Australian Domestic & Family Violence Clearinghouse

Engaging Men in Men's Violence Prevention: Exploring the Tensions, Dilemmas and Possibilities

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INTRODUCTION

What is the role of men in addressing men's violence against women? In recent years, there have been numerous articles, discussion papers, books, conferences and government policy statements advocating the greater involvement of men in working against men's violence and towards gender equality. The involvement of men in violence against women prevention movements has become institutionalised in the philosophies and policies of many international organisations (Flood 2005). In the Australian context, VicHealth (2007a) have also noted the recent shift from focusing on men as perpetrators of violence to involving them as partners in primary prevention strategies. A number of writers have argued that in associating men with violence, we should also ensure that men are part of the solution (Lang 2002a; Ruxton 2004; Flood 2005).

The aim of this discussion paper is to raise some questions and to encourage debate about the impact on gender equality of increasing men's involvement in campaigns to end men's violence against women. To address this issue, I have conducted a critical review of the literature on working with men as partners in violence prevention projects. I have also located this literature within theoretical debates about men's privilege, men's interests and men's resistance to change. Finally, I consider the potential costs and benefits of working with men in projects to end men's violence, with particular attention to the limitations of strength-based and male-positive approaches to engaging men and the need to formulate principles to lessen the dangers of men's involvement.

It is beyond the scope of this paper to evaluate existing partnerships between women and men in men's violence prevention or to explore the workings, significance or impact of particular programs. I make no claims about whether particular programs have succumbed to or avoided the dangers I discuss. The aim of the paper is to encourage participants in such programs to critically reflect upon their policies, conceptual frameworks and practices in light of the issues raised. I am hesitant about raising some of these questions because I know that men's involvement in this work is still relatively rare. However, I think that naming the dangers and potential misappropriations of this work is part of the process of improving and strengthening such projects.

Thus, while I support the involvement of men in violence prevention, I believe that particular conditions need to be met and that specific principles need to be adopted to address the potential problems associated with such involvement. Furthermore, I believe that the theoretical premises underpinning men's violence prevention need to be based upon both feminist theory and the critical scholarship on men and masculinities. I further emphasise that we should be careful not to promise too much from men's involvement and should be alert to the pressures for cooption that such involvement can elicit.

I share the following vignette to illustrate how easily the processes of collusion among men can take place.

1 Bob Pease is Chair in Social Work

I am attending a men's breakfast to present a paper on men's responsibility for challenging men's violence, to launch the White Ribbon Campaign against men's violence in a regional city in Victoria. I look around me at the 50 or so men present. I recognise a few familiar faces of human service workers who I think will be sympathetic to the message I am about to give. However, the majority of the men present are prominent local businessmen and senior officials and politicians in local and state government politics. They may be less familiar with the issue of men's responsibility for violence. Arrangements have been made for a senior political figure to introduce me and say a few words of support. In his brief speech, he manages to avoid mentioning men as perpetrators and women as victims of violence at all. He is against all violence he tells us, whoever it is perpetrated by and whoever is victimised.

It is clear that he is very uncomfortable with a gendered analysis. I am about to contradict his view and talk about the problems with gender neutral terms for describing violence. How can you get to the heart of the problem, I will say, if you are not prepared to name the problem correctly? I realise immediately that we are speaking at cross-purposes. I play Judy Small's song on the Montreal massacre to set the scene and I give my speech, trying to generate an emotional response to the consequences of men's violence. A few men come up to me afterwards, saying how much they appreciated what I had to say.

As I walk away from the event, however, I am uncomfortable because I realise that an opportunity was lost to engage the senior political figure with the problems I had about his comments. I feel that by not challenging him publicly, I have just colluded with his views, even though I contradicted them in my speech.

THE ROLES OF MEN IN VIOLENCE PREVENTION

What does working with men in violence prevention mean? There are a range of diverse entry points and forms of involvement in interventions with men. The key questions are: which men to work with and at what level.

As men's behaviour change facilitators

In the Australian context, the focus of most discussions about working with men is related to men's roles as men's behaviour change facilitators. Men's behaviour change programs are now recognised by government as a key intervention into men's violence (Oberon 2006). Earlier concerns about the tendency of these programs to individualise and pathologise men's violence, and fears that they would redirect funds away from women's services, seem to have faded from public debates in some parts of the country in recent years. I have argued elsewhere, however, that these concerns have not been fully addressed by many of these programs (Pease 2004/2005; Pease 2007a).

Working with men who are violent to their partners is perceived by many men in the human services as the best role that they can play to address men's violence. This role fits in with their professional education and training as social workers, psychologists, and counsellors. Although these men sometimes present themselves as being in the forefront of violence prevention, because they are working with the men who perpetrate violence, it is increasingly recognised that they are working at the tertiary level rather than at the primary prevention level (Pease 2004).

As anti-violence campaign organisers and activists

Men have a long history of involvement in social change campaigns and public action against men's violence. There have been Men Against Sexism groups in Australia since the 1970s (Pease 1997). In the 1990s, Men Against Sexual Assault (MASA) groups were operating in most Australian states (Pease 1995). However, attempts to mobilise men as activists and organisers in grassroots anti-violence campaigns have been small and scattered. MASA groups suffered the same fate as many volunteer-based, grassroots groups, losing members and momentum after several years. One legacy of these groups, however, was the White Ribbon Campaign.

