspects of womanhood that men most frequently targeted to degrade women were specific to gendered stereotypes about how women should look, act, and behave:

Dennis: my abuse towards her was very personal and very direct and it didn't miss and I know like it it's created damage and hurt that she remembers it and whether it's about her physical appearance or about her ability as a mother, her ability as a worker it was just like an explosion in me that went well I'm gonna stop this argument here and now I'm not getting my own way so guess what you stink you know ... and I was trying to be hurtful and I was being abusive deliberately I couldn't even claim that I didn't know what I was saying I knew exactly what I was saying and I knew why I was saying it.

Women's appearance, and particularly their weight was a frequent subject of criticism. A mother of five children struggled to return to her pre-child birth figure and was continually abused about her weight and accused of being unfaithful by her partner. Other women were told that their opinions of themselves did not matter and that they were 'stupid, crazy, and/or overly concerned' with their appearance:

Jamie: I might throw a comment about her weight at points especially when I knew that she was always cause after the kids um ... Um it was easy something I knew was gonna hurt her at the time um yeah ... you'd have a big argument who she'd been out with or who've you been sleeping with?

Anthony: Well Francis is a bit overweight – I'd call her a fat thing...

Other men criticized women for being lazy and reported verbally abusing them for not living up to acceptable standards of housekeeping and/or parenting:

Jamie: *you just sort of end up in a big fight cause she couldn't get off her ass and do anything.*

Jake: *So they (Medical Professionals and teachers) tend to agree, she tends to agree with them that he has got ADHD but I think she's fairly lazy herself so I don't think she puts enough time into keeping him stimulated ...*

Some men described directly verbally abusing their step-children by screaming at them and calling them names:

Hank: *Well, she'd probably say I'm surprised she still talks to me so the way I've been but I feel like I've never done anything right by her but I probably have but it just seems that I've been hard on her ... Forever pretty much ... just all the things that have gone on you know, ah, it's just hard to father someone else's child you know what I mean like it's hard to explain um it's not that I haven't taken an interest in anything that she's done I probably tried to be too, give her too much discipline do you know what I mean whereas everything like I probably don't have never seen anything good always trying to look for something bad you know what I mean never give her sort of encouragement or anything like that She'd probably say she hates me I'd say ... oh just probably cause I screamed at her, fought with her mother ... Yeah if we're talking to each other we're screaming at each other or otherwise we're not ...*

Angus: *Um when he comes home I'm gonna show him more love than hate.*

Interviewer: *Do you feel that you've shown him hatred?*

Angus: *Yeah ... Up over the years but um, yeah mainly it's (the child's suicide attempt) been blamed on the way I treat him, with name calling cause I don't like the way he treats his mother so that angers me then I go off at him in a rage – he doesn't like that ... he'd prefer me to be down at the pub drinking and come home pissed cause I'm a better person when I'm pissed he says, he hates me when I'm sober ...*

Interviewer: *Yeah, and um you said there was name calling, can you give me any examples of things you might call him?*

Angus: *Just like when he's doing the stupidest things like throwing a ball at the t.v. and, and like he's 11 years old he should know better I call him an idiot, um when he's acting stupid I call him idiot, um he calls me names like dickhead, asshole, prick.*

vi.) Maternal sabotage – 'Dad's the top of the food chain'

Mothering, and motherhood were areas that were frequently attacked, with many men degrading women for failing to meet their perceived standards around what constitutes 'good mothering.' This was a significant form of abuse that contributed to sabotaging the mother-child relationship and many men reportedly deploying deliberate attacks on their partner's mothering skills and abilities in order to exert power and control over her and the children:

Dennis: *Why her mothering? It was just to assert power over her to let her know I can stop you any time you want. You know I may not hit you but I may as well hit you cause what I'm saying to you is having the same effect it's you know it's, it's attacking something that's most oh I don't know, means, it's something that probably means the most to her, her identity, being and sense of worth. It's to say you're a hopeless*

mother you can't even do this you know you're whingeing about this you know that's your job you can't even do that why did you become a mother?

Interviewer: ... would (it) be pretty common place for the kids to hear that?

Dennis: Yeah.

Jack: *ah yeah I did do that a few times told her she was a bad mother and which I didn't mean it I just said that to try and lower her self-esteem and that, you know she, she had a couple of problems where she got upset and that while having him you know times were tough being a young mother and stuff like that so I used to tell her you can't handle him you shouldn't be a mother just stuff like that that shouldn't have been said ... I don't know it's just an easy way to hurt somebody you just put them down.*

Anthony: *I used to say things like 'fucking you're a slack mum, I'll take the kids.*

Men openly acknowledged the instrumental nature of such attacks, which effectively ensured maintenance of the man as the patriarch of the family by decimating maternal power and authority. Men described being aware of the deleterious impact that these tactics had on the ability of their partner's to enjoy being a mother and to parent her children effectively.

5.9 The resistance of women and children to men's violence - 'She's a mini human shield for her mother'

Six fathers described situations in which children had physically intervened to protect their mothers from harm. Some children bravely tried to end violence by physically standing up to their fathers during assaultive episodes and by comforting their mothers after assaults:

Dennis: *... I've found her to become really protective and like clingy around her mother like wanting to be around her mother whose like I don't know she's a mini – human shield for her mother, which is I can look back and see that in myself and my father used to physically attack my mother – like physically putting myself between them.*

Angus: *I don't really remember it was just a couple of days later that something was said that I knew that he'd come out um the fear and terror in her eyes was like, 'Fuck what's he gonna do to me?' And um apparently all he done was come out and told me to leave her alone and basically comforted her.*

Some men described how their children had pleaded to them to stop assaulting their mothers and/or siblings. Some men indicated that they felt shame and embarrassment because their children had begged them to act responsibly and respectfully towards others:

Dennis: *But I remember it caused such a rift like Anne rang me crying going, 'I don't want to meet with you why did you do that what did you say that to him, why did you threaten him?' you know and then I, I found myself trying to justify to her like I'm his father he won't speak to me like that and I remember her saying to me, 'Like dad there's better ways of doing this.' This is my 18 year daughter telling me this ... and it would end up being you know my 18 year-old daughter telling me you things that I just should have known.*

Hank: ... him telling me to stop and you don't and he's probably, he's probably scared for his mother's life and for his life I don't know you know when someone's you know raging like that.

Ken: Jackie was a bit older, she'd seen a lot more of it I think and realized that like she used to come up to me and ask me not to do it ... But um yeah she used to come up to me and say ask me to stop it crying.

Other children intervened by actively seeking assistance from nearby adults in order to end incidents of physical violence:

Interviewer: *Can you tell me a bit about how they reacted to that?*

Anthony: *Well that night Dennis ran over to the grab up the next door neighbour and he said to the neighbour dad was hitting mum can you come and help mum.*

5.10 Summary

This chapter presented the results of demographic details of the participants, including their age, ethnicity, educational, employment, marital and fatherhood status, and income level. Health and welfare indicators such as alcohol and/or other drug usage, mental health status, and involvement in the criminal justice system were also detailed. Data was also presented which compared the participants' level of contact with children and the magnitude of health and welfare problems described.

The domestic violence that the men in this study subjected their partners, ex-partners and children to was also described in this chapter. Collectively, the men described using physical and sexual violence as well as a plethora of other tactics to exert power and control over women and children. In most cases, a range of tactics were used concomitantly. Fifty-nine per cent of men reported that children were present and visually witnessed traumatic episodes of physical violence perpetrated by their fathers or step-fathers against their mothers and many others described exposing their children to frightening displays of aggression, property damage, homicidal and suicidal attempts and threats. Many men described how they used violence instrumentally to ensure the supremacy of their needs for authority, control and to gain what they perceived of as 'respect.' In addition men described the actions taken by women and children to seek protection and to find support. This introduction to the participants, including their use of violent and other coercive controlling behaviours contextualizes their accounts of their fathering experiences and practices.

CHAPTER 6

IMPACT OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

6.1 Introduction

Men's perception of the impact of domestic violence on women and children was central to the enquiry into their fathering experiences and practices. In particular, this area provided critical information about their level of empathy and concern for women and children, whom they had harmed. This chapter provides an overview of their perception of the physical and emotional impact on women and children, of their use of violence and other coercive controlling behaviours.

6.2 Physical injuries resultant from domestic violence

As outlined in chapter one, assaults on women and children frequently result in both visible and invisible physical injuries, as well as emotional and/or psychological harm. The most common visible injuries sustained by women and children who are physically assaulted are bruises, bleeding and fractures on attacked areas of the body. However, many women and children also sustain invisible and sometimes life threatening internal injuries resulting from brain damage, internal bleeding and/or ruptured internal organs. Furthermore pregnant women who are domestically assaulted are at increased risk of suffering pregnancy and birth complications.

Data regarding the injuries sustained by women and children was obtained from the analysis of the qualitative data, as well as from the men's responses to questions on the Injury Assessment Index, which 15 of 17 men completed. During the in-depth interviews, 11 of 17 men (65 %) described inflicting physical injuries on women, six of 17 (35 %) reported causing these injuries in the 12 months prior to the interview. Only one man described physically injuring his child.

Data obtained from the Injury Assessment Index showed that collectively in order of descending frequency, men described inflicting the following injuries on women; bruising on her body, bruising on her arms or legs, bruising her face, blackening her eyes, causing sickness or vomiting, splitting her lips, causing bleeding on her body, arms or legs, cutting parts of her body, knocking her unconscious, cutting her face, pulling out her hair, cutting her arms or legs, spraining her wrist or ankle.

During the interview two men who did not complete the Injury Assessment Index described physically injuring partners. One described an incident in which his partner sustained bruising on her body, while the other described an incident in which his partner sustained a significant head injury. Descriptions of the immediate and/or physical pain suffered by women as a result of their physical violence were absent from most men's accounts. In fact, only one man commented (albeit vaguely) on this aspect, describing the physical impact on his ex-partner following an assault in which he threw her into a banister:

Interviewer: when you say you hurt her back, what happened to her back?

Jamie: cause I think she said she had to have a couple of injections ... so she sees a physio down there and had to have a bit of treatment to yeah cause it must have been hit, must have just really bruised the inside of her back ...

Men described inflicting a range of physical injuries on partners and ex-partners including head injuries and internal injuries. Men also described causing significant injuries to pregnant women and unborn children.

Traumatic head injuries are potentially life threatening and victims of such injuries, are at risk of suffering the consequences of brain injury. Four men described punching and/or kicking their partners and/or ex-partners in the face, causing head injuries, bleeding, shock and split lips. For example, Dennis described punching his wife in the face:

Dennis: Yeah I did hit her...I just turned around and knocked her to the ground and I remember her just sitting there with a cut lip like just shocked that I did it and even I was shocked that I did it.

Two men described assaulting their partners in the facial/head region rendering them unconscious. Another man described 'splitting his partner's head open' during an assault, which resulted in her hospitalization, where she received stitching.

As described in chapter one, victims of domestic violence, experience more complications during pregnancy and birth, have an increased risk of premature birth, and experience a higher number of terminations and miscarriages when compared to non-victims. These increased risks are the result of the direct and indirect effects of domestic violence. For example, women can experience excessive bleeding due to internal rupturing of the placenta or uterus, experience premature labour and/or miscarriage and can suffer stillbirth after assaultive events (Taft, 2002).

Four men reported that partners and/or ex-partners had suffered miscarriages. Two men described having had children who had died in infancy, one due to a genetic disorder and the other due to complications associated with her premature birth. The father of the baby who died due to birth complications was accused of kicking his partner in the stomach, causing her to labour and resulting in the premature birth of her daughter, who died shortly after birth. He indicated that a Coronial Inquest into her death had been considered at the time but reported that he was unaware of the reasons for the matter not proceeding. He also stated that he was previously arrested and pled guilty to Assault charges on his partner in the fourth month of her pregnancy with another child.

One man described how his partner had been hospitalized with serious and potentially life threatening internal injuries, which he had been accused of causing, an accusation that he denied.

6.3 Minimization of severity and impact of domestic violence

Most men's accounts of the physical impact of their violence were characterized by denial and minimization. As a researcher, the seeming lack of empathy and blatant disregard for the pain and suffering that men had inflicted upon women and children was confronting. The use of minimizing words and phrases such as 'just,' 'a little,' 'only' frequently appeared in the men's narratives:

Seb: *I didn't really hit her anyway I only slapped her in the face but only gently.*' – This same man said, *When pressed ... she'll say nah, he was never violent towards me.*' He then went on to describe in the Violence Assessment Index how he had physically restrained her, pushed, grabbed, shoved her, slapped her, used an object

to hurt her, threw things at her, punched walls, shouted and screamed at her hundreds of times, shouted and threatened kids thousands of times, swore at her and called her names.

Jamie: ... *there was a **touch of** domestic violence ...*

Dennis: *I've **never struck her or anything** like that you know **I have grabbed her** on occasions ... I remember grabbing her by the scruff of the neck and going if you were a bloke I'd knock you ass over head and then her just sort of being shocked that I had her up off the ground.*

Angus: *Um like she **just went walking backwards** sort of thing, **didn't hurt**, get any physical damage **apart from a bit of a red mark around her neck**.*

Jake: ... *there was a **little bit of physical** where I **just held her against the wall** ... she reckons I held her around the throat I thought **I just pushed** her on but anyways same thing ...*

Jeff: (describing an assault on his ex-partner who was four months pregnant) *No, oh she had marks on her arms and stuff from where I was had the chair up and she's trying to get at me **but there was no bruising down here no nothing**.*

Other men used light-hearted phrases and words to describe assaults on their partners and/or children:

Angus: *I was throwing knives through me roof and **going a bit silly**.*

Ben: ... ***it was almost like a cartoon** and we sort of, there was a bit of a pushing in there and sort of I stepped back and she went through and grabbed the phone.*

Dave: *so I just **bumped past her** and she goes common assault charge on me for that, didn't harm her or anything or hit her or just get out of the way you know ... (goes on to describe how he 'bashed' a man that came to her aid, minimizing the impact thus:) Interviewer: *What happened to him?* Dave: *ahh, just swollen nose, cut, bit of blood, and couple of grazes and **that's about it, nothing serious**.**

6.4 Men's accounts of the physical impact on children and young people

Concerns about how domestic violence had affected the physical health and wellbeing of their children were expressed by a number of men. Many children were diagnosed with a range of diseases and disorders, by medical professionals, including cancer, clinical depression, and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder. This section begins by describing the diagnosed physical health problems experienced by children and young people before describing their fathers' perceptions of the psychological and emotional consequences of domestic violence on women and children.

Life-threatening cancerous polyps were detected in a young man, which were believed to have resulted from his exposure to chronic stress, fear and tension in the home environment.

Despite expressing a sense of shame and remorse about this grave situation, the father still described repeating a pattern of controlling and abusive behaviour, which continued long after his son's diagnosis and treatment.

Dennis: ... and then it turned out that we had a cancer scare with him like at 16 he had all these polyps in his bowel which were, were cancerous and for some reason that was almost like a cease fire between Jane and I because that type of cancer is only evident in old people you know its and um that and the primary cause is either age or stress when they're young it was almost like a stress related thing I can remember like praying oh God like have we caused this, have I caused this ... I know he was already quite distressed and I know it was like a long process for him you know losing part of his bowel.

Other men described believing that their children and/or ex-partners had eating disorders, which affected their physical health and wellbeing.

Seb: ... I'm really concerned about I've seen my daughter go from being I don't know probably 30 kilos to probably 75 kilos she's put on heaps of weight, she's quite rotund, heaps bigger than her mum heaps bigger um I'm sure that she's gonna have body image issues because of the age that she's at and I don't like the idea of her suffering from the same crap that her mum suffered from (bulimia) ... Yeah, she's gonna suffer the same thing she's gonna have body image issues I can't imagine that she won't have well she already does I already know that she does ... She hides herself and then she doesn't brush her hair.

Some men acknowledged that a direct effect of exposing their children to their abusive attitudes and behaviours was childhood depression and attempted suicide and/or suicidal ideation:

Interviewer: How did he try to commit suicide?

Angus: Tried to hang himself ... and I think it was a day or two before that he lay in front of a moving truck at school.

Other men described symptoms of depression, and indicated that they felt that their children and partners were at risk of suicide:

Hank: Um well I suppose he'd be withdrawn, being in his bedroom all the time I don't feel good about that ... I don't know maybe she (step-daughter) could have got the severely depressed with what she's but she stays out a lot see that's probably her you know escape.

Interviewer: when you say you're lucky that Barb (step-daughter) hasn't committed suicide, how's Crystal (wife) coped with things?

Hank: Well, there's another, she's, she's got to probably lucky she hasn't either...

A number of children had been diagnosed with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder by medical personnel. Whether or not the medical personnel were informed of children's chronic exposure to domestic violence prior to making this diagnosis was unknown. In many situations it appeared that the physicians were not privy to this information:

Anthony: *Well he's got ADD so at times he doesn't listen but it's only a real mild case of ADD like he's just over the borderline ... the school that he goes to said that he was lacking in concentration, couldn't really sit down and concentrate so we took him to (a Doctor) and you know like if me and Francis weren't caring parents we wouldn't have given him the stuff do you know what I mean like we're not paying 180 dollars to go and see a podiatrist (sic).*

Jake: *Well, Trish seems to, they seem to think that Larry's got a little bit of ADHD which I don't agree, I think he's just really active and needs stimulation all the time so she sort of thinks agrees with them and I don't necessarily agree with them so in that sense we're.*

Interviewer: *Oh okay, who is them?*

Jake: *Oh the Doctors and professionals and all that sort of stuff ... I spoke to a Occupational Therapist who thinks he's possibly got a little bit and a Paediatric Dr I spoke to but to me he was just arrogant so I don't really value his opinion at all.*

Interviewer: *Right so do they have him on medication or anything?*

Jake: *No, I won't let them put him on medication.*

John: *Umm, in Sandy she's ADDHD (sic) so she has a few extra problems ... Gena is a good kid like she puts herself to bed, she's an angel but Sandy has problems in general behaviour problems if she hasn't had her medicine I persevere with her though.*

John: *And she's got Global Development ...*

Interviewer: *Okay and so how does that affect her?*

John: *Sort of puts her behind, she's basically not a seven year-old she'd been a five and a half, six year-old in her reading and writing. I read to her everything. She struggles with reading and writing.*

In another situation, the father diagnosed his child as having ADHD despite the fact that medical personnel had assessed the boy and concluded that he did not present with symptoms of ADHD:

Interviewer: *What makes you say he's borderline ADD?*

Martin: *He just the energy level he's got is unbelievable ... Just can't tire him out no matter how hard you try... No we took him to (a Dr) and he said he's just an over energetic kid, kid but it's hard to diagnose ADD or Attention Deficit at such a young age ... They don't like to do it until they're older.*

6.5 Emotional and/or psychological injuries

As described in chapter one, the emotional and/or psychological impact of living with domestic violence has been well documented by researchers examining the impact on women and children. For example, women who experience domestic violence have been found to be at increased risk of experiencing anxiety and emotional tension. As highlighted by some researchers in the field, 'it is not possible to endure repeated physical attack, to sustain repeated injuries, and to live in an atmosphere of fear of repeat victimization without experiencing anxiety and emotional tension.' (Dobash, Dobash, Cavanagh & Lewis, 2000, p. 21) Many qualitative studies using feminist methodologies and seeking to understand the

impact of living with domestic violence from the perspective of women and children have highlighted that many experience a lowered sense of self-esteem, heightened sense of anxiety, increased rate of depression and suicide. Pregnant women living with domestic violence have been found to have increased rates of Post Natal Depression (Taft, 2002). Much research has found women's accounts to be rich in narratives of loss, including a sense of lost identity as a result of the continued violence, degradation, humiliation, isolation, and threats that they are subjected to (R. Dobash et al., 2000; H. Kennedy, 1992; Mullender, 1996; L. Smith, 1989; Stanko, 1985).

The emotional impact of living with domestic violence on women was an area largely unreported by participants. Many men claimed that women were mentally ill and/or substance dependent. They used their lay diagnoses to justify or explain their use of domestic violence. However, no man identified women's emotional problems as being the consequences of domestic violence. Most men were able to describe the impact of domestic violence on children generally, however fewer were able to describe the impact on their own children. Descriptions of the emotional impact of domestic violence on female partners and ex-partners, were strikingly absent from men's accounts. In contrast, their descriptions of the impact of psychological and emotional impact of domestic violence on children, was richer in detail.

Experiencing states of fear was the most commonly identified impact of domestic violence expressed by participants. Most men described being aware of the immediate fear experienced by women and children, however fewer described being aware of the long-term implications of living in a chronic state of fear arousal. Immediate fear was frequently described as fleeting, incident based, and relating mainly to proximate feelings of fear experienced during or after physically assaultive incidents:

Interviewer: do you think they're scared of you?

Angus: Yeah, I've seen the fear in Todd's eyes, I've seen the fear look in his mum's eyes and Nelson's when I'm going off.

Jamie: ... she'd see it I don't know in her face you could see like the shock and the scaredness then she'd start crying then yelling out for youse, not so much to stop but wanting comfort cause she feels scared of what's happened or what she's seen.