The White Ribbon Campaign was established by a group of men in Canada in 1991, on the second anniversary of a massacre of fourteen women in Montreal by a lone gunman. The White Ribbon Campaign encourages

non-violent men to wear white ribbons as an expression of their public opposition to men's violence. In 2003, the Australian office of the United Nations Development Fund for Women, UNIFEM, partnered with men and men's organisations to make this a national campaign in Australia. It is a good example of a community-based intervention by men, which is now supported by federal government funding[2] and involves full-time salaried program managers and coordinators. With the shift to government funding, however, there appears to be a diminishing focus on men's responsibility both in the organising of the campaign and in the wearing of the ribbons. Women are often the key organisers and the focus has now shifted to encouraging 'everyone' to wear ribbons. While this could be seen as an appropriate alliance between feminist women and profeminist men, it can also undercut the message of men's responsibility for violence. In Canada, the White Ribbon Campaign has been criticised for colonising and appropriating women's experiences (Spark 1994; Goldrick-Jones 2004), and some feminists have raised concerns about re-centring men in such anti-violence work (Marchese 2008).

As role models in community education

Men have also been involved as role models in government-sponsored community education and media campaigns against men's violence. The NSW government-funded Violence Against Women: It's Against All the Rules campaign is a good Australian example of involving men as role models in community education. However, the finding that 91% of target group respondents would not talk with their male peers about violence against women, irrespective of the campaign message (Cheetham 2002), was discouraging. There is evidence that media-based efforts can produce some change in men's attitudes towards violence against women (Flood and Pease 2006). However, such evaluations point to the challenges and limitations of media campaigns for changing men's cultural attitudes towards violence against women, given that the patriarchal psyche is so deeply embedded in men's subjectivities, and is reinforced by laws, customs and institutions that counter the messages conveyed (Fabiano et al. 2003).

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The use of men as role models in community education campaigns is usually premised on the theoretical underpinnings of sex role theory that posits that inequalities between women and men can be eliminated by giving women and men more varied role models. The argument is that men's dominance, aggression and violence can be challenged by teaching them to be more egalitarian and gentle. However, as I have written elsewhere, this approach under-emphasises the economic and political power that men exercise over women and cannot explain men's resistance to change (Pease 2007b).

As workshop facilitators

Workshops and educational programs in workplaces and community groups where specific groups of men are targeted is another form of intervention that has gained wider support in recent years. In the 1990s, I facilitated Patriarchy Awareness Workshops with men, which explored analyses of patriarchal culture, men's experience of power and domination, alternatives to patriarchal power, the impact of men's domination on women, and social and personal blocks to men's ability to listen to women (Pease 1997). More recently, following high profile sexual assaults by footballers, athletes have been specifically targeted with facilitated workshops and seminars (Heenan 2005).

As facilitators of boys' programs

Numerous programs have been developed in recent years to work with boys and young men in schools and family support agencies. However, these education programs are scattered and under-developed, and few have been evaluated. Those boys' programs concerned with violence prevention often cite research that suggests a relationship between witnessing violence as a child and becoming a perpetrator of violence (Mulroney 2003). This research is used to support the cycle of violence thesis and to promote therapeutic and educational interventions with boys (Indermaur 2001). Many of these programs focus on developing boys' self-esteem and communication skills, rather than on feminist understandings of masculinity, power and the privileged status of boys in gender relations (Mills 2001). Thus, the cause of men's violence is located in the developmental and psychological aspects of the individual perpetrator (Boyd 2007). As this approach has been addressed in detail in an earlier Issues Paper (Laing 2000), I will not explore it further here.

As policy makers and program administrators

Around the world, most political, cultural and religious leaders who are in positions to influence change are men (Connell 2003a). However, socially and politically powerful men are rarely the focus of violence prevention campaigns, even though they are the 'gatekeepers' of

2 In 2008 the Labor federal government announced funding of $1 million over four years for the White Ribbon Campaign.

change (Connell 2005). The targets of intervention are more often men as consumers of services, with little attention given to working with men as policy makers and service providers. At this level, the aim would be to gain the support of men in positions of power. This involves working with men in their professional capacities as key decision makers who are able to introduce policies and programs to take action against men's violence.

Good examples of this are the Religion and Family Harmony project in Western Sydney, which has engaged religious and community leaders in the prevention of men's violence for a number of years (Venkatraman 2008), and a domestic violence project run by Jewishcare in Eastern Sydney during 2007 and 2008, which works with rabbis, male doctors and lawyers to speak out against men's violence. These initiatives have sought to engage religious and cultural leaders in the project, to raise their awareness and understanding of issues of violence against women for their communities, to encourage and support them to act as spokespeople on these issues, and to connect them with services and agencies to promote referral for those affected by violence.

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As interventionist bystanders

We know that the majority of non-violent men do not challenge other men who are violent (Cheetham 2002). Most men who are not violent believe that men's violence is not an issue that concerns them. They are quick to ask why, as they are not violent, they should get involved. Challenging other men's violence is not something most men feel comfortable with. Banyard et al. (2004) argue that part of the strategy is for men to be able to view themselves as something other than perpetrators or potential perpetrators of violence. They emphasise the role that profeminist men can play in promoting a sense of 'bystander responsibility' that encourages men to intervene in specific instances to prevent violence from happening. We must be careful, however, not to assume that men who speak out against other men's violence are necessarily free from violence in their own lives.

As egalitarian and non-violent men in families

We are often reminded that most men are not physically violent to their partners. However, most men are likely to have engaged in psychological or verbal abuse at some stage in their lives (Lang 2003a). Consequently, men are encouraged to reflect upon whether their own behaviours and attitudes are reproducing or challenging violence. The focus is on transforming gender relations and men's beliefs and attitudes as individuals within families: to engage men in their roles as husbands, brothers, sons and fathers to enable them to see the connections for them personally (Katz 2006). As men recognise the impact of violence on the women in their lives, they are often more able to feel the issue in their hearts and not just intellectualise it in their heads.

Many of these roles are evident in recent VicHealth funded projects (VicHealth 2007c) encompassing work with the media, work with culturally and linguistically diverse communities, work with men and boys, work in local and regional communities, and school-based projects. While all these projects undertake important interventions to reduce the levels of men's violence, I have some concerns about referring to programs in schools, media campaigns and work with men as forms of 'primary prevention'.

The primary prevention level is seen more often than not as working on the attitudes, values and beliefs of men that underpin violence, rather than on interventions into structurally unequal gender relations. Mulder (1999) has noted that one the biggest challenges in preventing violence against women is how to formulate a conceptual framework for understanding the phenomena. For some years now, the public health epidemiological model of primary, secondary and tertiary prevention has become prominent in informing intervention strategies (Wolf & Jaffe 1999). In the original health education context, primary prevention focuses on community education (Mulder 1999) and the introduction of new values and thinking processes in relation to the health issue being addressed (Wolfe & Jaffe 1999). It is understandable that when this conceptual model was applied to violence against women, primary prevention would focus on attitudes and behaviour change. While some health promotion frameworks do acknowledge structural factors, they are less successful in addressing these in their interventions. Given the gendered power inequality in society and the prevailing social structures which reproduce men's violence, Mulder (1999) has questioned whether these public health concepts, which have their origins in the epidemiological and bio-medical model, will be successful in preventing men's violence against women.

When we frame social problems in terms of immediately feasible intervention strategies, we are engaged in a political act of accepting prevailing assumptions and ideas about the problem. Government departments and government-funded organisations will necessarily be constrained by legislative, organisational and policy requirements and such expectations will shape how they address the problem at hand (Eakin et al. 1996). In a university setting, I have relatively more freedom to

question these assumptions and to raise some questions about the ideas embedded in current policies. As primary prevention programs against men's violence rarely seem to move beyond community awareness-raising about violence (Korn et al. 1996), we need to contextualise the wider context of men's violence prevention.

THE STATE CONTEXT OF MEN'S INVOLVEMENT IN VIOLENCE PREVENTION

The role of men in violence prevention must be considered against the wider policy context of government intervention against men's violence. It is notable that there are no policies that explicitly address men's privilege and the potential roles men might play in challenging men's violence and promoting gender equality.

One of the great successes of the women's movement in Western countries has been gaining community and government recognition of men's violence against women as a social problem (Bush 1992). As has been well documented, however, the goals of many government-funded women's shelters became institutionalised and, as a consequence, men's violence was redefined again as a medical and psychological problem (Walker 1990; Breckenridge 1999). It is difficult to maintain the progressive representation of violence as a socio-political problem when governments construct service responses with professionals as intervention experts. This governmental and professional context has major implications for the current focus on working with men.

Gender mainstreaming policies of the state shifted the focus to men and masculinities in government service provision.

Phillips (2006) has documented how, during the years of the Howard Government, national domestic violence policy moved from a gender-based analysis towards individualised and relational understandings of men's violence. She documents how, notwithstanding the recruitment of feminist bureaucrats, the feminist socio-political analysis of men's violence was co-opted by the state. In all the policy documents and discussion papers that emerged from Canberra during the Howard years, 'men's violence against women' became replaced by the gender neutral framing of 'domestic violence'. Phillips demonstrates how the strategy of 'helping men' was part of the redefinition of men's violence as family dysfunction. Certainly, it is clear that Partnerships Against Domestic Violence gave priority to commissioned research and consultancy concerned with perpetrator programs and working with men. There also appears to be a link between the emphasis on perpetrator programs and the rise of other men's policies and services (Phillips 2006).

Gender mainstreaming policies of the state shifted the focus to men and masculinities in government service provision (Pease 2006b). A number of male writers have raised the issue of whether gender mainstreaming adequately took men and masculinities into account; they advocate the importance of mainstreaming men to ensure that men and masculinities are integrated into gender mainstreaming (Ruxton 2004; Flood 2005). What does taking men and masculinities into account mean? If gender mainstreaming is to be successful, it means that men's behaviour needs to change. One of the progressive implications of gender mainstreaming is that the project of promoting gender equality becomes the responsibility of men as well as women (Coles 2001). However, there is a concern that the focus on men may shift the debates away from women's interests, and a danger that men and women will be treated as facing similar obstacles.

The concept of gender mainstreaming is viewed critically by many women's organisations in Australia because it has legitimated the closing down of women's policy units and women-specific services. The rationale was that if gender was mainstreamed, then specific policy units and services concerned with women's interests were no longer needed (Bacchi 2004). These criticisms were made in the context of a Liberal government which had downgraded the existing women's policy machinery (Sawyer 2003) and relocated the Canberra-based Office of the Status of Women from the Prime Minister's Department to the Department of Family and Community Services.

Because gender mainstreaming created a space for men to claim victim status, men's rights activists used it to argue that Australian men were victimised by Commonwealth policies in the areas of family law, domestic violence and health care. Gender mainstreaming thus inadvertently created support for the men's rights discourse about men as victims and led to a retreat by the Australian government under John Howard to move away from gender equality. For example, in 2006 significant changes were introduced to Australian family law with strong messages about equal shared parenting following separation, and an emphasis on dispute resolution between separating parties before or instead of attending court for family law cases. Others have argued that the 2006 changes have significant implications for adult and child victims of family violence (e.g. Braaf and Sneddon 2007; Brown and Alexander 2007).