Ben: ... *When I get angry I think one of the main things is I just sort of say I've seen how scared the girls at home can get if I get angry and yell and sort of that's, that's where I sort of draw the line I sort of go well hold on the last thing I want is my kids to be scared of me.*

Ken: *And I remember I was that off me head but I remember seeing their faces how scared they were ... Oh they were shitting themselves to use a bit of foul language but yeah they were petrified yeah, yeah and I'm not a little bloke so ...*

Few men seemed to comprehend the long-term psychological and physical impact of experiencing chronic levels of fear for female survivors. Men voiced more awareness of the long-term impact of living in a state of constant fear on children. Many men lacked empathy for women's experiences and labelled them as abnormal, dramatic and manipulative if they demonstrated fear of their partners or ex-partners in the absence of any immediate physical threat:

Keith: *I believe that she's got a right to be scared for what I did but I believe that she plays that card a lot do you know what I mean like, 'I'm scared,' cause it's a bit of a cop out I believe yeah, yeah, yeah cause she's got nothing to be scared of now, yeah I, I don't drink or do you know what I mean? There's nothing like that that's gonna happen if I'm not in that situation do you know what I mean? I don't know there's a little bit of anger there from me at the moment do you know what I mean? Because she can't let go of that stuff at the moment so ... but that's HER stuff so ...*

Seb: (denying his wife's claims of fear after he punched a hole in the wall): *But she wasn't, she was scared because I had found out what had actually gone on I, I believe that she was scared about what she had done ...*

Men also minimized and/or denied children's feelings. Jake described exposing his children to many frightening displays of violence and abuse including, kicking a door in and taking them away from their terrified mother, putting them in his car and driving away. Jake, like many men described the potentially devastating impact of domestic violence on children, which was based upon his own experiences of domestic violence in childhood. However, despite being able to acknowledge that his children might have felt scared on some occasions, he generally denied their experience:

Interviewer: *Do you perceive that they're scared of you?*

Jake: *No I don't think so, I've never done anything to the kids.*

Many men acknowledged that chronic exposure to violence and anxiety provoking tension, had significantly contributed to hyper-vigilance in their children. They also described how they had witnessed their children 'freeze,' or become immobilized in situations of perceived danger:

Jamie: *... even if you tried to go to another room they could always hear what was*

going on and I was always the more over powering one ... the kids would sort of freeze or you'd see that sort of jump that they think that here we go again.

John: Sandy was in the front yard and people up the street were arguing because she's not used to it – she's not good with stress she just freezes.

Many men described exposing children to a highly inconsistent fathering style that contained intermittent explosive violent outbursts and they articulated an awareness of the associated consequences for children. They described many children as struggling with anxiety, uncertainty and trust related issues:

Dennis: With Jill especially I think it's made her scared of me you know that she sees a dad who can just either not say too much in the moment or then just go off like a bomb like it scares her ... it is affecting my ability to be a father and the ability of my kids to relax in my presence like I honestly feel that they feel that I'm some omnipotent character like you know that's just you know he loves you but just be a bit wary.

Ben: Yeah I think that Alice has the same thing cause there was a lot of um building that trust up and then blowing me stack and losing it and then building it back up and blowing me stack and losing it.

Ken: Umm I think just being withdrawn towards me which was fair enough and a lot of the time they would just look at me like is he gonna freak out is he gonna blow up or go off his head about something cause I didn't have much control about anything really.

Hank ... with him seeing the screaming and the domestic violence and all that sort of thing I suppose he's probably scared of me in a way where he's both of him, look both the children make they're scared to maybe talk in front of me in case they say the wrong thing and I'll fly off the handle.

Some men perceived that their children had difficulties forming trusting and self-satisfying peer relationships, which they associated with the consequences of exposure to their use of violent and other coercive controlling behaviours. Many men who articulated this view described how they had experienced the same social problems, which they attributed to growing up with fathers who had perpetrated domestic violence in their families of origin.

Ben: ... it affects them in the way they are going to trust people in the future it affects the way they trust people now um well trust comes down to respect too you can't respect someone if you can't trust them and if you want to have that trust in somebody you've got to be able to respect them ... yeah I never trusted anyone growing up ... I never trusted me dad, I never trusted me mum.

Dennis: Oh it affects them on every level it affects them physically, emotionally, psychologically, umm you know it affects their confidence to be able to function normally amongst their friends and in their own little environments at school umm makes them physically nervous I suppose and I'm not sure if they even think that home is a safe and happy place to be umm I know with my youngest two they love being at their grandparents house because they're the only grandchildren in the family where they're loved and adored and you know I mean it's a happy, happy

place for them and they don't want to come home when they go there and there's tears when you have to bring them home and I just never even used to think about why they didn't want to come home just thought oh you know they're just having too good a time down there it never even occurred to me that it's because they're unhappy or scared or stressed at home.

Ken: Well, she's shy like me ... she has a hard time making friends whereas I don't make friends easily either cause I don't trust people cause I been shit on in the past by people that I thought were me friends.

Interviewer: Why do you think she has a hard time making friends?

Ken: Well maybe not so much now but she did well she was fat see she's not now she's like a stick ... but she was fat I've always been a fat person ... and when you're fat you get treated different and you tend to act different too but now she's she's got a lot of friends, she's skinny she seems happy.

One man reported that his son experienced frequent nightmares that he believed were related to the trauma of living with domestic violence. He expressed remorse about disallowing his son to seek and receive comfort from his mother when nightmares occurred:

Hank: He has a lot a fair few nightmares so I'd say that probably um as I said sometimes nervous to go and whisper something to his mother cause he doesn't want you know me to hear it where he should be able to say anything ...

Interviewer: What does he do after he has a nightmare?

Hank: Yeah he's awake a lot at night turns his television on and goes back to sleep but, but um but I don't know whether the nightmares are about things that have happened or what but they probably are.

A number of men indicated that they had noticed that their children seemed insecure about their relationships with them. Many men described their daughters exhibiting this insecurity by being emotionally distant, withdrawn and guarded in their interactions with them. At the same time male children were described as being clingy, and needing reassurance from their fathers. Other fathers commented on how they perceived that their children had self-esteem issues and lacked confidence:

Dennis: Jill's sort of very stand offish and eventually she'll come in and like it'll be we often refer to her as the Ice Princess emotionally ... the reason that she's reluctant to even talk too much to me is that she's scared you know that I'll get angry that's how I see it with her, that's I've made her apprehensive and with (son) ... he's continually telling me you know that he loves me and are we mates. Are we the best of mates so it's a real questioning he's looking for reassurance that things are good with me and him. He doesn't want to be offside with me ... he's only six he senses it and I think that he's fearful.

Jake: ... the teacher noticed that he tries to when he talks was talking to me he was talking like a baby ... and said he was trying to get me to pay attention to him or love him or whatever ... she said he doesn't do that around his mother so I wonder if you know the violence has actually prompted him to feel as though I don't love him.

Interviewer: And what happened afterwards?

Hank: *Barb's just can't stand a bar of me, clingy sort of to me if they come back or whatever or days after ...I don't know maybe they think it's their fault or you know if I'm nice to him maybe he won't do it again.*

Ken: *... She went into her shell a bit because she's very outgoing like she likes to sing and dance and I mean when all that sort of things were happening she wouldn't come out of her room and she would she wouldn't talk to me much and, and sort of really withdrawn which was fair enough.*

Some men felt that it was unfair, even cruel, that their children reacted in a distant manner towards them, even in the immediate period after they had exposed their children to physical assaultive incidents:

Dave: *... she was a bit stand offish the first time that she came up after – but then since then I've had a big talk to her about that ... until I had that talk to her she was a little stand offish you know and that sort of was cruel to me ...*

The most commonly shared view regarding the impact of domestic violence was that exposed children and young people were at risk of viewing domestic violence as a normal part of intimate relationships. Almost all men indicated that they believed that this was a natural consequence of exposure:

Ben: *If you feed your kids I don't know sausages and potato every Thursday night then after two or three months Thursday night they're gonna be expecting sausages and potatoes... it becomes the norm.*

Angus: *She'll, she'll probably think that it's normal, a normal part of life.*

Dennis: *... I'm thinking that they would think that, that was me being normal or that's normal in any sort of relationship that's what I'm worried about you know what's passed onto me I may have passed onto them.*

However, not all men perceived that their children normalized violence. Many believed that their children had not been deleteriously affected in any way, and spoke in generalities about the effects of domestic violence on other children. Many believed that their children had not been affected for a variety of reasons including, the age of the child when exposed to domestic violence, the duration of exposure, their belief that their children had been asleep or otherwise unaware of the existence of domestic violence.

Jack: *Children are like a sponge you know domestic violence anything around children like domestic violence children are learning that I think that, that's what the right thing to do and they're taking it all in and obviously one day this is gonna come out in them.*

Interviewer: *Okay so do you have concerns about how it might affect him in the long term?*

Jack: *No well I think it was all addressed pretty early so I don't think that Stan will remember any of this I can't remember anything before I was you know younger than three, four years old.*

Ross: *They think that that's how people should be treated when they see it all the time.*

Interviewer: *Yup okay so do you have any concerns about your kids?*

Ross: *No, Sophie's only seen it once and I talked to her with it straight after.*

Ken: *They should never witness it I know that they shouldn't be a party to it cause it affected me I know it did. If it's constant like it was constant over 15 years for me probably thank goodness it's not for them but I think the little ones won't sort of remember a lot of it but I think Jackie might have a little drama with it down the track cause she witnessed a lot of it cause she's a bit older that would be my main concern ... Um my son well he was only tiny so but I don't think he would have been affected by it.*

Some men described how children observed their emotional affect, attitudes and behaviours and simply repeated these in their social interactions. Some men described their children as having difficulty controlling feelings of anger, which were frequently transmitted into physical aggression towards others. Sibling relationships in particular, were identified as problematic and men described numerous examples of sibling abuse:

Angus: *... He's got an attitude like me, angers very quickly and then um he'll punch ... He's a miniature me, he's got attitude um lot of tantrums from him I'm not getting me own way so I'll kick and I'll stamp or I'll throw something at you ... I feel in a way I feel like it's normal cause that's what I've grown up with but it gives me the shits cause he tells me and his mum to fuck off, you're a fucking asshole and ...*

Interviewer: *and he's four?*

Angus: *Yeah or he'll like turn around and punch into his brother whose Jake whose two so they're pretty ... Yeah he split his head open on one occasion just um I think they were like fighting I don't know if they were fighting or playing or something but he's pushed him and next to our oven we've got like a bit of the cupboard and yeah Jake's split his head open just there on that had to take him to hospital and get it glued ... There was a fair bit of blood.*

Jake: *He's very rough with other kids ...* Interviewer: *and do you think that has anything to do with things he's seen?* Jake: *I don't think so.*

Some men expressed fears about the possibility of their children repeating the violence and intimidation that they had exposed them to:

Hank: *I don't know I hope it's not too late for him to not turn out like me ... cause as much, as much as he can tell himself that I won't there's a big possibility that he will but hopefully I can change that before, before it goes too far, cause I was in the same boat, I used to say to myself I'll never do that and here I am and I don't know how like I'd possibly say all me brothers do it too I don't know maybe not to the extent I have but so I don't know it's sort of programmed in there I think.*

Jamie: *Yeah, yeah I don't want them to turn out the same.*

Few men believed that their children's cognitive development had been deleteriously affected by domestic violence. However, a number of fathers indicated that their children had speech

and language delays that required professional help. The few men that did believe that domestic violence had negatively impacted their children's cognitive development, indicated that their children were lagging behind peers in measures of school performance.

Jamie: um the messing up um yeah mucking up at school might back track a bit so it takes them longer to develop than what they should ... um they used to love school but they were a little bit behind um ... Yeah like Kerrie mainly with her reading and writing and stuff like she was behind on it she's even still to this day trying to learn how to ride a push bike without training wheels ... he's been behind in some things so yeah cause it'll be part of it like instead of having that loving environment not having to deal with domestic violence so. It would have effected them, wouldn't have been good, rebelling playing up at school but generally they were good kids but I couldn't sit and say it wouldn't have effected them.

Martin: He was going to start at preschool ... but they recommended that we didn't cause he was a little bit behind with his speech and all that ... so he's got to have speech therapy.

Ross: When she was like coming up to five she wasn't talking properly so we kept her back for that extra year.

On the other hand, a number of fathers believed that their children were high achievers at school:

Seb: Well he seems to be fine he does he still one of the smartest kids in the school ... You know and he doesn't seem to have body image issues you know he believes that he's good looking because you know yeah I mean I just I mean he is a good looking kid there's no two ways about it ... and he's incredibly intelligent he can handle all concepts at school he can handle concepts that people don't you know he, he um he's a little bit um like me I suppose he finds it a little bit difficult to communicate, trying to find the right words and stuff like that and isn't as confident communicating as a lot of people are at that age are but he seems to communicate on a level that's higher for his age.

A number of men described their perception of the impact of domestic violence on older children and young people. Some constructed their adolescent daughters as 'uncontrollable' and described how they had left or been 'kicked out' of the family home to live independently. A number of young women had become pregnant and were presently raising their own children. One man described how his young adult, step-daughter was a sole parent to a three month old baby. She, and her baby resided with him and her mother, despite the fact that Community Services had removed their biological children due to concerns stemming from his violence and drug abuse:

Ken: ... well she actually left home at 14 cause she was uncontrollable ... and then she came back at well she's been back probably two years I suppose and she's had a baby to this drop kick... and, but and then they fallen apart and she's come back to live with us she's been back probably 12 months now.

Interviewer: ... *what's your relationship like with her?*

Ross: *Touch and go ... yeah she's one of these ones where if it's not her way it's no way ... She thinks she can wear the pants ... Well she left home at 14, her mother threw her out at 14.*

Ken described how his step-daughter and her baby had been subjected to domestic violence by her ex-boyfriend, who was the baby's father:

Ken: *was she said that she wanted to get out of the relationship and he had to leave and he couldn't cope with it so he took an axe that I have for cutting down this bamboo out the front of our house and went out the front and started bashing the crap out of his own car put it through the bonnet and carried on like a lunatic ... he comes and sees the baby that's about it – Megan doesn't want him there and he can't live with us ever again – she doesn't like him at all.*

Keith described the impact of his domestic violence on his step-daughter, who also left home when she was 16 years of age:

Keith: *It affected her greatly ... she was hanging around the wrong crew anyways but she went off the rails and she left school ... she actually moved out and she wouldn't talk to her mother she, she stole money from her ... she was wracking up the alcohol bills, she was drinking heaps.*

In contrast, a number of other young adults had successfully completed year 12 and were enrolled in tertiary education. These young people had been raised by their mothers post separation and divorce.

6.6 Impact on mothering and the mother–child relationship

Some men acknowledged the impact of domestic violence on their partner's feelings regarding motherhood:

Interviewer: ... *how do you think that might have affected her mothering?*

Dennis: *How? I actually think it's made it more stressful she feels that she is alone and she feels that she does everything um that she stopped enjoying being a mother and it's become a burden.*

Jake: *Oh it would have yeah, probably depressed her ... yeah I'd say made her question why she got married and why she had kids ...*

Many men described their partners as inconsistent and indecisive mothers who were not respected by their children. They perceived that children blamed their mothers for the existence of domestic violence and viewed her as powerless and hopeless. These men

believed that children saw them as the patriarchs of the family who had the ultimate decision making authority and power:

Dennis: *Well I can see it now in my daughter questions her and answers her back and basically says and goes through that thing well "I'll ask dad if you can't do it or if you're telling me no I'll go and ask him" No, I wouldn't say it's a conscious thing but I think that's a result that it creates that impression that I, that you know I am the, the top dog so to speak that okay um mummy and daddy might say one thing but daddy displays you know that daddy displays a whole different attitude that when push comes to shove Dad's at the top of the food chain.*

Ken: *She's seen it all and that's probably why she shows disrespect to her mother and to everyone else and that's probably my biggest fault too she's seen it all she's probably just learnt it off me.*

Hank: *... like she can't if I didn't agree with it like she's trying to mother the kids and if I didn't agree with what she's trying to do, well then she's not allowed to do what she wants to do, if I said no I don't want it done that way so that affects her.*

Jake: *I don't know if that had any effect but certainly her the way she disciplines them I'm not talking belting the kids, I'm taking not standing by, if you say no, you should stand by it, even if it's the wrong decision, you should just stand by saying no ... I think she'd be an easy target ...*

Some men recalled 'hating' their own mothers for 'allowing' their fathers to beat them and speculated that their children probably felt the same:

Hank: *... I used to think it meself, like when I'd see it happen but um you know they probably hate their mother cause she doesn't really do anything about it do you know what I mean but ...*

Other men who had acknowledged that they had deliberately undermined their partner's parenting in front of their children seemed perplexed at the effect that it had, had on her authority as a mother:

Interviewer: *how would you describe Jock's relationship with Sandra?*

Martin: *Yeah, pretty good he doesn't like to listen to his mum a lot he always looks at me ... which I don't understand.*

One man indicated that he believed that his abusive attitudes and behaviours had resulted in his children losing respect for him:

Hank: *... I supposed I've lost respect there from them so you know I've got to gain respect from them ... well it affects, not only them it affects me cause I think underlying I think they don't like me – I know they do but there would be that lack of trust there you know which wouldn't be good if you can't trust your father who can you trust that wouldn't be good for them.*

Many men constructed partners as incompetent mothers, criticizing them for being 'too passive,' 'too aggressive,' and/or 'too concerned for the happiness of their children.' There appeared to be limited appreciation for the constrained context in which abused women parented. Many men described women as unassertive and ineffective disciplinarians. Men

seemed unaware of how their abusive attitudes and behaviours might have compromised their partner's ability to mother in their desired way. One father who had admittedly treated his step-son, 'like shit' and showed him 'more hatred than love' criticized his partner for being too concerned about the happiness of her children, at the expense of discipline. In this instance, the mother was dealing with the impact of her son's depression, self-harming behaviour, suicide attempts and entry into out-of-home-care:

Angus: Um, they all know that they've got it over their mum that they can get what they want out of her sort of thing most of the time pretty easily they've just got to put on a bit of a tantrum ... Just cause um that's how she's let them be, they know that if they put on a bit of a tantrum they get what they want so ... she um she'd prefer to see them happy than upset she won't punish them very often for doing the wrong thing.

Some men verbally acknowledged their own hypocrisy, but despite this, continued to pressure their partners to remedy the situation that they had created. Some men who had completed the program felt transformed by this process and became especially intolerant of any perceived signs of 'disrespect' within the family environment. Some men pressured women into 'taking a stand' against their children encouraging them to 'kicking them' out of the home.

Ken: Cause I feel as though Nadean (step-daughter) doesn't pull her own weight and won't contribute to the family. You know she just expects everything done for her and she's actually nasty to her mother which rubs me the wrong way totally ... but verbally she's nasty to her and I'll say don't put up with that ... you know I can't kick her out cause she's got a baby I said it's not right that she talks to you like that I don't do it anymore. I did do it but I don't do it no more so you know ... She's seen it all and that's probably why she shows disrespect to her mother and to everyone else and that's probably my biggest fault too she's seen it all and she's probably just learnt it off me.

Dave described how he had already begun to sow the seeds of division between his new partner and her children by advising her on how to parent her teenage son, who was conceivably coping with Dave's recent move into his family home:

Dave: There was a little while there a couple of months was angry at me for something that I said, cause he was giving his mum a hard time and she didn't know what to do and I said and he said, 'Oh I'll go live with dad' and I said, 'Well go, send him with to live with his dad you know if he thinks that's going to be all good then send him' and he heard that and thought I was saying 'ah it's nothing send him there' which I wasn't, yeah I get along with him pretty good, he's just a moody, lazy, he's been given everything, you know 16 year-old.

On the other hand, some mothers were criticized for being 'too aggressive' with their children. Many men seemed unaware of the connection between child behaviour problems and chronic

exposure to domestic violence. Apropos of this there seemed to be limited understanding of the additional difficulties involved in mothering traumatized children. When men criticized their partner's mothering skills it was often in relation to her ability to restrain aggression towards the children when she was finding it hard to cope with their behaviour:

Interviewer: *And how is she as a mum?*

Anthony: *Um brilliant – she can lose the plot at times ... like say if she's changing Jason's bum and Ryan's playing up ... and she's sitting down on the floor changing Jason's bum and Ryan's getting into something well of course she's gonna yell at him to tell him to stop doing it but other than that she's not violent to the kids whatsoever like she does smack them on occasions and I do get cranky but they're only smacks on the bum.*

Few fathers who had, had their children removed and placed in the care of Community Services commented on how domestic violence resulted in a disruption to the mother-child relationship. The one man who did comment on this aspect, became sarcastic and confrontational when describing his views on the matter:

Interviewer: *Okay and can you tell me how you think domestic violence might have affected his relationship with his mum?*

Jack: *Ummm, him being taken from us so him not being able to spend time with his mother? ... deep sigh, I don't know, I don't, I don't think it would have affected her, I don't know, these questions are just going straight over my head ... I don't understand where you're going with them. (laughs under his breath)*

Interviewer: *Okay I'm just looking at how you might think domestic violence might affect her ability to be a mum ...*

Jack: *her smoking and being angry all the time probably showing bad examples towards him I don't know.*

A number of mothers were described as suffering from mental health and/or substance abuse problems, which men believed limited their ability to adequately mother their children. Quite apart from accounts of the potential emotional and/or psychological impact of domestic violence on their partners, eight men painted their partners and ex-partners as women with a multitude of mental health and/or drug and alcohol problems. Interestingly, they frequently did not perceive of these 'problems' as being related to the abusive and oppressive circumstances that they had directly created through their use of violent and other coercively controlling behaviours. In their view, women had pre-existing conditions.