With the 2007 election of a new Labor federal government, there may now be a revision of this strategy. The Australian Government has established a National

Council to Reduce Violence Against Women and Children which will oversee the development of a National Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women and Children (Australian Government Media Release 2008). It is interesting to note the shift in language from 'prevention' to 'reduction', which may mean that the interventions will not promise more than they can deliver. It will be important for those developing this policy and intervention plan to keep gender at the forefront of policy discussions.

We should be careful, however, not to have too optimistic a view of the state as an instrument for social change in relation to gender. We know that democratic governments embody gender inequalities and we should thus not assume that enlightened policy makers will simply move towards gender equality (Daly 2005). The state is an arena of conflict over gender; different expressions of gender interests will be advanced by different policy actors. Men's violence prevention involving men must be viewed in this context.

Connell (2003b) identifies six key policy and cultural shifts that need to occur before men's violence against women can be adequately addressed:

- reaching gender democratisation in the state
- achieving equal employment opportunities
- ending misogyny and homophobia in the media
- gaining equal representation by women in agencies
- ending gender discrimination
- creating anti-discrimination norms in public culture.

It is thus important to emphasise that ending men's violence should not be regarded as a stand alone policy issue. Furthermore, men's violence against women is increasingly recognised as a human rights issue (Merry 2006). In this context, it would be appropriate for the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission to expand its engagement with men's violence beyond Indigenous family violence to highlight violence prevention more broadly as a human rights issue.

Senior government ministers and policy makers (most of whom are male) need to demonstrate that they have the political will to end men's violence against women. Small poorly funded specialist violence against women units, important as they are, do not have the mandate or the necessary resources to develop structural interventions that will make a substantial difference. This means that government must, in the first instance, make men's violence against women a higher priority by developing national prevention policies and by providing more financial resources to combat it.

ARGUMENTS FOR INVOLVING MEN IN VIOLENCE PREVENTION

The VicHealth Violence Prevention Framework (2007a) provides a threefold rationale for involving men in violence prevention efforts: intimate partner violence is largely perpetrated by men; constructions of masculinity play a crucial role in shaping some men's perpetration of physical and sexual assault; and men have a positive role to play in helping to end men's violence. This rationale provides the basis for involving men as partners in violence prevention.

In this context, Flood (2005/06) identifies what he sees as the main reasons for using men to educate other men:

- Men's attitudes and behaviour are shaped in powerful ways by their male peers.
- Male educators act as role models for other men by practising non-violent expressions of masculinity and demonstrating respect for women.
- Men possess an insider's knowledge of the workings of masculinity.
- Men are likely to be perceived by other men as more credible and thus they will be listened to more.
- When men work with men, they are demonstrating responsibility for action against men's violence against women and thus they lessen the demands on women to challenge men's violence.

Flood (2007) argues that we will only succeed in ending men's violence if we involve men. In working with men, however, we must separate out the issue of men as targets for violence intervention, from men as partners in violence prevention. There is no question that strategies to end men's violence against women have to engage with men. This is a different issue from involving men as partners in the violence prevention process.

A part of the rationale for involving men in violence prevention is that men will benefit from being involved. Flood (2005) says that it is in men's interests to end men's violence against women and VicHealth (2007a) also maintains that men have a stake in ending men's violence. This is one of the typical rhetorical appeals made to men about why they should be involved. It is simply not enough, however, to claim that ending gender-based violence presents benefits to men as Ferguson et al. (2003) and others proclaim. The implications of the claimed benefits and gains for men need to be examined.

Profeminist anti-violence advocates, such as Ruxton (2004) and Flood (2005) acknowledge that society is patriarchal

and that ending violence against women will necessarily involve removing men's unjust privileges. However, many also believe that involving men in violence prevention is a win–win situation where men will benefit 'on the social, psychological and emotional level by opening up options for behaviours and beliefs' (Lang 2002a, p.14). Jalmert (2003) writing in the Swedish context, believes that men are mistaken in regarding gender inequalities as being beneficial for them, arguing that men are also victims and losers in current gender relations. Consequently, he believes that men will be motivated towards violence prevention and gender equality to gain better lives.

It is clear that there are costs for men, as well as benefits, in adhering to patriarchal gender relations. The consequences for men of dangerous workplaces, over-commitment to work and limited time with partners and children have been well documented. Connell (2003a) talks about constructing gender equality as 'a positive project for men'. In a paper presented at the United Nations Expert Group Meeting on The Role of Men and Boys in Achieving Gender Equality, she provides an outline of positive reasons why men might change:

- personal wellbeing (involving the experience of negative effects on men's health and wellbeing in the current system)
- relational interests (based on men's relationships with women as wives, partners, mothers, daughters, colleagues and friends)
- collective interests (where gender equality is seen to be relevant to the wider community or society in which men live)
- principle (when men challenge gender inequality for political and ethical principles related to social justice).

Kaufman (2004) claims we can articulate the gains for men of gender equality by understanding men's contradictory experiences of power. The source of men's privilege and power is seen also as a source of emotional pain and alienation. Lang (2003b) also argues that it is in men's interests to stop violence against women because it has an impact on them as relatives, victims and witnesses. Some men will get involved because either they or a female loved one have experienced men's violence. Connell (2003c, p.14) observes that men who commit themselves to challenging 'hegemonic masculinity have often experienced the costs of it at the hands of other men'. Further, it is said that it will reduce their likelihood of being victims of homicide and becoming casualties of war (Ferguson et al. 2003).

Given the privileges accruing to men under patriarchy, how optimistic should we be about these reasons as a basis for men to change? Flood (2001) argues that men have a lot to gain from changing patriarchal gender relations. 'Yes, it demands that men let go of their unfair privileges, but this is a small price to pay for the promise of more trusting, honest, pleasurable and fair relations with women and children' (Flood 2001, p. 5). While at one level, this is no doubt a rhetorical appeal to men, how many men will perceive the benefits in this way? It is said that men will support gender equality when they can see the positive benefits for themselves and the women in their lives (Connell 2003). But how does this relate to the ethical responsibility men have to change the system that benefits them unfairly? In eliciting men's support for gender equality on the basis of men's interests, concerns and problems, we need to ensure that women's struggle for gender justice is not compromised.

When men's involvement in violence prevention is located as part of gender mainstreaming, we are told that all gender projects have to consider the benefits to men (Ruxton 2004). Arguing that gender equality and violence prevention will benefit men may win over some men, but at what cost? Coles (2001) asks whether men will support gender equality when it is not a win–win situation and when they have to relinquish power and privilege. This is not always acknowledged. Clearly men are more likely to support gender equality if women's benefits will also allow men to win as well, even if they do relinquish some privileges (Singly 1997). It is much harder if men see gender equality in terms of a zero sum game, where men will lose out as women make gains. If it is not a win–win situation for men, will they play a role in violence prevention against women? I will return to this issue later in this paper.

DANGERS AND PROBLEMS ASSOCIATED WITH INVOLVING MEN IN VIOLENCE PREVENTION

In promoting the involvement of men in violence prevention, we must be mindful of the potential dangers and problems. Some of the concerns have been well documented.

Reducing funding for women's programs and services

Lang (2002b) has acknowledged that working with men can take resources away from women's empowerment and can detract from working with women. Most advocates of preventive work with men emphasise that this work should not take scarce resources away from women. However, given limited funding, the reality is that gender mainstreaming and targeting men has led to women's services being cut back (Charlesworth 2000; Sawyer 2003; Bacchi 2004).

Weakening the feminist orientation

There is understandable anxiety that focusing on men and masculinities may lessen a commitment to ending gender inequalities (Cleaver 2002). Some writers, for example, fear that bringing men in under the wider umbrella of gender will dissolve the feminist agenda (Cornwall 2000). Men may espouse a commitment to gender equality but not follow through with action (Lang and Prewitt 1999). I have heard some women express concerns about men 'not sticking to the script' when conveying anti-violence messages. I have also observed a number of instances where high profile men, who are invited to speak about men's responsibility for violence, de-gender violence.

Silencing women

One of the arguments often put for involving men is that men are more able to influence other men. One of the contradictions of men working as mentors (Lang 2002a) is that, because men are granted more authority to speak than women, men are more likely to listen to other men than they are to women. While it is important to have profeminist men involved in violence prevention projects so that women do not have take responsibility for changing men (White 1997), when men speak for gender equality, do we perpetuate male dominance? Men speaking to men can have the effect of devaluing the power of women. Do we contribute to the marginalisation of women's voices and stories by using men to send messages to other men about ending their violence? I have had the experience of sharing a platform with a feminist speaker on men's violence against women and observing how her analysis of men's violence evoked more resistance and anger among men than my own, even though we were communicating similar ideas.

Taking over the campaign

Ruxton (2004) acknowledges the scepticism of many women towards the potential benefits of men and women working together against men's violence. One fear is that men will deflect the agenda or take over the campaign. Clearly, men can co-opt anti-violence campaigns for their own purposes (Lang 2002a).

Colluding with violent men

Flood (2005/2006, p. 6) acknowledges that 'all male groups do involve greater risks of men's collusion with sexist and violence-supportive discourses and behaviours'. In my own involvement with men's groups over the last thirty years, I have witnessed many acts of collusion between men. Some of these acts I have challenged and some to my regret I have not.

Gaining more praise

It is recognised that men's involvement in violence prevention is itself influenced by men's privileged positioning (Flood 2001). Men involved in violence prevention are likely to receive more attention from the media than are women. When I was involved in organising marches by men against violence, they always received greater media coverage than Reclaim the Night marches. Men also receive a lot of positive acknowledgement from many women for their efforts, often out of proportion to their involvement. Furthermore, they can draw upon their privilege to attract funding and gain recognition for their work (Flood 2005).

Failing to earn women's trust

Many women remain sceptical about whether men have the capacity to change. Trust between men and women in violence prevention work has to be achieved; it is not a given. Women are encouraged not to see men as perpetrators or potential perpetrators. However, there are well-founded reasons for many women's fears that men involved in violence prevention may themselves be violent or that they will respond to patriarchal socialisation that leads them to try and divert women's campaigns for their own purposes (DeKeseredy et al. 2000).

Many profeminist men demonstrate an awareness of the dangers. They recognise the potential to distract attention away from women and the danger of co-opting violence prevention and gender equality projects for their

own ends (Ruxton 2004; Flood 2005). At the same time, most profeminist advocates argue that the potential for positive outcomes outweighs the risks involved (Ruxton 2004, Kimmel 2005, Flood 2005). However, I argue in this paper that positive outcomes will only be achieved if the risks have been sufficiently acknowledged and addressed to avert potential negative consequences.