Jeff: *... She's got a long history of she is in my unprofessional opinion, BiPolar and Schizophrenic and um in full active addiction with any drug known to mankind ... Um she is one sick puppy but there is a side of her as well which seems very normal but she's very good at controlling and manipulating people, she's a very intelligent sick person and she knows how to play that sickness to a tee with the authorities and be normal when she has to be.*

Interviewer: *have psychiatrists diagnosed her with those things?*

Jeff: *No, no um she's been put through like she's been in and out of psychiatric wards and they all say she's fine.*

Seb: *It was in sickness and in health now everyone knows who works in the health industry in Australia that there's significant mental health issues in Australia. Why on earth in a country that's as free as we are, are there more people in the 25 – 40 age bracket dying from suicide than there are from car accidents – why is it that there are five times as many people dying from suicide what because it's a bad country to live in? Bullshit because there's mental health issues in Australia now if that is not a sickness if she doesn't have some sort of a sickness what the fuck is going on? If you don't think that what's going on, I mean seriously so if I walk away from that, 'oh she's sick I don't want to be with her anymore' – bullshit – I made a commitment to be with her no matter what.*

Two women who had expressed feeling as if they were suffering from depression, were disbelieved by their partners. Their symptoms of depression were constructed as evidence of their inherent 'laziness:'

Jamie: *no, she never seemed to be depressed she got really lazy ...*

Interviewer: *did she have post-natal depression?*

Jake: *She says she did now but it's easy in hindsight to say it I mean why didn't they diagnose that at the time? That's a good excuse, post-natal depression ... for women to say oh yeah I had post-natal depression.*

Interviewer: *What would it excuse in your situation with Trish?*

Jake: *Struggling, struggling to be a good mother ... to me she was just lazy.*

Two men whose children had been removed by Community Services from the care of their mothers and placed into their care, despite the fact that they had perpetrated chronic and severe domestic violence, indicated that they believed that their ex-partners had 'chosen' alcohol and drugs over their children. Neither man stated any awareness of how their use of domestic violence may have contributed to the alleged substance abuse problems of their ex-partners:

John: *she decided for drugs more than kids ... Gena doesn't understand, Sandy has heard conversations and has seen her mum off her face, she knows what her mum's done. We say your mum loves you but she says if mum loves me she will be here. She knows you know what I mean that's the sad part.*

Interviewer: *did she have an alcohol problem before she met you?*

Keith: *I believe so ... If you ask her she'd probably say no (laughs) ... The dual diagnosis as I've learnt in the stuff that I'm doing is a big is very close you know, yeah I don't know you know I got my opinions on her mental health.*

Interviewer: *So did you think that she had a mental illness?*

Keith: *oh yeah for sure but add alcohol it's like throwing fuel on the fire you know.*

The fact that a number of children ended up in the care of the men who had directly created the context for their mothers' mental health and/or substance abuse problems is an area worthy of further examination. As discussed previously in chapter one, there is a wide body

of research highlighting the links between domestic violence, substance usage and mental health problems amongst female survivors (J. M. Golding, 1999). This knowledge did not seem to be reflected in the child protection outcomes. Other research highlights that mothers who parent in the context of domestic violence, frequently experience the child protection system with suspicion and as another system of oppression (Westlund, 1999).

Some men described their partner's overall mothering in glowing terms:

Anthony: Um, um like I said she's the most caring, loving mother I've seen she reminds me of my mum.

Dave: ... she's a good mother, to her in all aspects I've seen that for nine years of it so I don't have a concern there about motherhood that way.

Interviewer: And what would you say about her mothering?

Ben: Oh it's awesome couldn't ask for a better mother that's and I know a lot of blokes probably say that about their Mrs. but there's nothing you could ask her extra to do house is always clean, kids are always well looked after she's a great wife.

6.7 Summary

Men described a wide range of physical, psychological, social and emotional consequences of domestic violence on women and children. Men's accounts of the impact corroborated the findings of other research conducted with male perpetrators of domestic violence, especially in relation to the men's use of denial, minimizations and justification when describing the impacts on women and children.

Many of the partners, ex-partners and children of the men interviewed suffered intensely: the death of an infant due to premature labour allegedly precipitated by a domestic assault, the repeated suicide attempts of an 11 year-old boy, numerous miscarriages, serious and potentially life threatening illnesses and injuries sustained by women and children, the removal of numerous children from their families, as well as the ongoing emotional and psychological effects of living in a chronic state of fear and terror were described by the fathers in this study.

All men expressed their opinion of the impact of domestic violence on children and young people generally, with most describing it as potentially devastating and long lasting. Fewer

men however, perceived that their own children had been deleteriously affected and the majority of men minimized the impact on their partners and ex-partners. Most men described their partners as culpable. The next chapter will examine the men's perception of their responsibility for domestic violence as it provides further context for their accounts of fathering.

CHAPTER 7

ATTITUDES SUPPORTING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

7.1 Introduction

In the context of exploring domestically violent men's experiences and practices of fathering, their perceptions of culpability were investigated. Alongside this area of inquiry, men's perceptions of violence supporting attitudes and beliefs were also explored. Two significant themes regarding the men's violence supporting attitudes emerged and were inter-related: 1) beliefs about their level of control over their violence and 2) their constructions of masculinity, and particularly their level of identification with hegemonic masculinity. This chapter will firstly explore these dimensions individually before describing a matrix model built upon the interactions of these dimensions. The next chapter will consider the implications of the model to the fathering practices and experiences of the men involved in the study.

7.2 Constructions of masculinity

Almost all men described their beliefs about what it meant to be a man and a father. Men's accounts of their constructions of masculinity differed and could be placed on a continuum from high to low adherence to narrow ideals of hegemonic masculine identity.

a.) High Identification with a hegemonic masculine identity

A number of men described a high level of identification with a rigid and narrow hegemonic masculine identity. In this vein, they described believing that men should be physically strong, fierce fighters, emotionally detached, action oriented, in control at all times and should never back down. References to masculinity were frequently in relation to physically fighting, being powerful and standing up to threats.

Angus: ... I feel like a man when I'm hurting people that have pissed me off and um just me strength that I've like pride in me strength.

Interviewer: Okay so what's being a man for you?

Angus: Um hurting people when they've upset me to a degree whether it be physical or emotional ... Um having the power and strength.

Ben: ... I was never allowed to fight back, my old man said, don't fight ... it takes a bigger man to walk away... I think it's a load of shit.

Dave: I'll always stand up for meself I guess I think that's part of being a man, not being fighting but being strong enough to stand up for yourself and not taking no shit

from people I guess some of the ways that men or myself deal with it is not the right way ... need to learn a different way of resolving that rather than going right to let's go out the back mate or something like that or have to, have resort to violence.

One man described the 'fighting mentality' in his family, whereby boys were 'taught to be men' by physically fighting/boxing each other before the weekly family dinner at the grandparents' home:

Dennis: I just thought this is making me tough and this is what I need to grow up and get along in the world that's how it was put on me like you need to be able to look after yourself and this is how you look after yourself and you don't let anyone stand over you and you don't let anyone take anything off you and you don't let anyone put anything over you.

Some men perceived themselves to be superior to others and felt that they were entitled to special treatment. They described themselves as better because they stood for culturally idealized standards that are often associated with hegemonic masculinity, such as integrity, striving for excellence, commitment, honour, respect and mateship:

Seb: I think I'm wonderful I look at myself and I think oh man I wish all people in the world were as good as me the world would be a much better place (laughs) ... there's a lot of ways in which I'm better than other people ... if I do something I like to do it properly - Like if I go and do a job if I don't do what the customer wants or if I don't fix it properly I don't charge them ... but here's the thing I don't drink to get drunk, I don't smoke, I don't gamble, I'm not, there's heaps, there's heaps of things that about me that ah you just don't get in guys anymore ... Anyhow I stand by my commitments I believe that my word is my bond and I honour and like I, I respect achievement, I respect excellence, some people don't, they think oh well that's fucked.

Dave: ... but I have had fights in clubs where shits happened, mainly to back your mate up, that's happened to me a few times, backing a mate up ...

Most men who adhered strongly to hegemonic masculine ideals articulated disrespectful, derogatory and sometimes even misogynistic attitudes towards women. Some claimed that these were attitudes of their past:

Keith: I'm not a chauvinist but I obviously thought that there was a place for women.

Ken: I'm a man you're a woman and I'm right and you're wrong ... seen it me whole life from when I was a kid with my relatives my old man the way he speaks to my mother not so much now but back in the 70s and thateveryone was like that - like you get in the kitchen you barefooted woman and all this sort of bullshit ... My father it was his bloody way or the highway basically I'm the bread winner in this household you'll do as I say or you can get out.

Ben described how he had sexually objectified women throughout his life, but claimed that his current partner had broadened his views on women:

Ben: *I had absolutely minimal respect for females period ... Sort of I've been pretty much like that most of me life but it wasn't like it's not like minimum respect like I don't mean as in um abusing them or anything like that like I'd just see them for one thing and one thing only and that was it.*

Interviewer: *... was just sex?*

Ben: *Yup ... it's sort of well if you don't like it well fucking there's the door. Do you know what I mean you don't like it well go I don't care I always looked at women like they're a dime a dozen ... Do you know what I mean like when I was doing security you could have a different woman every half an hour ... like the respect for women it was that much. (gestures with thumb and forefinger)*

Some continued to voice attitudes that sexually objectified women in the present:

Seb: *... she just likes to get on with men cause she knows how to control them she knows just about just how much boobs she has to show to make them lap in the palm of her hands.*

b.) Lower identification with a hegemonic masculine identity

Not all men described the hegemonic masculine ideal when describing their perception of what being a man meant to them. Some men voiced more egalitarian beliefs describing equality between men and women in relationships. They reported less rigid sex role expectations particularly in relation to domestic work and parenting. Their descriptions of masculinity and being a man, did not contain as many references to being physically strong and using violence when compared with men who identified strongly with hegemonic masculinity. Their descriptions of masculinity contained more references to being in relationships with other family members and showing loving and caring dimensions.

Jamie: *... sometimes you like to have that bit of power but ... I'm not big on the fact of always got to have the power and rest of it ... if you're in a relationship ... youse both have equal rights, equal power and to discuss things out with each other rather than one person thinking they're the more dominant person.*

Interviewer: *in your mind what's being a man?*

Hank: *I don't know if you've got a family, providing for your family, loving your family, um I don't know doing the right thing for them you don't have to impress anyone else I don't think um I can't stand when you know I've been in fights and that before you know punch ups and that but not very often, I usually lose ... but like you hear men standing around talking, saying I belted this one see that just I just feel like saying piss off that, that sort of thing you know I won't let my son play with barbie dolls and that's the biggest load of crap that I think they're I don't know maybe they're insecure I don't know.*

Some men described the difficulties that they encountered in negotiating changing societal expectations on men and particularly in their role as fathers and partners. Jake described how he learnt to be a man mainly by watching his father and felt challenged to express a different kind of masculinity that contained caring, and loving dimensions. In his view, being loving and caring were feminine, rather than human attributes. His accounts portrayed men

as the victims of unprecedented societal changes. He described his struggle to integrate these changes into his belief system:

Jake: Because the old school were very much you know hard line and this is how it's going to be, I'm the man of the house sort of thing whereas now we've got a transition happening ... Women have just sort of stuck up and said no we don't want to be treated like that anymore and men are getting hammered in a way which is probably a good thing to be a bit more I don't know feminine.

Interviewer: So how do you find being a bloke in that transition period?

Jake: Difficult, it's really difficult because you don't know where you stand, you've got to go to work and be a bloke, you've got to come home and be caring and loving to your wife and your family.

7.3 Level of control over violence

Most men's accounts contained descriptions of their beliefs regarding the level of control they felt whilst using violence. When the men's narratives were examined as a whole, the concept of control was a central theme that emerged from their descriptions of domestic violence. Men's narratives could be placed on a continuum ranging from descriptions of feeling 'in control' to feeling 'out of control' when using violence.

a.) Being in control

Although many men in this group blamed external factors for their use of violence, their accounts were rich in descriptions of how they felt aware and in control when they were using violence. Violence was depicted as a rational method to punish wrongdoers, or to achieve other desired outcomes. Men who held these beliefs described feeling entitled, due to their gender, to perpetrate domestic violence:

Angus: I thought that's how life is men show anger they get what they want. That's how they keep control by showing anger ... I like to be in power and control most of the time I get pretty shitty when she tries to take that back.

Seb: And she recognizes the fact that you know if I'm violent there's a reason for it and it's got to do with what she's done you know ... she was being hysterical (laughs) because of the way that she was acting and I had seen in the movies that that when a woman is um hysterical you slap her in the face and she becomes not so hysterical again course I found out that that's not true. (laughs)

Hank: Oh that's what the purpose of the whole domestic violence is to control a person.

Dave: ... well I certainly knew what I was doing.

Two of the three men in this group indicated that their professional background had trained them to be powerful and to take control quickly in order to prevent things from 'getting out of

control.' 'Training' also occurred on the sporting field, in the family, in the pub, through police work, indoctrination in the military, in apprenticeships and other male dominated arenas. 'Training' equipped men with the skills to recognize environmental threats and to pragmatically 'neutralize them.' These were skills, which they had replicated in the domestic sphere:

Dennis: ... I was probably operating on fear most of the time and sometimes the quickest way to alleviate that fear was rather than going through some negotiated process was to put the person down hard and quick and um you know physically with any means at my disposal you learn quite quickly do unto them before they do unto you ... I wasn't even worried about it as a police man in the street but when I saw it turning up in my home environment I remember not being able to switch off the way I was talking at work ... Carol says: "look you're not talking to crooks I'm your wife ... You're not in the army stop giving orders and directions." You know I just found myself becoming so indoctrinated and militarized I suppose.

Dave: ... that's the way I've been through sport and work if there's a physical threat it needs to be neutralized.

Ben: And I know that I've solved a lot of my problems in the past with violence um or with just shutting off so I'm sort of looking for another way to sort of deal with anger issues without just shutting off or without having to throw a punch or you know to get physical about it cause although it's quick and easy it's not um it doesn't really solve much.

Some men identified the 'threat' as their perceived inferior communication skills, when compared to female partners. These men believed that they had no other options but to use abusive tactics when they were 'cornered' by their more articulate partners:

Dennis: ... you know my wife's probably well she is better educated than me and I probably wasn't able to communicate on those levels so my sort of level which was almost a street level was the level of escalation just go straight to, to being abusive really.

In other situations the 'threat' was being 'ignored' or 'treated disrespectfully.' Many men described how they demanded to be heard:

Ben: Oh I think that comes from when I was a kid ... Because when I was a kid and I wanted to be heard, I couldn't but now, now that I'm physically bigger and emotionally stronger if I want to be heard then I can make myself heard regardless of who it hurts.

Many men perceived themselves to be threatened by their wives and seemed to believe that they had a right to 'shut their partners or their children up' when provoked. Many others felt that their violence was a natural response to their partner's provocation or 'baiting:'

Angus: Um sometimes they bait me to try and get me to go off more other times they just shut up leave him alone you know what he's like when he's in a mood so...

Interviewer: why would they bait you?

Angus: Um I don't know probably just to cause I've pissed them off so they want to piss me off some more.

Dennis: *Yeah I did hit her ... she was just not letting up on me in the car and I'm asking her not to do it now I'm trying to let me put the kids to bed and she was just right there, right there and before I knew it I just turned around and knocked her to the ground and I remember her just sitting there with a cut lip like just shocked that I did it and even I was shocked that I did it but I remember standing over her and going you just never fucking let up do you?*

Some men indicated that their violence was the result of a choice made to neutralize unresolved feelings associated with childhood experiences of victimization. One man who disclosed having been sexually abused in childhood described how his abuse affected him:

Jake: *Um I guess so all that contributes to why I spun around completely the other way and got sick and tired of being the victim and became the aggressor ... As soon as someone attacks me I attack two fold and at least that's how I used to be, I'm trying to change that now.*

b.) Being out of control

In contrast with other men, many participants in this group constructed their violence as resulting from control lost. Losing control was most commonly described as a consequence of internal explosive rage triggered by, alcohol and/or other drugs, mental illness, or childhood trauma.

A number of men believed that they had uncontrollable and explosive outbursts of rage, which they believed resulted from a build up of tension and unreleased pressure. Some men claimed to have been introduced to this explanation in therapy:

Anthony: *Yeah, all I can explain is that maybe in my life problems all started getting a bit too much and I started like the counsellor was explaining to me about the volcano situation like how so much pressure would bide (sic) together ... and then eventually the pressure would start a boiling and if something started you off well then come to that explosion ...*

Angus: *Yeah I've always been one to I find it easier to bottle it up and just let it explode when it explodes, like I kept feeding the time bomb ...*

Some men described how these 'outbursts' occurred in the work environment as well as in the domestic sphere. For example, an ex-police officer described his treatment of, and concern for, members of the general public that he came in contact with:

Dennis: *And I thought this could get out to the point where you know at the moment I'm punching them and flogging them but it could end up that I'm shooting them just through these internal anger or being you know perpetually motivated by fear of something that you know of doing something before someone does something to you.*

This man also claimed to have been introduced to this explanation by a police psychologist.

A number of men believed that their domestic violence was caused by a loss of control that resulted from excessive alcohol and/or other drug use:

Anthony: So I've come to realize that me alcoholism um was the main ground root of all these problems and if I eliminate the alcohol then you know um I might be able to work out things and we're actually back together.

Some men who held this view described themselves as having two personalities:

John: I think it was just the drugs cause I've done an anger management course and they say they don't know why I was there. When off drugs I'm the most pleasant person I think drugs brought out the worst in me.

Jamie: Yeah if I got to that point where I didn't remember anything um yeah I just wouldn't even remember what was going on they say that I still do everything as normal sit there having a conversation as normal but yeah just all of the sudden will just snap and they reckon yeah completely different person all together.

Interviewer: How would you change?

Jamie: Yeah just become real aggressive real nasty um saying things that I'd never say normally yeah just a completely different person.

Others believed that alcohol and/or other drugs may have contributed to their domestic violence, however they denied a causal relationship, citing many incidents that had occurred when they were sober:

Hank: So but where as I said I can do it stone cold sober so maybe some people hide behind the alcohol part. They say I've given up alcohol but that don't mean you're gonna stop.

Interviewer: Right and when you said um that you were feeling out of control was that both when you were using alcohol and drugs and when you weren't ?

Ken: Yeah because when I didn't have the drugs and alcohol I'd have the shits the whole time cause I was so dependent on it ...Yeah and I'd you couldn't even talk to me half the time.

Interviewer: So would violence occur in either situation?

Ken: Yes it did.

Some men attributed their use of violent and other coercive controlling behaviours to their purported state of mental ill health, which they believed made them unable to restrain themselves from responding abusively to the 'provocative' behaviours of their ex-partners:

Trevor: I'm not leaving then she'd say that's it, then she'd play with the phone like she was ringing the police and then I'd grab the phone off her and choke her.

Interviewer: So why do you think she was doing that?

Trevor: I don't know if it was a power thing or ... honestly I don't believe I would have, would ever have hurt her if she didn't say she was going to ring the police but I can't use that as an excuse um maybe she was fearful like she has been in abusive relationships beforehand so ...

Others described themselves as powerless victims of childhood abuse, which they perceived had rendered them incapable of behaving respectfully and responsibly to partners. They

also constructed themselves as unable to change the patterns that they had experienced in early life.

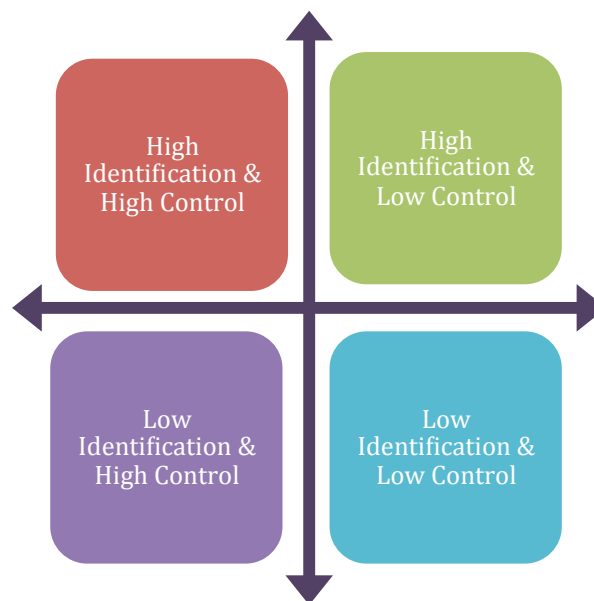
Hank: *I don't know I don't know what else to do I just get frustrated maybe cause I've seen it I don't know when you grow up ... with something pretty much your whole life ... but um I don't know punching walls and that I don't know what happens I just get to a point where I don't know what else to do like and I going back to what I was saying if that's what you've learnt I know it's no excuse but if that's what you've learnt from a young age and you've seen it happen.*

Dennis: *... that's probably a defining moment here it's knowing that how I am was probably influenced by the formative years in my own life you know like because I had no predetermined behaviours or attitudes until they were put into me you know umm and I'm only reflecting or mirroring umm what happened.*

7.4 The relationship between constructions of masculinity and control over domestic violence

When the men's narratives regarding the level of control they felt when using violence were compared to their narratives regarding the level of identification with hegemonic masculinity, four distinct groups emerged. Whilst a desire for power and control could be gleaned from all men's narratives, there were nuanced differences between groups regarding descriptions of their reasons for exerting power and control over partners and children. As will be explored in chapter eight, subtle nuanced differences in relation to their descriptions of their fathering practices and experiences could also be seen across the four groups:

Table 7:1 Typology of participant narratives on constructions of masculinity and control over violence



a.) High Identification, High Control

The narratives of four men contained rich descriptions of hegemonic masculinity in combination with frequent references to feeling aware and in control while using violent and other coercive controlling behaviours. Men in this group were more likely to be married, employed, and to report the lowest rates of substance dependency and/or mental health problems.

Referring to the earlier framework which examined level of contact and paternal risk/problem identification, two were in the low problem/high contact group (as they lived with their wives and children, had full time employment, reported no substance abuse nor mental health history, one had current criminal justice involvement), one was in the low problem/low contact group (recently separated, living independently of wife and children, full time employed, no substance abuse, mental health, criminal justice history), one was in the high problem/high contact group (lived with children and partner, history of mental health issues, long history of poly-drug dependence, unemployed; current and past criminal justice involvement). On average they described using approximately 13 different violent behaviours (from Violence Assessment Index and interviews) and reported using violence and other controlling behaviours with the most frequency of any group. Men who disclosed sexually abusing their partners were in this group. They described an oppressive, tension filled living environment consistently lacking in paternal warmth and characterized with a high and consistent level of violence and other controlling behaviours.

All female partners sustained physical injuries as a result of the men's violence at some stage, with three of four women reportedly suffering facial/head bruising. Three of four men who reported that their partners suffered sickness/vomiting due to their domestic violence were in this group. One possible explanation to account for this, is that the vomiting and/or sickness may have been one physical symptom of living with the ongoing anxiety and stress associated with chronic domestic violence. The men who reported the most serious child behaviour problems including suicide attempts, self-harm and cancer were also in this group.

The narratives of this group of men were full of descriptions of using violence to gain power and control over their partners and children, to get their own way, to punish, or otherwise assert their authority. In keeping with their constrained view of masculinity, which pivoted around being in control at all times, many men described feeling that they had to neutralize things that made them feel threatened, as those feelings were antithetical to their brand of masculinity. They described having a view that their needs were supreme, that they were entitled to dictate and rule over others in the family, and that resistance would be quashed with violence and abuse. They described wanting to make decisions for the family, being motivated by wanting to be right, directing and controlling family matters, desiring to be the centre of attention and using a range of violent and abusive tactics to ensure that these desires were attained.

Men in this group described sometimes feeling that their violence was 'out of control' due to rage, alcohol and/or drug usage, but the feeling of being 'in control' and using violence to attain their goals dominated their overall narratives. Rare descriptions of 'control lost' often related to their narrow view of masculinity, in particular their perception that men should not communicate about problems, stress, and/or other distressing feelings but instead should deal with those things on their own. Indeed, many of the men who described experiencing explosive bursts of rage, also described identifying strongly with a hegemonic masculine identity.

Men in this group recorded using many controlling behaviours, on the Controlling Behaviour Index, and using them frequently. They also described using violence to take control in other areas of their lives, such as the work place and sporting arena. As one man described violence pervaded 'every aspect of (his) life' and could happen anywhere and at any time. He described how he felt in control of the violence that occurred in the domestic sphere but out of control in relation to violence that occurred in other aspects of his life:

b.) High Identification, Low Control

The narratives of four men contained rich descriptions of hegemonic masculinity in combination with frequent references to feeling unaware and 'out of control' while using violence and other controlling behaviours. In comparison to the men who described an awareness of, and control over, their use of violent and other controlling behaviours, men in this group used similar tactics to create a consistently tense and frightening environment but described having less responsibility for, and control over their actions. They also described frequently punctuating the domestic environment with incidents of extreme and sometimes life threatening displays of violence.

Three of four men in this group were separated from partners and had minimal contact with them and two lived with their parents, whom they were highly dependent upon. Referring to the earlier framework, two men could be described as having high problems/low contact with their biological children but high contact with step-children, whom they lived with. Both men had substance abuse dependencies, criminal justice involvement, and were employed. One man had children who were in out-of-home-care, whilst the other man's daughter resided with his ex-wife. Another man could be described as low problem/high contact, as he had recently had his son restored to his care by Community Services, had recovered from a substance abuse addiction, and had completed the live-in treatment requirements of a Community Service Order for a domestic violence conviction and was employed. The last man could be described as high problem/low contact as he had been diagnosed with a mental illness, had a long history of substance addiction, had criminal justice involvement, was unemployed and his child was in out-of-home-care.

In contrast to men in the last group, men in this group described using more controlling behaviours and an average of 14 violent behaviours as per the Violence Assessment Index, with high frequency and regularity. Three of four men in this group described physically assaulting partners during their pregnancies and denied culpability citing their partner's 'madness' or 'substance abuse' as provocation for their violence. They also described women suffering the greatest number of injuries, which included two of four women suffering

miscarriages, facial/head injuries, black eyes, and other bodily bruising. Every man in this group had been convicted for domestic violence offences including, Assault and/or Breach AVO.

Narratives regarding their constructions of masculinity were rich in descriptions of male supremacy. Their accounts of using violence and other controlling behaviours were rich in descriptions of control lost due to the perceived effects of alcohol and/or other drugs, uncontrollable rage; mental health issues and/or impoverished developmental histories. These men described using violence and other controlling behaviours in altered states, denounced responsibility for their actions and described themselves as victims of uncontainable tension states:

Keith: ... there's no excuse I'm not trying to say that you know but, but she would bait me all the time and I didn't want, she was threatening me because um like she had an AVO over me ... but like I said I was in a black out I was off me head I was on cocaine and you know whatever ...

Ken: Cause my behaviour was pretty out of control I was into drugs and alcohol very heavily and doing all the wrong things.

In describing the violence and abuse that they had inflicted upon women and children, they were the most likely to deny recalling specific details of many assaultive incidents. However, the incidents that they did describe were frequently characterised by spectacular and terrifying displays of violence, which sometimes placed women and children in life threatening circumstances. Three of four men in this group indicated that they had previously attempted to murder partners.

c.) Low Identification, High Control

The narratives of the four men in this group were rich in descriptions of using violent and other controlling behaviours in order to 'protect' or 'save' female partners. In comparison to the previous groups however, their narratives did not contain as many references to hegemonic masculinity. In relation to the earlier framework, three men in this group could be described as low problem/low contact as they were employed, did not have substance abuse, mental health nor criminal justice involvement. Two had minimal contact with their children

who were in out-of-home-care and the other two had regular contact with children, who resided with their mothers, or their ex-partners.

Men in this group constructed themselves as martyrs, sacrificing their own happiness, to satisfy their partners, to hold the family together, to honour commitments previously made, to be there for their children. They perceived that they used violent and other controlling behaviours in order to save women from drug addictions, protect themselves from women who were 'mentally ill' or to help women 'come to their senses.'

Men described themselves as having liberal attitudes and promoting equality in relationships. Their narratives did not contain as many references to rigid sex role stereotypes when compared to men who highly identified with hegemonic masculinity. Many described feeling frustrated because they perceived that they were overly responsible for domestic tasks, while they perceived their ex-partners were 'lazy.'

Jamie: I felt like I was the one working all day (even though his wife worked as well) and we'd sort of end up in a big fight cause she couldn't get off her ass and do anything.

On average, men in this group described using approximately ten different violent behaviours and reported using them less frequently than men in the previous two groups. They also reported using fewer controlling behaviours and using them less frequently than men in the previous two groups. Men in this group reported inflicting minimal injuries, two men denied ever inflicting any injuries, one man reported that he had physically injured his ex-partner on one occasion, and the other indicated that he injured his ex-partner under four times, although he described assaulting her on many occasions. He also reported that he had been accused of assaulting his pregnant wife, causing her to prematurely labour and possibly resulting in the child's death.

Two of four men described 'sacrificing their reputations' in the court environment, one by withholding information that could have incriminated his ex-partner and the other by pleading guilty to offences that he hadn't committed to make 'life easier' for his family:

Jeff: Well me thinking I was a smarty pants knowing how the system worked, hadn't been in trouble for many years I just thought look I'll plead guilty to it get it out of the

way we can move on ... with me hanging in there going I'm going this will be okay we'll get through this you know um and um worse thing I could have ever have done because from that point on DoCS have had me down as being domestically violent and found guilty of assault towards her and that was it there was no going back after that no matter what credibility I came up with it was shot down by that one simple, one action.

The narratives of all men in this group contained references to feeling unappreciated, misunderstood and maligned. These feelings were used to justify their violence. For example, one man recalled how in an AVO hearing, he perceived that the presiding Magistrate sympathized with his anger and frustration due to his wife's alleged infidelity and purportedly asked him why he would bother to stay with her before dismissing the matter from court. The same man further described how he had endured his wife's 'repeated infidelities' but stated that he would not leave her because he honoured their marital vows made in the Catholic Church.

d.) Low Identification, Low Control

The narratives of four men contained references to a different variety of masculinity, in combination with accounts of violence resulting from control lost. These accounts of violence contained references to feeling out of control and an inability to remember violent incidents due to intoxication. When describing their use of violent and other controlling behaviours, men in this group portrayed themselves as placid people who had acted uncharacteristically in response to provocative stimuli. Three out of four men in this group described having substance abuse dependencies:

Anthony: I'm a really placid, I'm a Cancerian ... I know that's no excuse or anything but I've never been a violent person ... I wasn't thinking straight ... cause the alcohol infected me that much I was drinking every day.

In reference to the earlier framework, one man reported low problems, low contact, two as high problem/high contact (as they reported having significant substance addictions, were unemployed, involved in the criminal justice system (1) and resided with their children, and the remaining man as high problem/low contact (as he had a significant substance dependency, mental health issues, was employed and his children were in the care of Community Services).

Most externalized blame for their violence and abuse, described themselves as men with long histories of victimization, three of four men reported that they had childhood histories of being bullied and abused in school and two described incidents where they had been physically abused by their fathers in childhood.

As a group, they described perpetrating the least amount of physical and/or sexual violence, and other controlling behaviours. One man denied ever having perpetrated physical or sexual violence. He indicated that he had never even been in a fight in his entire life, and described approaching Lifecare in order to prevent himself from becoming violent because he felt himself becoming increasingly angry and verbally abusive towards his girlfriend.

In relation to injuries inflicted, only one man described inflicting physical injuries on his partner which he said had occurred on only one occasion, however, it is noted that he described perpetrating many violent behaviours including assaulting her when pregnant. Another man denied ever injuring his partner but reported an incident where his partner had suffered a ruptured spleen.

7.5 Summary

This chapter described the participants' narratives regarding their violence supporting beliefs, as well as, their beliefs about culpability. Two inter-related themes emerged from the men's descriptions: 1) varying degrees of identification with hegemonic masculinity and 2) varying degrees of perceived control when perpetrating domestic violence. An examination of the inter-relationship between these two dimensions resulted in the development of a framework that identifies nuanced differences between the attitudes and behaviours of the men involved in the study.

The narratives of men in the 'High Identification, High Control' group contained many references to a narrow perception of masculine identity, prioritizing idealized masculine traits like power, strength, action and decisiveness. The use of violence and other controlling behaviours were instrumental and seen as justified if they helped to achieve these priorities.

Men who described a high identification with hegemonic masculinity with a low level of control over their use of domestic violence shared similar backgrounds, characterised by alcohol and/or drug dependencies and/or mental health issues. In concert with men in the previous group, they shared attitudes and beliefs, which narrowly constructed masculinity but their narratives differed in relation to their explanations for domestic violence. They were more likely to construct domestic violence as stemming from loss of control due to substance abuse, mental health issues, and/or uncontrollable rage.

The narratives of men in the 'Low Identification, High Control' group contained many references to a broader construction of masculinity. For example, some men in this group articulated a desire to create more equal relationships with female partners, however at the same time described their domestic violence as stemming from a desire to exert power control over their partner. Many men in this group described feeling victimized, maligned and misunderstood by their partners and significant others.

Men in the 'Low Identification, Low Control' group commonly described feeling 'out of control' when using domestic violence and constructed themselves as fundamentally placid people who had acted uncharacteristically. Many men in this group described having significant substance abuse dependencies and/or mental health issues.

The next chapter will explore how the men's narratives regarding their fathering experiences and practices relate to the framework described in this chapter.

CHAPTER 8

FATHERING EXPERIENCES AND PRACTICES

8.1 Introduction

The experience of fathering was defined as the constructed meaning that participants ascribed to being a father and their understanding of the impact of domestic violence on their children, which was examined in chapter six. This chapter presents data pertaining to participants' descriptions of their fathering practices and experiences. In describing their experiences, men discussed their feelings, attitudes and beliefs about fathering and fatherhood in general, including their perception of their role as fathers, factors that contributed to their development, strengths, limitations, and relationships with children. In addition to describing the experience of fathering, men described their feelings about fatherhood as well as the observable behaviours and practices that they engaged in. Whilst there were many similar experiences and practices described by participants, subtle differences could be seen when comparisons were made between men in relation to their level of identification with hegemonic masculine ideals and beliefs about their level of control over their use of violence and other coercive controlling behaviours. For example, as will be discussed in this chapter, most men described fathering practices that placed children and young people at risk of harm, however the potential risks varied across the four groups identified.

8.2 High Identification, High Control Group

As previously detailed the accounts of four men contained a strong identification with hegemonic masculinity and descriptions of domestic violence, which was used in a controlled and instrumental fashion.

a.) Family Composition

To review, half of the men in this group resided with their partners and children whilst the other half were separated, lived independently, had regular contact with children and wanted to reconcile with partners. All men in this group were employed and none described substance dependencies or mental health problems. The family compositions, residential

status of children and amount of contact men had with their children are summarised in the following table:

Table 8:1 Family composition, residential status and contact: High Identification, High Control Group

Relationship and Residential Status of Participant	Residential Status of children	Paternal-child contact
Blended family	Biological child and step child reside with participant (father) and mother	Daily
Blended family	Biological child and step child reside with participant (father) and mother; Man's other biological child resides with natural mother	Daily No contact
Separated family	Biological children reside with ex-wife Biological child from previous relationship reside with ex-wife	Weekly Monthly or less
Separated family	Biological children reside with ex-wife	Weekly

All men in this group had partners who were the primary caregivers to children, and most women were described as 'stay at home mothers'. Many of the men in this group believed that children should ideally be raised by stay at home mothers as the following statement illustrates:

Interviewer: Right does she work outside the home?

Ben: No full time mum so she's ... we've got mates and friends and stuff that have kids at day-care and that sort of stuff and I think that makes, shows you can see that in your kid, when you're sort of handing that responsibility over to somebody else for eight hours of the day rather than a mother and a father.

b.) Fathering Experiences

In relation to their fathering experiences, these men provided the richest narratives in relation to the question of what being a father meant to them. They described a strong identification

with the fathering role and indicated that being a father provided profound direction and meaning to their existence. As Dennis' account illustrates, men had invested a great deal of their identity in being fathers and partners:

Dennis: I often told people that you know having children it gives you the answers to why you're here and you know purpose in life reasons to get up and go to work every-day and come home and put up with what you put up with at work.

One man described how he believed that masculinity and fathering were strongly entwined and that his separation from his wife and children not only threatened his perception of himself as a father, but also as a man:

Seb: I think that as a man the whole experience of being a man includes being a father and being a husband or being a partner ... I've read a bit of Steve Biddulph and ah one of the things that he says is that the best thing you can do for your sons is to love their mother and, and I think that the best I mean doing things for my kids, like being in there for my kids and doing stuff for my kids is all I care about I want to do most you know I don't care about what I do for a job, I care about what I can do for my kids making my kids happy or what I can do for my kids is just I love doing that.

Men in this group were more likely than men in other groups to describe planned pregnancies and to recall positive emotional responses upon first learning that partner's or ex-partners were pregnant. They also described positively anticipating the birth of children.

Dennis: I think it's just that bond as a parent and that unconditional love that comes from that relationship and the fact that its instantaneous it's not something that you have to develop or grow in you know develop in your relationship - that's there from the time they are born and it's just a natural connection.

c.) Role of the father

Many men's accounts of their beliefs about their role as fathers frequently reflected socially constructed, stereotypical gendered ideals. For example the role of the father as a 'provider' and 'protector' was described by five participants (four of whom were in this group):

Ben: ... being able to provide and protect that's probably the main two things ... I find that that's my job like it's my job to make sure that there's nobody there to hurt my family, including myself.

Seb: You know I relied on her to look after the kids and she did a fantastic job of it she did a really good job of raising the kids but I was out there working cause I wanted us to get ahead.

Similarly, many men in this group described themselves as the patriarchs of the family. As Dennis indicated he believed that his children agreed with his perception:

Dennis: They say it, they say it to my wife – daddy's the boss.

Some men felt that his role as a father was essential in providing balance and harmony in the family structure and they articulated having grave fears for their children's wellbeing post separation and divorce:

Dennis: ... *the fear of them growing up without a father and not being in a balanced relationship that has the perceived natural order of things you know a father or a mother and a happy house.*

Seb: *Oh look the thing that I'm mainly concerned about is, are my kids going to be okay without me there? I believe that I provided a balance in the relationship in the family in the home I believe I was a you know just like a*

Interviewer: *Like a stabilizing force or something?*

Seb: *Yeah, exactly and like now that there's only three of them I think it could quite easily go out of control ... not like I need to have control of it because I'm happy to go with however it goes but I'm not happy for it to just be gone.*

d.) Descriptions of children

In terms of their accounts of fathering, they frequently described having rigid ideas about how children should relate and behave. Children, regardless of their age or stage of development, who failed to comply with expected standards of conduct or behaviour were rejected or at risk of rejection by their fathers. One man provided a number of reasons for his three-year absence in the life of his six year-old daughter, which included her inability to follow his rules. He articulated his belief that he was beyond recrimination and could justify his estrangement in the future if his daughter ever questioned his absence in her life:

Interviewer: *Do you see her at all?*

Ben: *No, I haven't seen her ... Yeah I got the court orders that I wanted ... but then it just became to a point ... it became three sets of different house rules like she could do whatever she wanted with her mum and she could do pretty much what she wanted with her nan and then when she came to my house there were rules like put your stuff away, hang up your clothes, like please and thank you and she didn't like that so ... yeah so it was a bit of ah but if she keeps in, in, x amount of years if she decides she wants to come see me or find me or whatever she knows like she knows who I am like my name's on the birth certificate and all that sort of stuff so, so her being able to track me down shouldn't be that much of a drama but when she comes to me and says why didn't I have anything to do with her then I've got a file that's about that big and I can just go well ... go for it.*

Beliefs that children should conform to rigid gendered stereotypes, caused another man to have difficulties relating to his son, whose gentle and sensitive personality, became a source of concern, rather than a source of paternal pride. Since his son did not adhere to his narrow view of masculinity, Dennis assumed that his son must be gay, rather than considering that there were other ways of being a man:

Dennis: ... *I think initially my attitude towards it because part of being ex-police is I was ex-army and you know ex-infantry and you're always taught to you got to have that killer instinct that mongrel in you, be prepared to do what it takes and my opinion on it was that he just didn't have that mongrel in him so then my ... clouded way of thinking was well maybe he's gay ... my thought process you know like because he didn't live up to my expected norm or, or what I thought he should be and he was just a gentle kid.*

Since many men described having rigid expectations of how children should relate and behave, many of their accounts of their experiences of paternal pride contained references to members of the public commenting on their children's 'good behaviour' in public spaces. References to 'good behaviour' usually stemmed from accounts of children displaying polite manners, being respectful, obedient and setting a good example for others:

Ben: ... *my kids are brought up very well mannered they say please and thank you tidy up after themselves dress nice, they're always clean, always got clean clothes, there's nothing my kids need, there's a lot that they want but there's nothing they need, they're well looked after they're yeah often get told by people, mates, even strangers in the street how cute they are and well mannered they are the lady in the corner shop is she's constantly telling me that so but at the same time too the rules at home are pretty strict but they're not strict it's just the general please, thank you instead of saying 'I want' it's 'I would like' or 'may I' um chew with your mouth closed, clean up when you're finished with, if you want to use something else put the other thing away first, just general sort of everyday, well you'd think they're everyday general sort of living rules but a lot of people don't enforce them but um I think that's sort of half the problem with some of the, with younger kids and that too if they don't have the base for discipline then they're gonna grow up without that.*

Seb: ... *they're amazing I'm just really impressed with the kids you know they're such good kids, they're polite and they're conscientious and their nephews and nieces look up to them.*

e.) External fathering practices

In relation to their outward, observable fathering practices, men in this group described being the least involved in the day-to-day practical care of children. In describing time spent with children a predominant theme of paternal absence emerged. Most men in this group attributed their lack of time spent with children to heavy work schedules:

Dennis: ... *Carol thinks she's mothering alone ... I'm away a fair bit with my job.*

Seb: ... *but I don't see my kids anywhere near as much as I would like to because I'm too busy paying for the fucking house I have a lot of debt because I tried to make some investments to get us ahead so that she could look after the kids which is really important I reckon for mum to be there for the kids.*

Three out of four men in this group described believing that ex-partners were responsible for the lack of time that they spent with children. For example, one man who had re-married

described the contact that his adult children from his first marriage had with his current wife and their children:

Dennis: and their mother Jane, basically said: "well no you're not going there I'm not going to put you in that type of environment where that's going on" and I didn't have much of a choice but to be able to, I mean the kids didn't want to come there and as much as I wanted them there they didn't feel comfortable and basically their relationship with Carol (current wife) broke down entirely and has never been the same ... well it's never come back basically and um so you know any sort of relationship between these children and the other children has been outside my home outside of the home environment it's always been out to dinner.

Another man described how he did not spend much time nor exert much effort in establishing relationships with his biological son and step-daughter, whom he continuously criticized. He described feeling very concerned about the poor relationships that he perceived he had with both children:

Hank: ... he doesn't really come down to the park, kick the ball around, not that I've really encouraged him to, I suppose I've been a bit lazy that way but ... Um it's not that I haven't taken an interest in anything that she's done I probably tried to be too give her too much discipline do you know what I mean whereas everything like I probably don't have never seen anything good always trying to look for something bad you know what I mean never give her sort of encouragement or anything like that although I have the way I feel when I think about it not enough and um

Interviewer: what do you think she would say if she was being asked about her relationship with you?

Hank: She'd probably say she hates me I'd say.

f.) Perception of themselves as fathers

The narratives of most men in this group regarding their perception of themselves as fathers were rich in descriptions of feelings of failure, guilt and shame:

Dennis: ... oh shattered, it's not until you know it's virtually drawn for you in front of you I mean it literally has to be pointed out to you and someone saying, is your child like this, do they exhibit these types of behaviours, you know have you noticed it, and it's not until you go yeah, one plus one plus one plus one – all these one per centers add up to a 100 per cent of yes you are doing a shit job as a father.

Interviewer: ... what do you think would be your strengths as a father?

Hank: long pause ... well looking at it and thinking back from the course and that, I haven't been a very good one actually.

Seb: I find it really hard to reconcile that I'm gonna be a father to these kids now but I don't get to be a husband to their mum I actually believe that that almost the most important aspect of being a father is being a partner ... so my strengths then as a father have been completely decimated by the fact that I'm no longer a husband and, and I think they don't seem to matter as much anymore but strong things or things that are beneficial to my kids as a father is um I don't know encouragement, I don't know belief ...

Only one man in this group perceived himself to be a 'good' father to his daughter and step-daughter, however he did not comment about his perception of himself as a father to his first born daughter, aged six years, with whom he had been estranged for three years.

g.) Family of origin experiences

All men described growing up in a traditional nuclear family for all (2) or part (2) of their childhood and adolescence, during which time they resided with both biological parents and siblings. In two families the parents separated and in one family the children resided with their biological mother and had regular weekend contact with their father. In the other, the man described upheaval and discontinuity of care, moving between the care of his mother, father and numerous out-of-home care placements.