To date, there have been few published accounts of women's experiences in working with men as allies in violence prevention. For some exceptions, see Spark (1994), Goldrick-Jones (2004) and Marchese (2008). The few publications in this field suggest that the concerns noted above are not unfounded. Men and women have different experiences of the world and different approaches to addressing men's violence. In incorporating men into violence prevention, women's framing of men's violence should not be compromised (Marchese 2008).

The key question, I believe, is whether working with men in partnership with women will help transform gender relations? (Lang 2002). Connell (cited in Ruxton 2004) identifies a number of conditions to support progressive work with men. I think that three of these conditions actually constitute preconditions that will influence the likely success of this work:

- involvement of a core group of men who support gender equality and social justice
- support and commitment from men in leadership positions
- inclusion of feminist women who are prepared to form alliances with men.

It remains to be seen whether these three conditions have been met to date. To the extent that these conditions are not met, we should be very cautious about how we proceed to involve men as key partners in violence prevention. I would also add that we need to understand more fully the basis of men's privilege, the nature of men's interests and the forms of men's resistance in challenging men's violence.

Men's violence can be seen as a consequence, in part, of men's privilege. Male privilege leads men to believe that they are entitled to receive services from women.

UNDERSTANDING WHAT'S NEEDED TO ENGAGE MEN

Understanding men's privilege

Bailey (1998, p. 109) describes privilege as 'systematically conferred advantages individuals enjoy by virtue of their membership in dominant groups with access to resources and institutional power that are beyond the common advantages of marginalised citizens'. An individual's privilege is thus more a product of their membership of privileged groups than it is of their individual capabilities. Most privilege is not recognised as such, by those who have it. So not being aware of privilege and the sense of entitlement that members of privileged groups feel about their status are key aspects of privilege (Pease 2006).

Men's violence can be seen as a consequence, in part, of men's privilege. Male privilege leads men to believe that they are entitled to receive services from women. When these entitlements are questioned or denied, they may enact violence in response (Keijzer 2004). Connell (2003a) refers to the privileges that men receive as 'the patriarchal dividend'. This includes respect, authority, services from women, monetary benefits, institutional power and control over one's life. Depending on men's location in the gender order, they will get more or less of these privileges. It is the patriarchal dividend that leads men to defend patriarchy. While many men talk about the costs of hegemonic masculinity, there is insufficient attention to what men gain from the patriarchal dividend. Over twenty-five years ago Goode (1982) wrote an account of men's response to feminism, which is still one of the best critical appraisals of men's interests in relation to change in gender relations (Connell 2003.) Goode argued simply that men resisted change because they were the privileged group. Men benefit from gender inequalities and they believe that they are entitled to be serviced by women. Thus, they have both a vested interest in maintaining gender relations as they are and a belief in the existing state of affairs as a moral necessity.

While Lang (2002a) acknowledges that men's privilege makes it difficult for men to identify the benefits of working against violence, he believes that men can come to see how we will all gain from living in a world without violence. In another paper, however, Lang (2003b) talks about men as a group benefiting from gender inequalities, and how it is to their benefit to hold on to their privilege and to defend it. That being so, as I believe it is, men's involvement in violence prevention will

have to address men's privilege. There is, however, much confusion about the place of men's privilege in violence prevention. This confusion is usually related to how we understand men's interests.

Understanding men's interests

It is generally well recognised that dominant groups have different interests in continuity, as opposed to change, when compared with subordinate groups. Thus, feminist campaigns for violence prevention and gender equality would appear to be opposed to men's collective interests (Messner and Solomon 2007).

This raises the question of whether it can be in men's interests to change and whether men can distance themselves from their privileged position in patriarchy. Can men change to support and promote non-violence and gender equality? Would they do so only on the basis of altruism or do they have things to gain? If men are to be reliable allies with women in violence prevention and gender equality campaigns, we must understand the nature of their interests and the basis of their resistance to change.

To involve men in changing unequal gender arrangements, we must persuade them that the costs associated with the current system outweigh the benefits.

It is necessary to articulate the reasons why men should challenge violence and support gender equality. Connell (2003b) believes that, if they are to involve men, policies and programs will need to be compatible with some of the interests of men. Flood (2005) talks about the tension between men's 'patriarchal interests' and what he perceives as 'their interest in undermining patriarchy'. While he acknowledges the dangers of men asserting their interests at women's expense, of denying male privilege and regarding themselves as victims, he believes that it is essential that men 'see their stake in feminist futures' (Flood 2005, p. 459). I have previously written about the need for men to see beyond their socially constructed interests towards what I call their 'emancipatory interests' (Pease 2002). The issue is, however, whether men can have non-patriarchal interests as men. I have also argued that men have an ethical obligation to change (Pease 2002) irrespective of whether change meets their interests or not.

When we talk about men's interests in terms of the disadvantages suffered by men under patriarchy, we are in danger of lending support to men's rights advocates, who aim to refute feminist claims of men's privilege. There are also dangers in seeing the disadvantages as the 'costs of being on top'. Connell (2003) demonstrates that the men who benefit the most and the men who experience the greatest costs are not necessarily the same. Thus, the gains and costs of men's gender privilege are spread unevenly between men on the basis of race, class and age differences. These differences are important to understanding and intervening in men's violence towards women because the different positions provide differential access to personal and societal power. For example, with Rees, I have elsewhere explored how refugee men's violence against women can best be understood against the context of male privilege, racism, colonialism and class oppression which shape refugee men's intersected identities (Pease and Rees 2008).