Three of four men in this group described being exposed to domestic violence in childhood, perpetrated by their fathers against their mothers. Their perception of the nature and severity of exposure varied with some men describing frequent exposure and others describing sporadic exposure. However all men described chronic exposure that spanned the length of their childhood and adolescence and all men recalled experiencing a pervasive sense of fear as a result. Men's accounts of traumatic experiences as children were often extensive, detailed and contained descriptions of the emotional impact of events:

Dennis: I remember being terrified I can remember my dad hitting my mum and me just trying to grab hold of him and my brothers dragging him away. Him pushing us away and going to get her again and um things like that I remember just screaming and being terrified, umm the fear of it ...

These rich descriptions stood in direct contrast to their impoverished accounts of traumatic events experienced by their children, which often contained minimal detail and lacked specificity in relation to descriptions of the actual traumatic events and women and children's emotional reactions to them. All men perceived that domestic violence had, had a 'grave effect' on their own development and constructed their perpetration of domestic violence as a direct effect of childhood exposure.

Men in this group perceived that their mothers were responsible for domestic violence. Hank's belief that his mother should have acquiesced to his father's demands in order to maintain peace in the home is illustrative:

Hank: That's the thing too when you see it I don't know whether it sort of gets programmed into you but you sort of think oh mum was to blame for that cause she didn't shut up or ... yeah whereas possibly she didn't deserve it but possibly dad should have gone about it in a different way but she probably should have shut up sometimes as well...

Men described their perceptions of the effect that domestic violence had, had on their mothers. Empathy for their mothers' victimization was strikingly absent from men's accounts. For example, Dennis described his 'disgust' towards his mother for her repeated suicide attempts, which he constructed as being a sign of her 'weakness.'

All men recalled memories of being physically hit by their fathers and two recalled being hit by both parents during their childhoods. Three of four men did not label their experiences as 'abusive,' instead rendering their treatment as deserved and within the parameters of normative child rearing practices of the time and context in which their parents lived. They described physical assaults as appropriate punishments meted out for 'disobedient' or 'provocative' behaviour. In describing a memory of an event that many might perceive of as abusive, Seb was adamant that his father was 'good' and had acted in a restrained and fair manner whereas he was 'bad' and deserved to be punished. This view was typical of three out of four men in this group:

Seb: I can remember pushing it as a kid like me and my brother used to fight like cats and dogs ... we used to just make it hard for them and I don't know if it was for entertainment value or what but I can remember my dad getting so pissed off once that he grabbed us both by the heads and went smack, smacked our heads together ... that's something that happened once and like what had been going on you know I'm sure there would have been other parents who would have just shot us ... forget about trying to calm us down by clogging our heads together because of you know because of what we had been doing before ... why have I experienced domestic violence? Because I was a prick as a kid and I was just a nightmare really hard to, to get along with ...

This attitude prevailed regardless of the severity of the assault. For example another man who described being punched in the face with a closed fist by his father, and assaulted with objects by his mother voiced similar sentiments, which exonerated his parents.

Regardless of the abuse experienced, three of four men described feeling loved by both parents, but stressed that their fathers were unable to verbally express those feelings to them. For example, one man described how his father had never verbally expressed love for him until his dying day. Many men believed that this was due to generational factors:

Hank: yeah but he wasn't someone that I would feel comfortable to go and talk to I don't know whether it's probably just his generation sort of thing he's pretty old so ...

Only one man indicated that he did not feel loved by either parent and described being subjected to severe physical and emotional abuse as well as neglect perpetrated by both parents over the course of his childhood and adolescence. He also described being removed by child protection services and repeatedly relocated in numerous out-of-home care placements:

Angus: I used to get flogged with horse whips and kettle jugs and um cords and um sticks hockey sticks base, cricket bats anything she could sort of reach for and get her hands on um I'd have things thrown at me sent to me room, locked in me room just sort of go to bed, supper, without dinner, that sort of shit but it was all um ...

Interviewer: Did the same thing happen to your siblings or was it just you?

Angus: Nah, it was only me.

Interviewer: And in retrospect why do you think it happened to you?

Angus: I think it might of just been a resentment for when I was born.

This man was the only man to perceive his parent's treatment of him as abusive and neglectful, extending beyond the parameters of normative discipline. He was also the only man in this group to believe that he was not inherently 'bad' and did not deserve to be treated abusively.

All men had regular contact with their fathers during their childhood but despite this a predominant theme of paternal absence was evident. All men indicated that they felt that their fathers had been fundamentally absent from their lives due to work commitments, alcoholism and/or divorce. Even fathers who lived with men throughout their childhoods were described as 'never there.'

Some men described their fathers as patriarchs who ruled the home with an 'iron fist,' as one man described:

Dennis: It was hard see my dad was always at work ... but he was this God like figure who just turned up of a night after getting home from work he'd sit down in the

one chair in front of the t.v. have a few beers, he'd say hello to everybody ... it was more just acknowledging your presence ...

h.) Similarities/differences to fathers

When comparing their fathering experiences and practices to their fathers, many men described similar behaviour patterns and attitudes. Three out of four men believed that they had learnt their fathering skills from their fathers and perceived that there was an intergenerational transmission of parenting practices, as well as abuse. This view was described by one man who, despite having completed the program, was still of the opinion that his behaviours were the direct results of childhood trauma, rather than choices that he was presently making:

Dennis: like every parent you want things to be better for them than they were for you and I know that was the same with my parents but essentially you know I can see now that while you might have a little bit more money and you know a better house and something that your actual parenting skills they don't improve they stay exactly the same that that is a constant and that is dependent upon how you were raised you know um that's one thing I am realizing.

One man described how he felt that his childhood history of abuse and neglect had pre-disposed him to distrust others and to desire feeling powerful and in control of women and children but he indicated that life events (like meeting his wife) had changed these patterns. As a result he perceived that he was a much 'better' father than his own father ever was. In contrast another man described himself as 'much worse' than his father in relation to dominating his family through violence and other controlling behaviours.

8.3 High Identification, Low Control Group

As described earlier, the accounts of five men detailed a strong identification with hegemonic masculinity in combination with a predominant discourse of domestic violence resulting from a loss of control.

a.) Family Composition

The family compositions, residential status of children and amount of contact that men had with their children is summarised in the following table:

Table 8:2 Family composition, residential status and contact: High Identification, Low Control Group

Relationship & Residential Status of Participant	Residential Status of children	Paternal – child contact
Blended inter-generational family	Step daughter & her child reside with participant & biological mother 3 biological children in care of CS foster carers	Daily Quarterly
Separated, intergenerational - participant resides with his family of origin	Biological child in care of CS pending outcome of Children's Court proceedings	Weekly
Blended family	Participant resides with partner and step - children Biological child resides with natural mother	Daily Weekly
Intergenerational – participant resides with parents and biological son	Biological son restored to care of father	Daily
Nuclear	Biological children reside with mother and father Step – son in care of CS	Daily contact Denied contact

b.) Fathering Experiences

A unifying theme, which emerged from an analysis of the men's accounts in this group was a desire to seek redemption from past abusive behaviours. Most men described themselves as being engaged in activities to redeem themselves or to 'prove' to people (particularly the child protection services) that they could be trusted to resume relationships with their children. Two of three men who had children in the care of Community Services described being engaged in efforts to 'transform' themselves. Participating in the '*Facing Up*' program was seen as an arena to regain legitimacy as fathers. Their accounts were rich in descriptions of their desire to change in order to reclaim their paternal role:

Trevor: Oh I don't know I love how she always calls out for daddy and comes up to me, I'd like there to be more love to be there everyday, but DoCS is saying I can't so it's up to me to get myself right so that I can show them that I can look after my daughter.

Ken: *You know and they umm they basically said they would take them away and they did in the end ... So that's why I joined the group and to try and get my act straightened out and ... hopefully get them back and when I'm working towards now is unsupervised access and with the kids and down the track hopefully get them back and so.*

Men in this group were more likely to describe unplanned pregnancies. Typically, men reported that contraception was not used and that pregnancies were the result of chance occurrences. Keith's description was typical of the accounts given in relation to his son's conception:

Interviewer: *... did you guys plan to have him?*

Keith: (Laughs) *no, not really, not really, there was no nah, I suppose, I did say to her that I want to have a child and she was all for it but there was no, ahh let's do it do you know what I mean ... like it was just it just happened.*

Many of the men in this group described chaotic, unpredictable lifestyles characterized by alcohol and/or drug abuse. Many alleged that partners and ex-partners had abused alcohol and/or other drugs throughout their pregnancies. The accounts of women's pregnancies were also characterised by descriptions of domestic violence, with four out of five men in this group describing how they had inflicted serious, repeated, and in some cases life-threatening assaults on their partners and unborn children during pregnancy. Despite the unplanned nature of the pregnancies, many men in this group reported positive feelings upon learning that they were going to become fathers:

Interviewer: *... how did you feel when you found out she was pregnant?*

Trevor: *I was happy, I was stoked.*

Keith: *It's unreal, yeah, it's the best thing that's ever happened to me.*

However, in comparison to the previous group their narratives regarding their feelings about fatherhood were frequently impoverished and lacked the rich detail given by men in the last group. Commonly, men in this group responded positively, describing their experience of being a father using superlative descriptors but rarely provided the details that men in the previous group had described regarding their feelings about being fathers. For example, Trevor's response was typical:

Interviewer: *how do you like being a dad?*

Trevor: *Yeah, absolutely love it.*

Interviewer: *what do you like about it in particular?*

Trevor: *Um, I don't know piece of me you know like I mean my daughter like she's everything to me, she's actually in DoCS care at the moment.*

Not all men described their paternal experiences positively. For example, Angus reported that his experience of fathering was more complex, and less positive due to his temperament and substance dependency:

Angus: Um stressful cause I've been pretty bad on drugs and alcohol since I was 15 or 12 ... but I find it pretty hard, I've got a short temper so that doesn't help ... normally I'm alright like I get along pretty good with my kids when I'm not angry or drinking ...

c.) Role of the father

Men in this group were not as homogenous in highlighting the role of father as 'provider' or 'protector' as were men in the last group. Many men's accounts of their beliefs about their role as fathers frequently prioritised the relational aspects of being a father. Many men described desiring to be 'friends,' 'teachers,' and/or 'confidantes' to their children:

Dave: so I just try to make sure she's happy, give her the right guidance to make sure she's doing the right thing and try and give her the things that I think that a father should be you know sort of like I guess like a friend to her, obviously I want her to trust me and all the rest of it but someone that she knows that I'm there for her and just I don't know be a good provider for her, well it's different now cause I don't get to have her every day but you know just all around make sure that she's safe is really a big key for me.

Interviewer: Oh, okay ... and for you what does being a good father mean?

Keith: Ahh just being available just being there for him just in time and emotional needs, do you know what I mean, all that, all that stuff... It's more a less just being there for him yeah, just teaching him stuff I suppose. I actually think that teaching him stuff comes second just actually being there is the most important thing and um and that's pretty much sums it up for me just, just being available you know um yeah, and like I said being able to be there emotionally for him.

d.) Descriptions of children

In terms of their accounts of fathering, with the exception of one, men did not describe holding rigid ideas about how children should relate and behave. Descriptions of children frequently pivoted on what children could provide them with, rather than the other way around. For example, a number of men highlighted how their children provided them with comfort when they were upset. Trevor's beliefs about his daughter's ability to help him deal with the symptoms of his mental illness illustrate:

Trevor: You know I was you know whenever I'd get upset or anything she (infant daughter) was sort of enlighten me and she'd make me happy yeah she's a lovely little girl, she's beautiful, like I love being a father.

Some men went as far as to describe how they believed that their children had literally saved them from a life of alcohol, drugs and criminal behaviour:

Keith: I thought having a boy like when he first come along would change me but it didn't I actually got worse for various other reasons and all this stuff was going on but yeah for sure like if I didn't have him I don't think I'd be where I am now ... like I've been sober for three and a half years.

Martin: Great, calmed me down a lot, like I was in trouble with the police a lot doing a lot of stupid stuff ... Sort of quietened me down.

e.) External fathering practices

In relation to their outward, observable fathering practices, many men in this group also described being frequently absent in the lives of their children. Whilst men in the previous group attributed their absences to work commitments, men in this group attributed their absences to a variety of factors such as the effects of substance abuse and/or mental illness, and/or the removal of children by child protective services. Some men also indicated that despite being home daily with his children, he chose to have limited involvement in their care:

Interviewer: How involved are you with the kids?

Angus: Um not really cause I'm I suffer depression like me partner does as well, but I'm just like I don't know I don't do much around the house so I don't really like I help cook that's about it so that's probably about all I do like change nappies occasionally like wet nappies, I change I don't change poos.

Other men attributed their absence to the fact that their children resided in foster care and hence they presently had limited opportunities to directly care for them. In reflecting back on their involvement with their children prior to their removal, they described idyllic images of home life characterized by highly involved and active fathering practices:

Trevor: Um, I used to change her, feed her every afternoon I'd bath her like I bathed her every night, fed her like probably 80 per cent of the time for her to go to bed, like after, before a big nap and Linda would mainly feed her dinner, I'd feed her dinner sometimes um but always for a bed bottle, like most of the time I put her to bed um and then ... Linda would um wake up through the nights when she'd wake up and feed her through the nights ... see I was working at the time.

Only one man in this group described providing day-to-day care for his son. In describing his involvement, he was animated and expressed much affection for his son.

Keith: Yeah, yeah, yeah, I do everything for him except for cook the meals pretty much I'm pretty lucky there... but yeah like I wash all his clothes and you know get him prepared for everything, like we go to swimming lessons every week and yeah yeah and just all that stuff

Interviewer: what sorts of things do you guys do together?

Bike rides and movies, slot cars, oh, we've got a full book ... Yeah like we always we're a bit I can't sit still sort of thing and neither can he of course, being a four year old ... So, yeah, we're just always doing stuff.

f.) Perception of themselves as fathers

In comparison to the last group, the majority of men in this group described their fathering practices positively. Some men perceived themselves to be 'good fathers' or 'decent fathers' who had positive relationships with children. Their only concern related to not being able to have as much contact with their children as they desired:

Interviewer: ... anything you find especially challenging about being a father?

Keith: Ahh yeah, it's not easy you know like I say like my life has like changed so much but the challenges is consistently being there I guess ahh

Interviewer: And do you have any concerns at all about your relationship with him?

Keith: Nah, not really ... ahh you know I think like every parent you think like maybe you can always do a bit better or whatever you know but I don't beat meself up too much ... I know I'm a good father now so .. um yeah.

Interviewer: yup so how do you see yourself as a father?

Dave: Yeah I guess of recent times I've probably let her down a little bit with some things, actions, that have happened but all in all yeah pretty decent I guess.

Interviewer: Yeah, what do you think have been your sort of strengths as a father?

Dave: just ah I guess for her for her to know that I'm always there like I'll never leave her ... It's challenging not being an everyday father you know um that's probably about, about it it's not challenging it's more I hate not being that do you know what I mean for me that's challenging but anything else it's pretty easy, you know in my situation it's not real hard, you know I ring her every night, talk to her every night or she'll ring me or so I know what's going on with her every day and stuff but it sort of more of a challenge for me not being there everyday.

Some men felt that children were adversely affected by decisions made by child protective services or ex-partners, which limited or denied paternal contact. For example, one man described how he believed that the health of his step-children was adversely affected:

Trevor: ... even with Josh and Mary like Mary was very obese well not obese but she was over weight and I've noticed through visits when I've seen her she's put on twice as much weight she started losing it when I was there cause I got her into netball and I was out in the back doing things with her and now that they're just in the house not doing much, Josh's still playing football which is good but I don't know what Mary is doing I just noticed how much weight she'd put on and I'm like ahh dear cause that was one of my things when I was there I promoted health, healthy, like go out and do healthy things like I was getting her into I would take her for runs and things like that.

Two men described feeling ashamed of being 'inadequate fathers.' However they both stressed a desire to rectify this situation and cited remedial actions taken towards improving their parenting, such as involvement in the 'Facing Up' program:

Ken: all the same shit you shouldn't be doing to your family and to your kids and the people you love and are supposed to protect and ah really I'm pretty ashamed of the

whole thing ... I'd like to get down the track 30 years down the track and think well at least for that last 30 years I've been the decent man that I should have been ...

Interviewer: How would you describe yourself as a father?

Ken: Pretty lousy I suppose ... got a long way to go ... I was always there for my kids ... even though I was drunk all the time doing the wrong thing ... I'd tell them every day that I loved them.

Interviewer: Okay what do you think are your strengths as a father?

Angus: Um at the moment I don't really have any cause I'm just trying to get on top of me anger.

g.) Family of Origin Experiences

Three of five men described growing up in a traditional nuclear family setting, whereby they had resided with both biological parents and siblings for the duration of their formative years. Two men were raised in single female-headed households, one throughout his entire childhood and another for part of his childhood. The latter man described having irregular contact with his biological father when he was growing up but recalled being sent to live with him for a short time in his adolescent years.

Four of five men in this group did not perceive that they had been exposed to domestic violence. Despite perceiving that they had not been exposed to domestic violence, four out of five men in this group recalled memories of their fathers using violence and other tactics to control women and children in the domestic sphere. Men minimized the impact of these behaviours by claiming that they were infrequent and not severe, as is evidenced in the following accounts:

Ken: I did the wrong thing yeah he never knocked my mother around but he used to lay into me a fair bit ... No, not that I ever seen I think he did it once and um she threatened to leave him so he never did it again see he, he doesn't handle his grog at all I've only seen my dad drunk twice.

Interviewer: Was he violent to your mum?

Angus: Um abusive wise yes, I never seen any physical violence towards mum from him ... just a yelling and screaming from both of them.

Only one man described witnessing what he perceived as 'domestic violence.' He recalled being present when his father assaulted a female partner and indicated that he reacted by physically intervening to protect the woman. He also denied visually witnessing but remembered hearing physical assaults perpetrated by his father against his mother. For

example, he recalled an incident where his father put a shot-gun in his mother's mouth, knocking a number of her teeth out.

Similarly to the last group, most men also described childhood memories of paternal physical abuse. However, only half concurred with the majority of men in the last group who constructed their abusive treatment as deserved punishment for 'bad behaviour' within the parameters of normative discipline. The two men that concurred with this view were similar to the majority of men in the previous group who described themselves as 'bad' children. For example, Ken who described being the victim of severe paternal abuse described how he had internalized the message that he was the 'black sheep of the family' and 'the devil.' Conversely, two men perceived that they had been dealt with unfairly, describing their treatment as unjustified and abusive:

Trevor: Um ... he threw me down a set of stairs when I was a baby ..., he burnt most of my ... I was probably about one ... yeah he burnt all burnt all my baby photos stuff like that ...

Angus: Most of the time it was me that copped his violence like I'd either get smacked or excessively he'd double his leather belt over and hit me with that a few times across the back side and tops of the legs and that sort ... He then went on to describe the worst assault of his childhood ... Um I was 11 years old ... just basically picked me up by the throat threw me half way across the room I hit a brick wall ... it was a good couple of metres and I'd already been belted with his belt that day, um he told me sister to ring a place like a boarding home ... and um he said ring them get him booked in tonight or I'm gonna kill him so yeah I was um him and me older sister took me out there that night ...

The four men who had a relationship with their fathers during their childhood and/or adolescence were more negative about these relationships than were men in the last group, with only one man describing positive feelings towards his father and ambivalent feelings towards his mother. The accounts of the remaining three men were rich with descriptions of paternal absence, emotional abuse and neglect. The following sentiment was representative of the descriptions of many men in this study, the majority of whom were in this group:

Ken: ... my old man could never tell me to my face that he loved me ... never ... he's never said to me that he loved me but my mother I'll ring her up and she'll say she loves me five times before I get off the phone and always has ...

All men except one stressed that they did not and still do not feel loved by their fathers. In comparison, all men in this group indicated that they felt emotionally 'close' to and loved by their mothers. Two men in this group also described feeling rejected and scapegoated by

their fathers whom they perceived as favouring their siblings. These two men also described experiencing similar problems as adults including perpetrating severe and chronic domestic violence, having extensive alcohol and/or other drug dependencies, experiencing mental health problems and having extensive criminal justice involvement including incarceration.

In concert with the previous group, the theme of paternal absence was a significant feature of men's accounts. One man indicated that he had never met his biological father and felt that he never had a male role model as a child that he could base his fathering upon:

Trevor: I didn't have a father growing up, I'd my real dad I don't know him but, my mum's boyfriend he died when I was about 12 and he was a drunk but he was, you know never harmed us or was always pretty cool about it but um so I never seen fatherhood in that way.

Two other men, who did have relationships with their biological fathers, also described feeling like they never 'really knew' their fathers. The following description is typical of the sentiment expressed by many men:

Ken: ... cause my father was never there for me, he was always working it was like we, well really I thought well, who are you anyway? I hardly knew my father and I still don't know him...

h.) Similarities/differences to fathers

Men's beliefs about how their fathering practices compared to those of their own fathers resulted in more descriptions of difference when compared to the responses of men in the previous group. Whereas most men in the previous group seemed to identify strongly with the intergenerational transmission of abuse discourse, men in this group had more disparate views on this subject. Some indicated that they were both similar and different to their fathers. Men who described similarities, frequently nominated their reactions to feelings of anger and stress as commonalities. Men who described differences frequently perceived that they were more 'emotionally available' to their children than their own fathers had been to them. Many men described this as an example of how they were 'better' than their fathers.

Ken's description is illustrative of this view:

Ken: You know he's not there for me where as me ... I was always there for my kids ... even though I was drunk all the time doing the wrong thing if we had to go do something I'd be right there. I'd be there with bells on and tell them I tell them every day that I see them that I loved them where my dad never said that to me and I think that is just pathetic. But that's his problem not mine – you know I'm not him.

Some men constructed their own abusive fathering practices as being a consequence of being abused as children by their fathers. For example, one man described a cold, harsh childhood characterized by severe physical abuse and scapegoating, and when discussing his experience of being a father, he provided numerous examples of scapegoating and physically abusing his step-son in conjunction to exposing all family members to severe and frequent domestic violence.

8.4 Low Identification, High Control

As described in the preceding chapter, the narratives of four men detailed a lower identification with hegemonic masculinity and descriptions of domestic violence used in a controlled and instrumental fashion. Coupled with postmodern perspectives, which highlight the fluidity of identities, and the limitations of rigid categorizations of our lived experiences, the narratives of one man, who was placed in the first group, contain many similarities to the narratives of many men in this group hence some of his comments have been included in this section as well.

a.) Family Composition

The family compositions, residential status of children and amount of contact men had with their children is summarised in the table below:

Table 8:3 Family composition, residential status and contact: Low Identification, High Control Group

Relationship & Residential Status of Participant	Residential Status of children	Paternal-child contact
Separated – lives independently	Biological children reside with natural mother	Weekly
Separated – lives independently	Child in long term care of CS	Quarterly
Separated – lives independently	Child in long term care of CS	Quarterly
Separated – resides with one biological daughter	Biological daughter placed in care of father; 2 other biological children in care of CS, placed with paternal grandparents	Daily with all children

b.) Fathering experience

As previously described, a unifying theme in the accounts of men in this group was a view of themselves as fundamentally 'good fathers' who had been maligned and misunderstood. Like martyrs, they described themselves as making multiple sacrifices to provide the best for their ex-partners and children but believed that their paternal efforts were often unappreciated, misunderstood and that they had been treated egregiously.

Similarly to men in the last group, most men in this group indicated that most pregnancies were unplanned. However, one man in this group indicated that at least one of his ex-partner's two pregnancies was planned and when describing the conception, he objectified his daughter referring to her as a present that he had 'given' to his ex-partner:

Jeff: No Trina was planned ... so I gave her, I gave her Trina for her birthday present and she unwrapped her nine months later so we discussed having a child and I remember distinctly having that child.

All men in this group described feeling like they performed a disproportionate amount of paid and unpaid work on behalf of their families. Many described performing the bulk of the child-care and housekeeping duties, in addition to working outside the home. Commonly, men described performing domestic duties happily and unselfishly:

Jeff: I would come home, let her relax, let her have a drink and go outside talk on the phone to friends while I would make dinner, bath the kids, play with the kids put them to bed. I had worked a shift but was always happy to come home and cook dinner. I enjoyed cooking.

Jamie: Normally I'd take the kids to school work all day pick em up drop them off go back to work um normally when I got home it was yeah a lot of cooking their dinner help feed the kids, bath the kids and stuff um have a bit of a muck around with them before bed and stuff you try to help with the homework here and there or getting them trying to teach the kids different things, I always tried to get in there and help but yeah a lot of the time it just by the time you come home from work cook, get em ready, like bathed get them ready for bed and stuff sometimes you do miss out on all that playtime and yeah.

c.) Role of father

When men in this group talked about time spent with children and their role as fathers, they frequently described being actively involved in their children's lives. Similar to the last group, they prioritised the role of father as playmate, friend, and teacher over the more traditional role of provider and protector.

Jamie: *Um, I was always there for them ... used to play a lot with them um try to teach them different things yeah I was always there for a cuddle always provided for them as best I could yeah um yeah always showed them love and yeah, yeah.*

John: *Yeah, being there supporting them when they, food wise, looking after them being there when they need you. All of the above really ... The part, being a good role model for them being able to care for them.*

Jake: *Outside doing surfing or going for bushwalks or going on the lake or something, paddling on there ... ah, doing things around the house or mucking around out the back or all sorts of stuff, trying to teach them how to read ... He likes to do everything that I do so follows me around a bit and goes surfing or rides his bike, he loves his bike and swinging from trees, climbing the trees.*

d.) Descriptions of children

The men's account of their children's progress and development were often scant and this was particularly the case for men whose children had been placed in out-of-home- care. However, this was also the case for some men who had weekly contact with their children. They also indicated that they really did not know a great deal about important aspects of their children's lives, such as schooling:

Jake: *I don't know much about the school thing because that's in Sydney so I don't have much to do with it.*

e.) External fathering practices

Similarly to the previous two groups, many men described having long absences from their children due to work commitments. One man described how he sacrificed his relationship with his children because he felt that it would be better if he relocated inter - state as he believed that he was 'scapegoated' and vexatiously accused of child abuse and domestic violence. As a result he described his paternal contact as infrequent:

Interviewer: *... before they went into care ... how much contact did you have with them?*

Jeff: *Every month I lived in Melbourne I used to come up every month and we'd play happy families for the month just for three or four days I'd go and stay at her place, um all the kids were there um we'd go and stay in a caravan park or something or we'd go away on a little trip, always did something.*

Similarly to men in the last group who had children who were in the care of Community Services, a number of men indicated that they spent limited time with their children. They expressed a desire to change in order to facilitate restoration in order to resume fathering on a full-time basis.

Jamie: *I want to obviously change myself so I can give them the better life the life that they deserve and I want for them and yeah to get them back with family and into a joint custody arrangement so that ...all I'm concerned about is getting myself to the right point to be there for them the children and to be able to look after them meet their needs every day ...*

f.) Perceptions of themselves as fathers

Many men in this group described strengths in their fathering practices. Many men, even those whose children had been removed from their care by child protective services, described themselves as 'very good fathers.' Many men described believing that their major challenge as fathers related to their relationship with their partners:

Interviewer: *What's fatherhood like for you?*

Jake: *Frustrating ... not necessarily fatherhood, more the ah, the lady's involvement is frustrating ... yeah she has very different ideas about raising kids then to what I have I think otherwise it's been good, I love it, it's great ... (reflecting on his strengths) Patience, as well as something I'd like to change I'd say it's also a strength tolerance, patience, I don't hold a grudge against the kids in general and I guess I try and involve myself in whatever is going on ... try and encourage him with things that he's good at ... and um love my kids.*

g.) Family of origin experiences

All men in this group described being raised in a two parent family with siblings. Three of four men described growing up in a traditional nuclear family, residing with biological parents and siblings. Another man described being raised from infancy by adoptive parents.

All men in this group perceived that they had not been exposed to domestic violence in childhood. In fact, some men, described being exposed to many examples of non-violent conflict resolution during their formative years:

John: *Um everyone has their arguments mum and dad would sort it out when in bed they would discuss it rather than let problems build up.*

However, two men in this group described experiences and/or dynamics in their parents' relationships that could be perceived as domestic violence:

Interviewer: *Was there domestic violence?*

Jake: *Um no, not really no.*

Interviewer: *So how would you describe their relationship?*

Jake: *I don't know it wasn't equal ... the whole street knew what was going on but I mean everything was behind closed doors ... oh they'd hear the fighting and arguing and yelling and all that sort of stuff ...*

Another man described his father as calm and rational, in contrast to his 'abusive' mother. However he recalled a childhood memory in which his father grabbed his mother by her hair and dragged her out of the dining room in order to 'mellow her out,' by giving her some medication. He believed that the treatment that she received on this occasion was entirely justified, as his father had to do something to 'shut her up.'

No one in this group perceived of themselves as victims of child physical abuse perpetrated by their fathers. However two men described memories of being physically chastised, which they labelled as an appropriate disciplinary method, employed by parents at the time. One man described how his father had struck him so hard when he was eight years old that he was literally lifted off the ground. Another man recalled memories of severe paternal physical abuse towards his older siblings but had no memories of having been physically abused himself. He did however have memories of being publically humiliated by his father and recalled how it had left him feeling unloved, worthless and humiliated. The same man recounted memories of extra-familial sexual abuse, which occurred when he was an adolescent and described how he believed that his parents did not respond to his considerable distress appropriately.

Two men in this group described positive paternal relationships. One indicated that he had a good relationship with both parents and described a history devoid of maltreatment and rife with indulgence:

John: I had a good upbringing I would chuck fits up until the age of 16, I was treated like a king.

Two men described negative relationships with parents and in both situations they commented on feeling unloved by their fathers but loved by their mothers. Jake's description typified this view:

Interviewer: At the end of the day did you feel loved by him?

Jake: No, not at all.

Interviewer: And what about your mum?

Jake: Yeah, my mum used to, I can't remember a time my father actually hugged me I think there was a real big gap there somewhere.

In keeping with the theme of paternal absence identified by many men in this study, another man who described negative relations with his father, indicated that he felt that his father was

‘never there for me.’ He also described how his father’s influence in his life to this day had caused problems for his immediate family to this day, since his father’s conviction on child sexual assault charges had contributed to the removal and placement of his children into long term out-of-home-care.

h.) Similarities/differences to fathers

Men’s accounts of their beliefs about how their fathering practices compared to their fathers were similar to the views expressed by men in the previous groups. In fact, some men used nearly identical words and phrases to describe their opinions about how they were different to their fathers. This was particularly evident in regards to their perception of themselves as being more emotionally available.

8.5 Low Identification, Low Control

As described in the preceding chapter, the narratives of three men detailed a lower identification with hegemonic masculinity in combination with a predominant discourse of domestic violence resulting from a loss of control.

a.) Family Composition

The family compositions, residential status of children and amount of contact men had with their children is summarised in the table below:

Table 8:4 Family composition, residential status and contact: Low Identification, Low Control Group

Relationship & Residential Status of Participant	Residential Status of children	Paternal child contact
Divorced – lives independently	2 biological children reside with natural mother	Weekly
Nuclear	Biological children reside with mother and father	Daily
Defacto – resides with partner	4 children in temporary care pending court determination	3 weekly

b.) Fathering experiences

Men in this group differed in their descriptions of their experiences and feelings upon first discovering of their partner's pregnancies. For example, one man in this group described unplanned and unwanted pregnancies. However, another expressed feeling happy upon learning about their partner's pregnancies but stressed that due to his chronic alcoholism he could not remember many details of his children's lives.

Martin: that's a tricky one I didn't want the third, or last one (fourth), but me partner did ...

Anthony: It's always been really good I love being a dad ... Just watching me kids grow up like I've seen all me sons being born ... Yeah, maybe I haven't bonded as much with the kids as much as what I did with Dennis - I don't know - cause I can remember Dennis' first steps ... Yeah cause I cause I've heard like through AA that alcohol does affect your memory and there are times when Frances says: "oh can you remember this?" I've got a vague memory of it where I haven't got a good memory of it where I can remember it to a certain extent but I can't remember the whole lot.

Men expressed that they enjoyed being fathers but did not provide as much detail about what particular aspects of fatherhood they enjoyed the most.

C.) Role of the father

In describing their role as fathers, men in this group were similar to men in previous groups, in that they tended to elevate the relational aspects of being a father over and above the provider and protector roles. For example, like Ross below, most men described feeling that spending time with children and loving them were the most important aspects of being a father.

Ross: To be there, to love ... Yeah to be there emotionally if they want anything to be there for it, yeah anything they want they get. They don't ask for much but.

The same man described how he did not provide any regular financial support to his eldest daughter when she was purportedly 'kicked out' of the home by her mother at 14 years of age. He reported that his ex-wife was responsible for this and that he had helped his daughter find an apartment but that she had primarily survived by receiving government assistance and charity from a concerned neighbour.

d.) Descriptions of children

All men in this group described having a favourite biological child, whom they spent more time with. This was usually the child whom they felt was most similar to them. For example, one father described how he preferred spending time with his middle child since 'me and her are just like twins' but not wanting to be around his other two daughters, whom he found 'irritating.' Although the 'favoured' child was only 12 years of age, he described treating her like an adult and a confidante in all aspects of his life, including his relationship problems:

Ross: ... Sophie I have every weekend, Martha I have every second weekend ... I can have her more often but she just drives me around the bend ... He also described his relationship with another daughter, Emma who he has had limited contact with and who was kicked out of the home at 14 years of age: Touch and go (relationship) she's one of these ones where if it's not her way it's no way ... she thinks she can wear the pants...

Four other men (two from this group and two others) also described favouring or having a preference for a certain biological child, whom in both cases was their first born child.

Martin: I think I might favour him a little bit cause he's me first son ...

Ken: like me and her are pretty tight we're really close you know have been ever since she was a kid, you know baby, it's sort of strange I've got a closer bond with her than I have with the other two I don't know why cause maybe she's my darling my first born.

Some men talked about how they felt more attached to their sons than their daughters:

Interviewer: Yeah um okay so what about how would you describe your relationship with the kids?

Jake: Um Larry's fine, Larry and I are like best mates, we just run around everywhere, Georgia, because I haven't lived with Georgia since she was born basically ... She's sort of, it's a good relationship but still not as close as with Larry and I are

Interviewer: Right okay so you feel more of an attachment with him would you say?

Jake: To Larry, yeah yup I would plus he's a bit older too.

e.) External fathering practices

Men's descriptions of time spent with children often revolved around children accompanying them while they engaged in activities centred on meeting their own needs. For example, Anthony described how he used to take his children for a walk, not to play or relate to them, but rather to purchase and drink alcohol:

Anthony: You know what I mean it'd be like hang on Dennis, come for a walk I'm gonna go and buy a couple of beers and we'll go to the beach do you know what I mean why couldn't I just take him to the beach without buying the beers?

One man described how he did not spend much time with his two toddler aged children because he couldn't relate to them and stated that he did not engage in the practical day-to-day caring tasks of his infant daughter because he feared that allegations of abuse might be levelled at him:

Interviewer: ... *anything you find hard about being a dad?*

Martin: *Not really cause, I'm always, I'm at work a lot too so ...*

Interviewer: ... *during the week how much time do you think you spend with them?*

Martin: *Probably about five, five to seven hours, mainly the weekend I'm really involved with the kids ... Just love getting out riding the scooter with him, kicking the footie around ... sit there and draw, watch cartoons, like he loves 'Ben 10' shows ... the other two are getting up into that sort of group yet cause I'm not really the whole baby sort of person ... can't really (interact with them) they're too delicate ... with the boys yeah, I won't do nappy changes with the girls with the whole allegation and that ...*

f.) Perceptions of themselves as fathers

As previously described, a unifying theme in the accounts of men in this group was a fundamental description of themselves as 'good fathers.' Frequently this view stood in direct opposition to striking descriptions of abusive and neglectful fathering practices. For example, one man described how he believed he was a 'really good father' who managed to care for his three young children despite being heavily intoxicated. This often included times when they were out in public spaces where there was an element of risk to unsupervised children, such as in parks, on the beach or at the local swimming pool. Despite initially indicating that he did not think his care was compromised, he later described how this did place his children at risk:

Anthony: *And I wasn't just drinking socially, I'd get up in the morning and that'd be the first thing I'd be looking for was alcohol and then I'd drink all day **but it didn't affect me fatherhood at all** (emphasis added) - Frances said while you were drinking you still managed to take the kids out to take them to the beach to do normal fatherly things ... Oh, I wasn't drinking to really get drunk all day I was drinking to really keep life manageable ... Well, I'd, I'd take them to the parks and that but I'd always be drinking ... I feel like I was an imbecile ... What other people would have thought of me seeing me there with the kids and I'd be walking around with a beer bottle in me hand ... You know when most parents take their kids to the park, they're there for the kids, even though I was there for the kids I was there for meself as well do ... I wasn't there do you know what I mean - I was oblivious to what was going on ... I was spending time with them for instance, we'd enrolled into swimming lessons and most fathers would be in the water with their boys where I'd be at the edge of the pool drinking, sneaking grog in ...*

Similarly, another man believed that despite the fact that his four children were in the care of Community Services, his fathering practices were not in need of any improvement and he

could not understand why Community Services would be concerned about domestic violence in his family, as he claimed that it was 'only' verbal abuse:

Martin: That's why I have trouble getting me head around the whole verbal domestic violence.

Interviewer: Was that one of DoCS major concerns?

Martin: Yeah ... the impact on the children ... that it's psychological damage can be done which I didn't understand anything at all about.

Two men in this group who had children who were not in their care, were not as enthusiastic in describing a strong desire to have their children restored to their care, nor to engage in activities that would facilitate restoration.

g.) Family of origin experiences

Two of three men in this group experienced the death of their mothers at an early age. One man described how his father raised him following his mother's death but that he became an alcoholic to numb the pain of his wife's loss. Another man described being raised by his grandparents and reported that he had no contact with his father, who had been incarcerated at the time of his mother's death. Both men were only children. The remaining man described being raised in a two parent family with siblings.

Similarly to men in the previous group, all three men in this group perceived that they had not been exposed to domestic violence in childhood. However, as was the case with men in previous groups, men provided accounts of domestic violence, which stood in contrast to their assertions of being raised in non-violent homes.

One man perceived that he had, had a 'brilliant' relationship with his father saying, 'me and Dad were really close we weren't like father and son we were like best mates.' In describing his history with alcoholism, he recalled his father's willingness to drink with him as a child but he never identified how this could be perceived as neglectful parenting, which might have contributed to his current alcohol dependence:

Anthony: It was never a problem until probably the last year of me drinking – my dad passed away in June last year and I grew up um my mum passed away when I was ten so I had a lot of problems when I was a young kid and I started drinking young at age like when I was about 15 like sociably with me mates at parties and that and it escalated to where my dad was an alcoholic so he didn't care if I drink at home and I'd just get drunk with me dad all the time cause I was really close with me dad.

Two other men in this group indicated that they had predominantly negative relationships with their fathers. One man who did not meet his biological father until he was 18 years of age decided not to pursue any further contact due to his father's involvement in organized crime. The other man who grew up in a traditional nuclear family setting described his father as 'a prick.'

One man who described a negative relationship with his father recalled being physically abused by him throughout his childhood, which included being assaulted with objects, which left him with long-term tissue damage. Ultimately however, he defended his father's behaviour as justifiable punishment:

Ross: My dad... was a stock whip man you done wrong and as you were running out the door the stock whip was coming up behind you ... that's why I don't believe in hitting kids

Interviewer: ... in retrospect would you describe him as abusive?

Ross: No, he only done it when you deserved it.

He also described being hit with other objects, such as the electric jug cord by his mother throughout his childhood. Ross also expressed feeling unloved by his father but loved and emotionally close to his mother.

h.) Similarities/differences to fathers

There was not a consistent theme amongst men in this group in regards to their views about how they were similar or different to their fathers. One man saw himself as being gentler towards his children, than his father had been to him. He attributed this to changed social conditions, expressing the belief that his father had conformed to a more distant fatherhood style, which was acceptable at the time. He indicated that he did not want to repeat this pattern with his children and expressed a desire to be more 'emotionally available' to them. Another man indicated that he could not answer this question as he 'never really knew' his father. The last man described how he 'idolized' his father and indicated that he wanted to be just like him as he perceived him to be a good role model. At the same time he described his father as an alcoholic, who was frequently disengaged from fathering due to his substance usage. This was a pattern that the participant was repeating with his own children.

8.6 The experience of step-fathering

As previously stated, four men described themselves as being step-fathers to their partner's child/ren at the time of the study. Three other men did not describe themselves as step-fathers but described cohabitating with an additional seven children (four girls, three boys) who were the offspring of their partners either currently or in the recent past. All step-fathers, regardless of their identification with hegemonic masculinity or level of control over their domestic violence, indicated that they had difficulty living with non-biological children.

Many described that in addition to exposing these children to chronic domestic violence, they had also behaved harshly towards their step-children in other ways such as treating them differently to their biological children. As has been previously discussed, many men described favouring their biological child/ren over step – children in the family. In analysing the accounts of step-fathers, all men bar one, indicated that they favoured their biological child over their step-child and many provided details of behaving abusively and neglectfully towards the step-child:

Interviewer: ... *how do you treat him?*

Angus: *Like absolute shit (Interviewer: Right) I don't treat him like he's mine even though I love him and care about him and shit um yeah I just don't really treat him like he's mine.*

Hank: *You know I treat him (biological child) probably better which I shouldn't but ... just through anything that he did he wouldn't cop the same sort of if he did something Barb did when she was younger you know I might have a go at him but not to the same ... extent*

Interviewer: ... *why do you think that's the case?*

Hank: *Probably cause he's me own flesh and blood I suppose I don't know or maybe I've learnt.*

Only one step-father indicated that he believed that he treated his step-daughter in the same way as his biological children, although he did stress that he believed that she was manipulative towards his mother:

Ben: ... *But there's times when she doesn't see it and I'll see it but other than that it's great, we go, I'll take her out to the movies and go motor bike riding and just chill out around the house and just sort of do like I treat her the same way I treat me other daughters.*

8.7 Summary

This chapter presented the findings of data obtained in relation to the participants' fathering experiences and practices. When examined as a group, some similarities were evident, particularly in relation to their descriptions of relationships with parents and family of origin experiences including exposure to domestic violence as well as other forms of child maltreatment. The majority of men described fathering practices and attitudes that placed their children at risk of significant harm. When the narratives were examined in light of the framework, nuanced differences were evident between groups.

Men in the 'High Identification, High Control' group detailed rich narrative descriptions of what being a father meant to them and they described having a great deal invested in their role as fathers. They were most likely to have a traditional view of fatherhood, describing their role as the 'protector' and 'provider' and the motherhood role as 'primary carer' and 'nurturer.' They described being 'absent' from the day-to-day lives of their children due to work commitments, and having the least amount of involvement in their direct care. Their accounts of children contained frequent references to 'good children' as being those that obey and respect adults. Men also made references to feeling proud of their children's achievements and seemed to have expectations that children would 'work hard' and apply themselves in order to meet goals. The consequences of disobedience and disrespect included physical chastisement and abuse, as well as, outright paternal rejection in some cases. Men in this group were the most critical of their success as fathers.

Men in the 'High Identification, Low Control' group described fatherhood in superlative terms but lacked detail in discussing what fatherhood meant to them, described chaotic lifestyles characterized by substance dependency and/or mental health problems, and many had children who had been placed in out-of-home-care by child protective services. Many men in this group described being involved in remedial actions to demonstrate that they had 'changed' and were now in a position to have their children restored into their care. The role of the father as a 'friend/teacher/confidante' as most frequently described by men in contrast to the more traditional father role of provider and/or protector. Many men described being

absent in the lives of their children due to substance dependencies and/or mental health issues. Most men assessed their fathering abilities and history positively, although some men provided negative self-assessments.