Men's interests are also further complicated by their relationships with particular women in their lives such as mothers, partners and daughters (Goode 1982). Given that men have different interests, it is unclear how these interests will play out. It is thus important to pay close attention to the concrete situations in which men are located and to the diversity of men's experiences (Connell 2003b). In this context, we can better understand the ways in which men's interests are constructed and the possibilities of eliciting particular men's support for gender equality and violence prevention.

Understanding men's resistance to change

The challenge for involving men in gender equality and violence prevention is to understand men's reasons for resistance and to find answers to the arguments advanced by opponents (Connell 2003a). However, many anti-violence advocates believe that men's perception of gender equality as a threat to their privileges is somehow misconceived. Esplen (2006), for example, says that to view gender equality as an attack on men's 'way of life' misses the point that men also need to be 'liberated' from restrictive gender roles. It is important to acknowledge that men are not always losers in more equal gender relations (Connell 2003b). However, we must avoid the simplicity of the view that men are oppressed by the male sex role.

Any attempt to articulate the benefits for men in gender equality and non-violence must acknowledge the various reasons for men's resistance. Connell (2003a) identifies four areas:

- material benefits, including the care and domestic services men receive from women
- identity problems about change, involving men's internalisation of hegemonic notions of masculinity about strength and toughness
- resentment towards gender equality programs from men who get very little of the patriarchal dividend

- ideological defence of male supremacy by men who have deeply internalised a sense of male entitlement.

There are thus major cultural and political infrastructures that maintain patriarchal power relations.

To involve men in changing unequal gender arrangements, we must persuade them that the costs associated with the current system outweigh the benefits (Connell 2003b). So how do the health disadvantages and the work pressures add up against the services of domestic and emotional support that men receive from women? While many of the arguments about men's involvement focus on how men will gain from gender equality, the reality is that most men do not see the gains as benefits. In the prevailing view, much of men's opposition to gender equality is based on their ignorance of what is in it for them. Too often gender equality is conceptualised in terms of attitudes, as if the real issue is in men's minds. So if we could only construct a good enough argument, most men would change their minds. However, focusing on what men will gain by gender equality and non-violence has not seemed to work very well for practical policies and programs targeted at men. Gendered power and privilege are often ignored in this approach (Magnusson 2000).

Some men believe that they face comparable injustices and oppressions to women and that feminists have overstated men's privileged position.

As I have previously mentioned, if we move towards greater gender equality, men will lose some of the domestic services performed by women; they will have less power over women and there will be an erosion of cultural traditions that prioritise men (Connell 2003b). Thus, it will not necessarily be a 'win–win situation' (Lang 2002b). While there may be long-term gains for men, there are certainly short-term losses. As a result, the reality is that many men will not be willing partners in the change process. It would appear that most men believe that on the whole the existing gender relationships serve them very well.

When they realise what they have to lose, men may work to erode the advances that have been made. In light of the privileges men receive, I have become increasingly doubtful about our ability to convince many men that they will gain benefits from gender equality that will outweigh these privileges. We should not underestimate the investment men have in maintaining their privileges. When we identify all the reasons why men will resist change, it is hard to be optimistic about winning large groups of men over to the cause of gender equality. We have not yet created the conditions that will enable us to move the majority of men from a consciousness based on privilege to a consciousness based on reciprocity (Connell 2003b).

Understanding men's backlash responses to change

Men's resistance to challenges to men's violence can sometimes take the form of a backlash. During the years of the Howard Government, men's rights and fathers' rights groups mounted a number of successful campaigns focused on what they perceived as the disadvantages to men of existing policies and practices (Connell 2003a). The backlash by men may at times even lead to an increase in men's violence as they attempt to regain what they believe they have lost (Godenzi 2000). For example, Kelly (2002) has demonstrated that in Sweden, where formal equality between men and women is established in law, there are alarmingly high rates of sexual violence against women.

In the area of men's violence against women, the backlash takes two major forms. First, there is an attempt to disassociate violence from men and masculinity. Woods and Andresen (2007) have challenged the White Ribbon Campaign against men's violence because men are more likely than women to be killed. Glicken (2005) talks about the portrayal of men as perpetrators of violence as a form of 'male bashing'. This move even comes from many anti-violence activists. Medrado (2003), an activist against men's violence in Brazil, emphasises that the number of men who do not commit violence against women is greater than those who do. He asks how violence can be part of men's identity, if not all men are violent. Lorentzen (2004) also asks why it is that many men in a patriarchal society are not violent to their partners. Holding the line that violence is a gender issue because it is perpetrated primarily by men is undermined by the usual follow-up statement that 'most men do not perpetrate violence against women' (VicHealth 2007a, p. 50). Such statements fail to understand the connections between men's physical violence and the wider forms of coercive control that permeate the majority of heterosexual relationships (Stark 2007). It thus enables most men to disassociate themselves from the 'bad' men who commit violence.

The second form of backlash responses by men focuses on women's violence against men and frames violence in the home as a 'two way street'. Rogers (2004) explored how men working for gender inequality in Oxfam understood gender, gender relations, and gender equality. Many participants stressed that a key element of this analysis should explicitly recognise both men's and women's roles in perpetuating gender inequality rather than just focus exclusively on men. The men in this study did not understand the institutional dimensions of men's social and political power that underlies men's

abuse of women in the family. Rather they regarded conflict between women and men as taking place on an equal plane. They were also unable to recognise the overwhelming extent of the violence perpetrated by men against women. What was most troubling about the results of this research was that men involved in the promotion of gender equality and violence prevention held these views.