Men in the 'Low Identification, High Control' group shared a common perception of themselves as 'good fathers' who had been misunderstood and maligned. They prioritised the relational aspects of being a father over and above more traditional fatherhood roles, described themselves as highly involved fathers who shouldered the bulk of paid and unpaid work for their families, when they were together. Even fathers who had children who had been placed in out-of-home-care perceived themselves as providing 'good enough' care to their children, and attributed problems to external sources such as their ex-partners, childhood traumas, and malice of their partners and ex-partners.

Men in the 'Low Identification, Low Control' group also described themselves as 'good fathers' and highlighted the relational aspects of being a father as paramount. Many described neglectful parenting practices such as taking children to risky environments when intoxicated or leaving young people to fend for themselves in independent living situations without adequate financial and/or emotional support. In describing their relationships with children, their narratives were dense in descriptions of children meeting their needs, rather than in descriptions of fathers meeting children's needs.

The next chapter will discuss the relevance of the findings presented in chapters five to eight. The findings will be discussed in light of the literature review, which documented the major findings of contemporary research in relation to the parenting practices of men who perpetrate domestic violence.

CHAPTER 9

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

9.1 Introduction

The preceding three data chapters are discussed in this section. The key findings of the inquiry are considered in relation to the existing bodies of knowledge relevant to the topic of the fathering of men who are domestically violent.

This study explored the following research question, 'What is the lived experience of fathering for men who are domestically violent?' The 17 men who participated in this study were fathers to at least one living child and had acknowledged that they had been physically, sexually and/or emotionally abusive towards the child's mother. All men were, or had been, participants of a behaviour change program for men who are domestically violent in NSW. This inquiry invited men to 'share their stories' about their fathering experiences and practices. The men's stories underscore the need to develop strategies that hold men accountable for their violence and diverse, yet harmful fathering practices.

This chapter discusses three key aspects of the findings in order to contribute to the existing literature on the subject. Firstly, it compares the main findings of the inquiry with the relevant bodies of literature, which were discussed in the literature review. The participants' accounts of their use of violence and other coercive, controlling behaviours, their impacts on women and children, attitudes supporting domestic violence and their fathering experiences and practices are compared to the findings of other relevant studies.

Secondly, this chapter describes how the key findings of each data chapter interconnect. The findings of the inquiry led to the development of an exploratory conceptual model of the fathering of domestically violent men, which pivoted on two central features: 1) men's diverse constructions of masculinity and 2) their accounts of control over domestic violence. The model conceptualizes these factors as being shaped by the intersection of gender with other aspects of men's identities, particularly their class, culture and health. A diversity of harmful

fathering practices was evident, and was contingent upon a complex interplay of these features of men's social locations.

The final purpose of this chapter is to discuss how the exploratory conceptual model based upon feminist intersectional understandings of domestic violence can be used to consider the diversity of domestically violent men's fathering experiences and practices. In particular, the relevance of adopting a feminist intersectional analysis to understanding men who use violence against women is discussed, particularly as this type of analysis has to date largely been employed to understand the diverse experiences of women who experience domestic violence, rather than to understand men who are domestically violent.

9.2 Links to the existing bodies of knowledge

a. Varieties of men

As previously discussed, the data was analysed through the lens of critical feminism, and was particularly influenced by an intersectional approach. A central tenet of this perspective is that 'people live multiple, layered identities and can simultaneously experience oppression and privilege.' (Dill, 1987, P. 175) From this location, constructing men who use violence against women solely as 'perpetrators' is viewed as unhelpful in violence prevention efforts. Through this lens, men's identities as they are shaped by the intersection of gender, class, culture and health are considered. The multiple ways in which masculinities are influenced by these other identity categories must be attended to in order to address men's violence against women.

As a cohort of men, although attempts were made to diversify the sample, there were similarities amongst the participants, which negate the generalizability of findings. For example, most of the participants in this study could be described as 'marginalized men.' Although it was not my intention to recruit such a sample, in the end it enabled the exploration of a population of fathers, who are not usually the subjects of social science research. Most had limited incomes, limited education, were unemployed or under employed, had significant substance dependencies, mental health issues and/or involvement in the criminal justice system. For example, most men were from socio-economically disadvantaged groups with

43 per cent indicating that they earned less than \$20 000 per year and nearly 80 per cent indicating that they earned less than \$40 000 per annum. About a third were unemployed and received government benefits. Only six men were permanently employed on a full time basis. Approximately half of the men cited year ten as their highest school level completed. A high percentage of men described substance abuse dependencies, mental health issues, and/or involvement in the criminal justice system. Although most men identified as Anglo-Australian, three men identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander.

The findings of this study support the theoretical conceptualization of masculinities apparent in the works of Connell (1987, 2000, 2005), Coles (2009), M. Kimmel, Hearn, and Connell (2005) and Messner (2004) who argue that there is not a universal form of masculinity, rather multiple, competing masculinities existing between and within groups. Although sharing a marginalized status, men had varying perceptions of what it meant to be a man, ideas that they brought into the fathering arena. For example, some men described identifying strongly with hegemonic masculinity as described by R. Connell and J. Messerschmidt (2005). These men described their variety of masculinity as bound up with the idea that men should be powerful, strong, competitive, in control, aggressive, physically capable, all elements considered to epitomize hegemonic masculinity in many cultures and contexts including, contemporary white, western contexts. However, not all men ascribed to this version of masculinity. In concert with Connell (1987) examples of subordinate or marginal masculinities were evidenced. Connell (1987) argues that these forms of masculinities emerge amongst those men who either reject or fail to live up to the hegemonic ideal. Structural constraints may contribute to the inability of some men to live up to hegemonic ideals. For example, men marginalized due to unemployment, lack of education, mental health issues, alcohol and/or drug dependencies may not possess the internal or external resources needed to access this variety of masculinity. Lacking the requisite resources to enable marginalized men to access the power and privileges gained by other men in the public arena, marginalized men may resort to asserting the power and privilege afforded to them as men, within patriarchal societies, by controlling women and children in the private sphere. In this way, marginalized men may experience oppression and subordination in the

public arena and at the same time, be oppressive and privileged in the domestic arena. This supports the findings of Krug, Dahlberg, Mercy, Zwi, and Lozano (2002) who argue that domestic violence is most prevalent when communities are in transition, when women take on non-traditional roles or gain employment, or when men are less able to meet culturally gendered expectations such as being providers and protectors.

b. Varieties of fathering by men who are domestically violent

Each man in this study had a unique and complex story to tell about his lived experience of fathering. The findings corroborate Perel and Peled (2008) who found complex and conflicting processes at play in relation to the fathering of men who use violence against women. In concert with the view of Featherstone and Peckover (2007), men in this study were not seen as 'one dimensional characters' constructed solely in relation to their potential for harm, but their accounts were also considered in relation to other aspects of their fathering identities. However, the findings of this study corroborate Harne's (2004) findings that men's constructions of masculinity, which directly contributed to violence against women, were bound up in their practices of fatherhood and directly contributed to significant harm against women, children and young people. Furthermore, in concert with Harne (2004), the findings of this study suggest that the potential for harm was a central feature of the fathering practices of men who use violence against women, and this is discussed later in the chapter.

The findings of this study support the view of fatherhood as an historically varying social construction influenced by social and cultural expectations of the particular period under review (Marsiglio & Cohan, 2000; E. H. Pleck & Pleck, 1997). Men ascribed a variety of meanings to their fathering role, which corresponded to the general body of knowledge on this subject in the fatherhood scholarship. This inquiry found differences between men's stated perceptions of their role as fathers. The intersection of gender, class, culture and health contributed to the diversity of men's perceptions of their fatherhood role. For example, Anglo-Australian men who identified strongly with hegemonic masculinity, used domestic violence instrumentally, were from higher socio-economic groups and were more likely to

prioritize providership and protectorship, themes associated with hegemonic masculinity and the 'traditional' fatherhood motif.

Men from marginalized groups, such as Indigenous men, poor men, men with mental health issues and/or substance dependencies did not define fatherhood, nor their fathering practices, from within the confines of the 'traditional' fatherhood motif. Instead, some of these men prioritized relational aspects of fatherhood, citing their desire to be 'friends' to their children and to be present and actively involved in their care. Conversely, others described having minimal practical or economic involvement in the lives of their children. Although there is a gap in the fathering literature about the fathering of men from marginalized groups, these findings do corroborate the limited research in this area. For example Pagelow and Pagelow (1984) found that the degree of active fathering differed amongst American men according to socio-economic status. Fathers from working class backgrounds were more likely to help with schoolwork, provide direct care, and engage in other active fathering behaviours, when compared with fathers from upper-middle classes. Stykes (2012) found that marginalized men, described as men with less education, income and/or from marginalized cultural groups in America identified less with the 'traditional' fatherhood role, when compared to other men. However, it should be noted that this research did not consider the perceptions of men who use violence against women specifically.

Many men described desiring meaningful relationships with their female partners and children. Furthermore, many described investing a great deal in their role as fathers and of wanting to succeed in this role, findings which have been corroborated in previous research (Fox & Benson, 2004; Fox et al., 2001; Perel & Peled, 2008). However, despite desiring meaningful relationships, men described a variety of complex factors, which they believed restrained them from engaging in respectful and non-abusive fathering and partnering practices. Jenkins (1990) describes such 'restraints,' as the traditions, habits, and/or beliefs that restrain violent men from behaving in a responsible and respectful way towards others. Restraints exist at the individual, developmental, relationship and socio-cultural levels. Men in this study described a multitude of 'restraints,' which supported their use of violence and

other coercive controlling tactics. For example men described holding violence supporting attitudes at all levels to justify their abuse of women and children. Men nominated a diverse array of explanations to justify their use of violence and other coercive behaviours, which attended to their desire to exculpate themselves from responsibility for their domestic violence. These reasons closely resembled the 'denials, minimizations and excuses' used by men in research conducted by Cavanagh et al. (2001).

Few studies have simultaneously explored men's dual perceptions of being fathers and being fathered (Rich, 1976) and fewer still have considered violent men's perceptions on these issues. This inquiry explored men's dual experiences and found that men described complex feelings about fatherhood, with many describing unsatisfactory relationships with their own fathers, whom they perceived had been largely absent and often abusive figures in their lives. This finding is corroborated by other research, which found a similar pattern of paternal absence and paternal abuse in the familial backgrounds of violent men (Dick, 2005; Dutton, 1998). These findings challenge psychopathological approaches, which construct psychosocial problems as originating within the context of 'insecure' mother-child attachment relationships, whilst often ignoring the relative contribution of fathering practices. This is especially salient as most men were of the opinion that their fathers were their most influential role models, in regards to providing them with a fathering template. Many men indicated that they felt uncertain about and deficient in their abilities as fathers. They attributed these beliefs to the legacy of their fathers, whom they perceived as abusive and/or neglectful. This raises the broader issue of the need for specialist fathering programs for men who use violence against women and children. Currently there are few programs in Australia and overseas, whose primary remit is to assess and enhance the fathering capacity of men who are domestically violent. As Stanley et al. (2012) argue, child protective services frequently refer this population to men's behaviour change programs, whose purpose is to address men's use of violent and other controlling behaviours. Despite addressing the subject of fathering to a certain degree, this is not the central focus of such programs. Further, as Costello (2006) argues men's behaviour change programs in Australia can collude with male oppression by prioritising 'men's behavioural change over the safety of women and children.'

(p. 2006) At the same time, child protection services often rely on the opinions of facilitators of men's groups to determine the potential risk of harm posed by fathers who are domestically violent, despite the fact that insufficient attention is paid to this area within the therapeutic group.

This study found that men's explanations for domestic violence pivoted on explanations of control and constructions of masculinity. For example, in concert with the results of another Australian study conducted by (James et al, 2002), men's descriptions of their violence could be located between accounts of being in control and using violence instrumentally to achieve desired goals and accounts of being out of control and 'losing it.' In contrast however, the findings of this inquiry suggest that men's beliefs about control may be bound up in their constructions of masculinity as opposed to being solely the result of psychological constructs such as impulse control. Nuanced differences in the fathering practices and experiences of participants were observed when these particular aspects of men's identities were considered.

c. Varieties of harm

In concert with feminist understandings of domestic violence, which problematize the binary construction of 'violent men' and 'fathers' as distinct and mutually exclusive categories (L. Kelly et al., 1994; L. Radford & Hester, 2001, 2006), the findings suggest that participants used their privileged positions as men and fathers to oppress both women and children. This research found that the use of violence and other controlling behaviours were central features of the men's fathering practices, which had the oppressive effect of controlling both women and children. These findings are consistent with the findings of other research examining the fathering practices of violent men (Bancroft & Silverman, 2002; Harne, 2011; Perel & Peled, 2008). However, the findings of this study suggest that domestically violent men's fathering may oppress women and children in different ways, which may result in different varieties of harm. For example, men who identified strongly with hegemonic masculinity and expressed a high level of control over their use of violence and other controlling behaviours, described an authoritarian fathering style characterized by rigidity, control, hierarchy and physical

punishment. On the other hand, men who identified less strongly with hegemonic masculinity and expressed a low level of control over violence and other controlling behaviours described a neglectful fathering style characterized by permissiveness, carelessness and irresponsibility. These different fathering styles posed significant, yet different, risks to women, children and young people, which have different implications to human services policies and practices generally, and to child protective services specifically. For example, the risks posed to children by a father who is violent to their mother, and who has a high identification with hegemonic masculinity, high income, is a member of a privileged cultural group and in good health may differ markedly to the risks posed by a father who is poor, has a history of drug dependence and mental health issues, is from a marginalized cultural group and who practices a subordinated masculinity. Child protective risk assessment procedures need to attend to the diversity of harm in the fathering practices of men who use violence against women and children. This would require child protection services to undertake comprehensive assessments of the fathering of men who perpetrate domestic violence.

Drawing upon an intersectional approach, the findings of this research support the view that patriarchy and its varying forms of oppression, may operate differently across class, culture and health status. This approach has gained much support in the area of working with survivors of domestic violence, and is increasingly being considered as an appropriate way to work with men who perpetrate violence against women (Almeida & Durkin, 1999; Sokoloff & Dupont, 2005). The findings of this research also suggest that although fathering experiences and practices were diverse, a common feature of violent men's fathering was the existence of a variety of practices that placed children and young people at risk of significant harm. Whilst this finding is similar to the findings of other similar research with violent fathers (Bancroft & Silverman, 2002; Harne, 2011; Perel & Peled, 2008), this study differed in that it found that there were varieties of harm, which related to class, culture, health status, men's constructions of masculinity and their beliefs about control over domestic violence.

Men's descriptions of the range of injuries inflicted on women and children were consistent with the range of injuries evident in the literature on the subject. The findings support the large body of evidence based upon feminist understandings, which problematize narrow definitions of domestic violence into discrete silos or categories of abuse types. Men in this study described using a wide and complex 'web of abuse' (Code, 1991; Morris, 2009), consisting of a constellation of co-existing tactics, including physical, sexual, psychological, emotional abuse and ill treatment that entrapped women and children. Participants described employing a common arsenal of tactics to oppress women and children. Many participants described being aware of, and actively utilizing such tactics purposefully to gain power over others in order to get what they wanted. Many men described privileging their own needs over the needs of others and of having limited concern for the impact of their oppressive behaviours.

Similar to recent research conducted in the U.K. with men who were domestically violent (Stanley et al., 2012), participants in this study described high levels of violence and abuse. For example, nearly half of the group had criminal convictions for domestic violence related offences, 65 per cent had been the subject of current or previous Apprehended Violence Orders, 59 per cent had long standing substance abuse histories, 29 per cent had been diagnosed with a mental health issue, and 88 per cent reported that they had a history of childhood abuse and/or neglect, which for approximately half, included exposure to domestic violence.

The premise that violent men will cease engaging in oppressive behaviours once they are educated about the impact of such behaviours on women and children has been the subject of vigorous debate in the literature. The findings of this inquiry do not support this premise. The majority of men demonstrated their awareness of the impact of domestic violence through their detailed descriptions of the harm that they had caused to the physical and mental health of women and children. Their descriptions in this regard closely resembled the extensive body of evidence in this regard. However, the fact that men were aware of the impact of their violence and control did not preclude their continued use of such tactics of

oppression. In fact men who identified strongly with hegemonic masculinity described using these tactics of oppression **precisely because** they achieved the desired results. For example, such men described using psychological and emotional abuse in order to subjugate women and undermine their position as mothers, so that they enshrined their patriarchal position at the 'top of the food chain.' The findings suggest that efforts to end men's violence against women are contingent upon more than simply educating men about the impact of violence and other controlling tactics on their children.

9.3 The interconnectivity of the key findings

This inquiry found a diverse range of fathering practices and experiences amongst men who used violent and other coercive behaviours to control women and children. In particular, the findings corroborate the findings of other research, which concludes that the fathering practices of domestically violent men place children and young people, directly and indirectly, at risk of significant harm. This inquiry makes a unique contribution to the literature because it viewed domestically violent men's fathering experiences and practices through the lens of gender, class, culture and health. By taking this feminist intersectional approach, men's fathering practices, and the risks that they exposed women, children and young people to were found to be diverse and contingent upon context and particularly their social location. Viewing efforts to end men's violence against women through this lens broadens the perspective, bringing into stark relief, the need to embark on a long-term project, which requires creative strategies that target multiple levels including the individual, familial, community and the socio-cultural.

This study found that the meanings men attributed to their fathering experiences, practices and use of domestic violence were shaped by contextual factors such as gender, class, culture and health. Of all of these aspects of men's identities however, this inquiry found that men's constructions of masculinities were central features, which shaped their fathering experiences, practices and use of violence and other coercive controlling behaviours. In particular, the study found that two central themes emerged from men's accounts. These themes were men's constructions of masculinity and their related beliefs about the level of

control they ascribed to their use of violence and other coercive controlling behaviours. Furthermore, the inquiry found that contextual aspects of men's identities such as class, culture and health, shaped their constructions of masculinity and their associated beliefs about control.

These findings suggest that the fathering experiences and practices of domestically violent men cannot be adequately understood when viewed through the lens of single axis explanations that focus solely on one aspect of identity. For example explanations that focus exclusively on gender, class, culture or any other single factor risk over simplifying human experience. This inquiry found that a complex interplay of factors shaped men's fathering experiences and practices. Furthermore, multiple forces influenced men's choices to use violence and other coercive controlling behaviours. Paramount amongst these factors was men's constructions of masculinity and the associated level of control they ascribed to their use of violence and other controlling behaviours. The findings support feminist understandings of domestic violence, which argue that men's choices to use violence are made within a socio-cultural context, which privileges men. In order to prevent violence against women, efforts must attend to this wider context.

9.4 Working with men through an intersectional feminist lens

Adopting an intersectional feminist approach does not preclude recognizing that violent men are ultimately responsible for their violence against women and children, nor does it preclude advocating for their fundamental human right to live in safety. Prevention and intervention strategies that are not based upon this recognition run the risk of exonerating men and further oppressing women. Letherby (2003) argues that it is essential to attend to violent men's experiences of systemic oppression, whilst maintaining the 'fundamental pre-requisite standing that, regardless of past and current experiences, men must take responsibility for their violence against women.' (page 8)

The findings of this study support the views of Hague et al. (2010) that male domination means different things when it is viewed through the lens of race, colonization and class

based oppression. This is especially salient to an analysis of power in the accounts of two Aboriginal men, both of whom described how they came to be the primary carers of their children. In both circumstances, children were removed from their mothers' care due to child protection concerns relating to alleged maternal substance abuse. Both men described subjecting their female partners to extreme, often potentially lethal and frequent domestic violence. The women's substance abuse was described as developing within this context. In compliance with the legal requirements regarding the placement of Aboriginal children, the Children's Court determined that the children be placed in the care of their nearest Aboriginal relatives, who were the natural parents of the violent men. In both instances, the violent men resided with their parents, and hence were permitted ongoing access to their children. Their parents provided day-to-day care and support to their grandchildren and to their sons, assisting them to eventually be successful in their restoration applications. In the mean time, contact between children and their mothers, the men's ex-partners, was largely determined by the men. Through an intersectional feminist lens, the multiple layers of inter-locking forces of oppression that bind women and children are obvious.

What is less obvious is how the different dimensions of men's lives are woven together to produce patterns of privilege and oppression. K. Smith et al. (2010) argues that more is known about how gender oppression intersects with other types of oppression for people who are members of subordinate groups, than is known about members of privileged groups. Recent American scholarship concludes that identity categories associated with privilege, for example being white, being male, being heterosexual, etc., can also be sources of subordination contingent upon context, intervening norms and stereotypes (E. MacDowell, 2013).

The subject of attending to the experiences of subordination for men who use violence against women and children is contested. For those who work with men who are violent, there is an inherent tension between attending to men's lived experiences of subordination and at the same time disallowing these experiences from being used to exculpate men from responsibility for choosing to use violence and other tactics to control women and children.

Fletcher (2009) argues that 'it is important that men's stories of racial, class and economic injustice are not summarily dismissed – the material effects of injustice on individual men's lives are very real.' (p. 111) At the same time, attending to these experiences must not detract from ensuring that the paramount consideration in any intervention with men who use violence must be to ensure the safety of women and children, over and above any other consideration.

Recent scholarship has extended the application of intersectionality theory to heterosexual American men of colour (Cooper, 1996) and underpins the '*Cultural Context Model*' of Almeida and Durkin (1999). This model was developed with couples who experienced marginalization due to low income and minority group status. This model was developed in response to a recognition that many services for survivors of domestic violence failed to address the intersectionalities of gender, race, class, culture and sexual orientation (Almeida & Durkin, 1999). The model incorporates ideas from P. Freire (1970) in particular 'conscientisation' or consciousness-raising, an approach for engaging people in a process of socio-political analysis through dialogue. This innovative model uses numerous strategies such as 'cultural consultants,' and 'culture circles' amongst others to engage survivors of domestic violence and those who use violence in efforts to challenge sexism and other forms of privilege-based oppression. Such efforts focus on identifying and challenging all forms of oppression, including sexism, racism, classism, and heterosexism. The model targets multiple levels in challenging oppression including the individual, familial and socio-political. Underpinning all efforts for change is the recognition that 'the personal is political' and that the process of change for individual men who use violence against women is part of a long-term project embedded within large-scale societal change. This approach has also been used specifically in research and intervention with men who use violence against women in Australia. For example, feminist intersectionality theory framed recent research examining the experiences of domestically violent refugee men, who had recently arrived in Australia (Rees & Pease, 2006).

9.5 Conclusions

This study is unique because it examined the fathering experiences and practices of marginalized Australian men who used violence and other coercive behaviours to control partners, ex-partners and children. This area has not been well attended to and could be described as a 'blind spot' in both the general fatherhood scholarship and in the scholarship specific to male perpetrators of domestic violence. The study is also unique because it examined men's lived experiences of fathering through a feminist intersectional framework.

Connell (2007) argues that it is crucial that a feminist informed systematic analysis of men emerge. This is especially salient given that the social sciences contain an abundance of studies of men conducted by men. Connell (2007) questions the legitimacy of such 'science,' particularly if it does not attend to the influence of contextual factors like the power and privilege afforded men in patriarchal society. Adrienne Rich (1987) wrote that 'objectivity is just male subjectivity made sacrosanct.' This statement is particularly relevant in this context, since studying domestically violent men without employing a feminist lens runs the risk of ignoring the wider context in which violence against women occurs, and of perpetuating the dynamics that already silence the voices of the oppressed.

Through a feminist lens it is clear that in order to improve initiatives to prevent and address violence against women, responsibility must be placed on the perpetrators, rather than the survivors of such crimes. Interventions with men who are violent towards women and children will only be effective if they hold men accountable for the consequences of their harmful attitudes and behaviours.

At the same time approaches to working with men who use violence need to attend to the diversity of their lived experiences. Indeed, approaches that do not attend to the diversity of human experience run the risk of over simplifying complex problems. As a profession, social work has a long tradition of developing and promoting holistic helping strategies that begin with understanding the person in-situ. Feminist approaches have a long tradition of examining the context of behaviour and influence of gender, culture, class and other aspects of identity in shaping the lived experiences of mainly, but not only, women.

Strategies based upon feminist understandings of domestic violence, which specifically elevate gender as the primary contributor to violence against women, whilst taking into account how gender is mediated through class, culture and health offer a positive way forward. Interventions with violent men, which are underpinned by feminist intersectional understandings, which simultaneously hold men accountable for their violence whilst attending to the diversity of their lived experiences offer hope for addressing violence against women. Historically these dual positions have been conceptualized in opposition to each other. For example, those who work with women who experience domestic violence have focused on promoting safety for victims and accountability for men who are violent. Those who work with men who use violence and have challenged them to become accountable for their abuse, have focused on trying to help men change by attending to their experiences. These goals do not need to stand as binaries, in opposition with each other as either/or propositions. It is possible for them to stand together as both/and propositions.

Such approaches need not excuse men's violence away as the inevitable vestiges of colonialism, racism or disability. On the contrary, feminist intersectional approaches grapple with complexity and strive to understand how men's decisions to use violence and other coercive behaviours are mediated through the complex intersection of gender with other aspects of their identity. Such an approach acknowledges the complexity of human experience, the way in which multiple identities can be held and can frame the meaning that we ascribe to our lived experiences. Such an approach stands in contrast to modernist notions of rigid uniform monolithic influences on human behaviour. Postmodern notions highlight the complexity, discontinuity, fluidity of identities and their influence in shaping human experience and behaviour. E. L. MacDowell (2013) argues that not applying an intersectional analysis to both men and women allows racist, ethnocentric, and heterosexist stereotypes to flourish. She further argues that 'addressing these connections holds the potential to advance anti-domestic violence work and further the purpose of intersectional inquiry, which is to describe and resist subordination.' (p. 535)

E. L. MacDowell (2013) also argues for ‘an extension of intersectional method and analysis that shifts the locus of the inquiry from the intersection of subordinating social categories to the interstices – the spaces in between converging categories of power. This shift will permit the analysis of relative privilege and subordination that adding the perpetrator to intersectional analysis requires. It will also create a space more conducive to drawing connections across categories of difference and incorporating the analysis of power more directly into intersectional analysis.’ (p. 535) Examining the spaces in-between can potentially contribute to the development of policies and practices that hold men accountable for their decisions to use violence against women and children and that attend to the wider social, political, cultural and economic contexts, in which men make such decisions.

A parallel can be drawn between the consequences of failing to mind the ‘blind spot’ when driving a vehicle and the consequences for families when social workers fail to attend to this space in their work to address violence against women and children. Both situations can result in accidents with serious and potentially lethal outcomes. Careful examination, especially at the intersections, offers the potential to prioritize safety by taking into account the whole road network.

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DEMOGRAPHIC DETAILS

Age

18 – 25

26 – 32

33 – 39

40 – 47

48 – 55

Ethnicity

Aboriginal/Torres Strait Islander

Non-Aboriginal/Torres Strait Islander, Australian born

Overseas born – please specify where you were born and how long you have lived in Australia

Marital Status

Married

Separated

Single

Living in defacto relationship

Divorced

Widowed

Currently involved in intimate relationship, not residing together

Highest Educational Level Achieved

School – Year 10 or below

High School Certificate – completed Year 12

TAFE qualifications

Trade certificate

University Undergraduate Degree

University Postgraduate Degree

Employment Status

Unemployed, receiving benefits

Unemployed, not receiving benefits

Employed, permanent full time

Employed, permanent part time

Employed, contract basis

Studying, full time basis

Studying, part time basis

If employed, what is your occupation? _____

Income Level

Less than \$20 000 per year

20 000 – 40 000 per year

40 001 – 60 000 per year

60 001 – 80 000 per year

80 001 – 100 000 per year

100 000 + per year

Appendix 2

Violence Assessment Index

Thinking of all the incidents that may have happened in the last 12 months and over the course of your relationship, please tell me how many times you have done each of the following:

Over last 12 months	Behaviour	Over course of relationship
_____	A. Restrained her from moving or leaving the room	_____
_____	B. Choked her or held your hand over her mouth	_____
_____	C. Punched her in the face	_____
_____	D. Forced her to do something against her will	_____
_____	E. Slapped her on the face, body, arms or legs	_____
_____	F. Pushed, grabbed or shoved her	_____
_____	G. Threatened to kill yourself	_____
_____	H. Punched her on the body, arms or legs	_____
_____	I. Used an object to hurt her	_____
_____	J. Kicked or punched her in stomach when pregnant	_____
_____	K. Threw things at her or about the room	_____
_____	L. Demanded sex when she didn't want it	_____
_____	M. Punched or kicked the walls or furniture	_____
_____	N. Threatened to hit the kids	_____
_____	O. Shouted at or threatened the kids	_____
_____	P. Forced her to have sex or some kind of sexual activity	_____
_____	Q. Tried to strangle, smother or drown her	_____
_____	R. Kicked her on the body, arms or legs	_____
_____	S. Shouted and screamed at her	_____
_____	T. Threatened her with an object or weapon	_____
_____	U. Kicked her in the face	_____
_____	V. Swore at her or called her names	_____
_____	W. Threatened to kill her	_____
_____	X. Twisted her arm	_____
_____	Y. Dragged her or pulled her by her hair	_____

Appendix 3

Injury Assessment Index

Thinking of all the incidents that may have happened in the last 12 months and over the course of your relationship, please tell me how many times you have done each of the following:

Over last 12 months	Injury	Over course of relationship
_____	A. Cut/s on her face	_____
_____	B. Bruise/s on her body	_____
_____	C. Burn/s anywhere on body	_____
_____	D. Lost hair/pulled out	_____
_____	E. Broken arm or leg	_____
_____	F. Cut/s on her arms or legs	_____
_____	G. Bruise/s on her face	_____
_____	H. Miscarriage	_____
_____	I. Blackout or unconsciousness	_____
_____	J. Bruise/s on her arms or legs	_____
_____	K. Cut/s anywhere on her body	_____
_____	L. Black eye/s	_____
_____	M. Internal injury	_____
_____	N. Lost or broken teeth	_____
_____	O. Sickness or vomiting	_____
_____	P. Bleeding on any part of face	_____
_____	Q. Broken ribs	_____
_____	R. Bleeding on body, arms or legs	_____
_____	S. Split lip	_____
_____	T. Sprained wrist or ankle	_____
_____	U. Broken nose, jaw or cheekbone	_____

Appendix 4 Controlling Behaviours Index – Part 1

In the **last 12 months**, how often have you done the following things to your partner, which means she must be careful?

	Never	rarely	sometimes	often	very often
a. Threaten her	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b. shout at her	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c. swear at her	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d. shout at the children	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
e. threaten to hurt the children	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
f. call her names	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
g. question her about her activities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
h. check her movements	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
i. have a certain look/mood	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
j. try to provoke an argument	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
k. criticise her	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
l. criticise her family or friends	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
m. put her down in front of others	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
n. deliberately keep her short of money	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Never rarely sometimes often very often

o. make her feel sexually inadequate	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
p. point at her threateningly	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
q. make to hit without doing so	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
r. restrict her social life	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
s. use kids in argument against her	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
t. threaten to hurt the pet	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
u. nag her	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Appendix 4 Controlling Behaviours Checklist – Part 2

In the **course of your relationship** how often have you done the following things to your partner, which means she must be careful?

	Never	rarely	sometimes	often	very often
a. Threaten her	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b. shout at her	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c. swear at her	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d. shout at the children	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
e. threaten to hurt the children	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
f. call her names	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
g. question her about her activities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
h. check her movements	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
i. have a certain look/mood	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
j. try to provoke an argument	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
k. criticise her	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
l. criticise her family or friends	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
m. put her down in front of others	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
n. deliberately keep her short of money	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Never rarely sometimes often very often

o. make her feel sexually inadequate	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
p. point at her threateningly	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
q. make to hit without doing so	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
r. restrict her social life	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
s. use kids in argument against her	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
t. threaten to hurt the pet	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
u. nag her	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



ABN 15 211 513 464

Marietta Coutinho
Deputy Manager
Human Research Ethics Administration

Human Research Ethics Committee

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NSW 2006 AUSTRALIA

Ref: IM/PR

12 February 2010

Dr Lesley Laing
Faculty of Education & Social Work
Faculty of Economics and Business
The University of Sydney
Email: l.laing@edfac.usyd.edu.au

Dear Dr Laing

I am pleased to inform you that the Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) at its meeting held on 2 February 2010 approved your protocol entitled **"The experience of fathering for men who are violent to their partners"**.

Details of the approval are as follows:

Ref No.: 02-2010/12408
Approval Period: February 2010 to February 2011
Authorised Personnel: Dr Lesley Laing
Dr Fran Waugh
Susan Heward-Belle

The HREC is a fully constituted Ethics Committee in accordance with the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Research Involving Humans-March 2007* under Section 5.1.29.

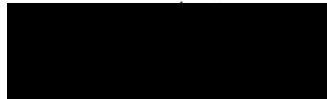
The approval of this project is **conditional** upon your continuing compliance with the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Research Involving Humans*. We draw to your attention the requirement that a report on this research must be submitted every 12 months from the date of the approval or on completion of the project, whichever occurs first. Failure to submit reports will result in withdrawal of consent for the project to proceed.

Chief Investigator / Supervisor's responsibilities to ensure that:

- (1) All serious and unexpected adverse events should be reported to the HREC as soon as possible.
- (2) All unforeseen events that might affect continued ethical acceptability of the project should be reported to the HREC as soon as possible.

- (3) The HREC must be notified as soon as possible of any changes to the protocol. All changes must be approved by the HREC before continuation of the research project. These include:-
 - If any of the investigators change or leave the University.
 - Any changes to the Participant Information Statement and/or Consent Form.
- (4) All research participants are to be provided with a Participant Information Statement and Consent Form, unless otherwise agreed by the Committee. The Participant Information Statement and Consent Form are to be on University of Sydney letterhead and include the full title of the research project and telephone contacts for the researchers, unless otherwise agreed by the Committee and the following statement must appear on the bottom of the Participant Information Statement. *Any person with concerns or complaints about the conduct of a research study can contact the Deputy Manager, University of Sydney, on +612 8627 8176 (Telephone); +612 8627 8177 (Facsimile) or ro.humanethics@sydney.edu.au (Email).*
- (5) Copies of all signed Consent Forms must be retained and made available to the HREC on request.
- (6) It is your responsibility to provide a copy of this letter to any internal/external granting agencies if requested.
- (7) The HREC approval is valid for four (4) years from the Approval Period stated in this letter. Investigators are requested to submit a progress report annually.
- (8) A report and a copy of any published material should be provided at the completion of the Project.

Yours sincerely,



Associate Professor Ian Maxwell
Chair
Human Research Ethics Committee

cc: Susan Heward-belle, email: shew8551@usyd.edu.au

Encl. Approved Participant Information Statement, Version 2 17/12/09
Approved Participant Consent Form, Version 2 17/12/09
Approved Interview Schedule
Approved Child Behavior Checklist for Ages 2-3
Approved Child Behavior Checklist for Ages 4-18
Approved Violence Assessment Index (VAI)
Approved Injury Assessment Index
Approved Controlling Behaviors Checklist
Approved Demographic Details
Approved Recruitment Advertisement



From a Father's Perspective Research Project

I am a PhD student at the University of Sydney conducting research in the area of domestic violence. I hope to learn about the fathering experience of men who are participating in Domestic Violence programs.

You are invited to participate in this study if :

- **You are a father who has resided in the home with your child or children for at least 1 year**
- **You have been involved in the parenting of your child or children.**

Participation would involve one interview of about 1 hour and the completion of some questionnaires.

To find out more about the study please call **Susan Heward-Belle** or **Lesley Laing** on **9351-4091**

If you are interested in participating please leave your name and phone number below.:

Name

Phone Number

Appendix 7

DR LESLEY LAING
SENIOR LECTURER

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION STATEMENT

RESEARCH PROJECT

Title: The experience of fathering for men who are violent to their partners

1. What is the study about?

The study is looking at the fathering experiences of men who are participating in Domestic Violence Programs. We hope to learn about their views about what it is like to be a father and about the impact of domestic violence on their child(ren).

2. Who is carrying out the study?

The study is being conducted by Susan Heward-Belle and will form the basis for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy at The University of Sydney under the supervision of Dr Lesley Laing.

3. What does the study involve?

If you decide to participate, I will arrange a suitable and private time and place to meet with you to discuss some questions and to complete some questionnaires. To ensure that your viewpoints are accurately recorded, I would like to audiotape the interview, with your permission. The tapes will be transcribed. The audiotapes and written notes will be stored in a locked cabinet at the co-researcher's residence, which is fully secure and alarmed. At the conclusion of the study, the audiotapes and written notes will be stored at the University for a period of 7 years, after which time the audio tapes will be erased and the written notes shredded.

4. How much time will the study take?

The interview will take approximately 1 hour. Completing the questionnaires will take approximately 30 minutes.

5. Can I withdraw from the study?

Being in this study is completely voluntary – you are not under any obligation to consent and – if you do consent – you can withdraw at any time without affecting your relationship with the University of Sydney or LifeCare Counselling Service.

You may stop the interview at any time if you do not wish to continue, the audio recording will be erased and the information provided will not be included in the study.

6. Will anyone else know the results?

All aspects of the study, including results, will be strictly confidential and only the researchers will have access to information on participants except as required by law. For example information about risk of serious harm to a child or young person maybe required to be reported to the Department of Community Services. A report of the study may be submitted for publication but individual participants will not be identifiable in such a report.

7. Will the study benefit me?

Although your participation in the study may not be of immediate benefit to you, the research will increase the knowledge and skills of professionals working with men who perpetrate domestic violence which could in turn benefit you, as more effective intervention strategies may be developed.

8. Can I tell other people about the study?

You are free to discuss your experience of participating in the research study with other people.

9. What if I feel upset after the interview?

Participants could experience feelings of guilt, anxiety or stress associated with the material discussed. In the event that you feel upset or want to talk with someone after the interview, arrangements can be made for you to speak with a suitably qualified LifeCare counsellor.

10. What if I require further information?

When you have read this information, Susan Heward-Belle will discuss it with you further and answer any questions you may have. If you would like to know more at any stage, please feel free to contact Dr Lesley Laing, 9351-4054.

11. What if I have a complaint or concerns?

Any person with concerns or complaints about the conduct of a research study can contact the Manager, Ethics Administration, University of Sydney on (02) 8627-8175 (Telephone); (02) 8627-8180 (Facsimile) or human.ethics@sydney.edu.au .

This information sheet is for you to keep.



Appendix 8

DR LESLEY LAING
SENIOR LECTURER

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

I,(PRINT NAME), give consent to my participation in the research project.

Title: The experience of fathering for men who are violent to their partners

In giving my consent, I acknowledge that:

1. The procedures required for the project and the time involved have been explained to me, and any questions I have about the project have been answered to my satisfaction.
2. I have read the Participant Information Statement and have been given the opportunity to discuss the information and my involvement in the project with the researcher/s.
3. I understand that I can withdraw from the study at any time without affecting my relationship with the researcher(s) or the University of Sydney now or in the future.
4. I understand that my involvement is strictly confidential and no information about me will be used in any way that reveals my identity.
5. I understand that being in this study is completely voluntary – I am not under any obligation to consent.
6. I understand that I can stop the interview at any time if I do not wish to continue, the audio recording will be erased and the information provided will not be included in the study.
7. I understand that by participating, there will be a report published, and that every care will be taken to de-identify me.
8. I understand that participation in the study could contribute to experiencing guilt, anxiety or stress and that every care will be taken to arrange a consultation with suitably qualified LifeCare counselors upon my request.
9. I consent to:

a. Audio taping	YES	NO
b. Receiving feedback	YES	NO
10. If you answered YES to the "Receiving Feedback Question," please provide your details ie mailing address, email address.

Signed:
Name:
Date:

Faculty of Education and Social Work The University of Sydney NSW 2006 Australia
T +61 2 9351-4054 F +61 2 9351-5027 www.usyd.edu.au
ABN 15 211 513 464 CRICOS 00026A

Appendix 9: Qualitative Research Instrument

Thank you for volunteering your time and agreeing to speak to me today. As you know this research is about men's experiences of fathering and about their views about the impact of domestic violence on their children.

In terms of the format of our time together, I want to spend some time talking to you about your experience of being a father and then I will ask you to fill in some forms. After that I will return and talk to you again about your experience of participating in the research project and to see if there is anything else that you would like to tell me that may help me to understand your views.

Let me remind you that what you tell me today will be confidential and will only be used for the reasons specified in the consent form that you signed. If at any time you wish to stop the interview, please let me know and I will cease the interview straight away.

There will be someone available after the interview to provide you with debriefing in the event that you feel upset or distressed by the material that we talk about. Do you have any questions so far? If not, let's move on to some topics that relate to your views about being a father. The following topic areas and 'anchor points' will direct the interview.

Relationships with child(ren)

1. I am particularly interested in finding out about your relationship with your child (ren). Can you tell me a bit about that?
2. How would you describe your relationship with your child(ren)?
3. What do you like about this relationship?
4. Do you have any concerns about this relationship?
5. How do you spend your time with your child(ren)?
6. How would you describe your child's relationship with her/his mum? siblings? other family members? friends?

Views on fathering

1. What is fatherhood like for you?
2. What do you like about being a father?
3. What are your strengths as a father?
4. What, if anything, do you find challenging?
5. Is there anything that you would do differently as a father?

Impact of domestic violence on father-child relationship

1. Can you tell me how you think that domestic violence may have affected your relationship with your child(ren)?
2. Does domestic violence affect children? If so, how?

That brings us to the end of the interview. Is there anything else that you would like to add that might help me understand your experience of fathering or how you think that domestic violence may have affected your child(ren)?

Thank you for volunteering your time and sharing your views with me. Your participation in the research is appreciated. I would now like to ask you to fill in a few questionnaires for me that will help me to understand things more fully. These are:

1. Demographic Information Form
2. Violence Assessment Index
3. Injury Assessment Index
4. Controlling Behaviours Index

After participants have finished the aforementioned forms, the researcher will return to the room and have a conversation with the participant that will focus on the following areas:

1. Thanks for completing the questionnaires. Having finished them, are there any other thoughts that you might have about your experiences of fathering or your views on how domestic violence may have affected your child(ren)?
2. I'm interested in your thoughts and views on participating in the research project. How are you feeling? Do you feel the desire or need to debrief further with a LifeCare counsellor?
3. Are you interested in receiving any feedback about the research project? I can provide you with a one page summary if you would like.

Appendix 10: Demographic details of participants

<u>Age (in years)</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
26-32	8	47
33-39	4	24
40-47	5	29
TOTAL	17	100
<u>Ethnicity</u>		
Aboriginal/Torres Strait Islander	3	20
Non-Aboriginal/Torres Strait Islander/Australian born	11	73
Overseas born	1	2
TOTAL	2	12
	17	100
<u>Education</u>		
School Certificate	8	53
High School Certificate	2	1
Trade	4	3
University	1	Less than 1
Unassigned	2	1
TOTAL	17	100
<u>Income</u>		
Less than 20 000	6	43
20 001 - 40 000	5	36
40 001 - 60 000	2	14
60 001 - 80 000	0	0
80 001 - 100 000	1	Less than 1
Unassigned	3	21
TOTAL	17	100
<u>Employment</u>		
Permanent Full Time	6	35
Permanent Part Time	4	24
Unemployed, Receiving Benefits	5	29
Unemployed, not Receiving Benefits	1	Less than 1
Unassigned	1	Less than 1
TOTAL	17	100
<u>Marital Status</u>		
Married	2	12
Married but separated	2	12
Not married, separated	3	18
Single	4	24
Defacto	6	35
TOTAL	17	100



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