Melvin (2007), writing on behalf of a non-feminist men's network, has proposed the establishment of a national men and boys' resource centre, a 'men's office' to put the issues facing men on the public policy agenda. 'Is it our turn now?' he asks. There is no acknowledgement of the institutional advantages in terms of the economic power and privilege men have compared to women, and no stated commitment to gender equality. Some men believe that they face comparable injustices and oppressions to women and that feminists have overstated men's privileged position (Mills 2001). Thus, many of the backlash campaigns purport to be about fairness and equality.

Of course men are not inherently violent. However, holding someone responsible for their behaviour, which is the literal definition of blame, is an important part of any strategy that affirms moral standards to influence people's behaviour.

Bacchi (2005) discusses the blind spot that many men have in understanding why women might need to have affirmative action. Many men seem unable to understand these policy interventions as correctives to institutionalised privilege. Women are portrayed as being deficient in some way and needing preferential treatment. Bacchi's analysis of how many men perceive affirmative action helps us to understand the current critique of many social work and health professionals of what they call 'deficit approaches to men' whenever men's violence and abuse are highlighted. These critics say that they work from a strength-based, non-shaming approach that aims to encourage 'positive masculinity' (McDonald et al. 2000; King 2005). As this strength-based, male-positive approach to men has now infiltrated violence prevention campaigns with men, it is important to analyse its theoretical underpinnings.

Understanding the limitations of strength-based and male positive approaches to working with men

As I have demonstrated, many of the approaches to working with men on violence prevention stress the importance of decreasing men's defensiveness by focusing on the positive benefits for men of their greater involvement in this work (Lang 2002b; Connell; 2003b; Ruxton 2004; Flood 2007). Thus, the strategic emphasis is on how to engage men and how to appeal to men. One of the frequently noted challenges to community education programs against men's violence that are targeted at men is the perception by many men that such messages are negative towards them (Banyard et al. 2004).

Consequently, working with men in violence prevention emphasises the importance of using positive messages that also address men's issues. Esplen (2006, p. 14) expresses concern that the men and masculinities literature on men's violence 'reinforces unhelpful stereotypes of men as inherently violent and blameworthy'. Ruxton (2004) similarly says that using language that leaves men feeling blamed for behaviours that they were taught will alienate most men.

Thus, when working with men, the emphasis is placed upon the positive outcomes for men. As previously stated, this is presented as a win–win situation, as opposed to asking men to relinquish their privileges without any gains. Flood (2007, p. 15) argues that to appeal to men, it is important to start with the positive.
In his view, engaging men with 'a deficit perspective, focused on the negative, is likely to prompt defensiveness'. Similarly, Lang (2002b, p. 17) also says that 'men respond much better when you begin with the positive …rather than approaching them with deficit models'.

However, in profeminist variations on the strength-based approach, there are tensions. On the one hand, Flood (2001) maintains that 'strategies of blame and attack are ineffective' in working with men. On the other hand he acknowledges the importance of challenging gendered power relations and dominant forms of masculinity. While there is no necessary contradiction between these approaches, any naming of men as the main perpetrators of violence is seen by many men as a form of 'male bashing'. This is fuelled in part by the understanding of masculinity as an expression of male biology. Challenging dominant forms of masculinity is seen as challenging the essence of what it is to be a man. Furthermore, challenging privilege and institutional power is also seen as promoting a deficit perspective on men. Thus, what is missing in much violence prevention work with men is a conceptual framework that adequately explains the links between men, masculinity, patriarchal culture and gendered violence (Ferguson et al. 2003).

An alternative to emphasising what men have to gain for themselves is to frame violence prevention and gender inequality in the language of human rights and social justice (Connell 2003a). The benefits should perhaps be positioned less in terms of immediate gains for men and

more in terms of longer-term gains for the society as a whole. This enables men to see their involvement in violence prevention as attaining a more ethical sense of self.

Of course men are not inherently violent. However, holding someone responsible for their behaviour, which is the literal definition of blame, is an important part of any strategy that affirms moral standards to influence people's behaviour. Braithwaite (1991, p. 30) emphasises the importance of persuading men 'to internalise an abhorrence of violence, to take pride in respecting the rights of women and caring for others'. Adopting an ethical stance in relation to violence and abuse can thus become a source of pride for men.

In developing an alternative strategy for sexual violence prevention, Carmody (2003) argues that we need to inculcate ethical sexual practices. Drawing upon Foucault's idea of an ethical self, she posits ways in which an ethical subjectivity can contribute to non-exploitative sexual relations and violence prevention. Her notion of an ethical subjectivity could easily be extended to non-abusive relationships with women more generally. In this view, men can resist the dominant discursive construction of masculinity and construct non-violent masculine subjectivities. She is quick to emphasise that this approach should be seen as complementary to structural feminist approaches to men's violence. Otherwise, it will become another individualistic model of masculinities.

An ethical subject is constituted as a moral subject whose subjectivity involves caring for other people. As a result, relationships with women are conducted in an ethical manner. It is possible for men to perform masculinity in nurturing and non-violent ways. Men can engage in ethical and egalitarian gender relations which involve critical reflection on the implications of their behaviour on others. Of course, more men will be able to do this if the cultural norms and social practices of our society involve clear messages of intolerance to violent and abusive behaviour by men.

We need more examples of men's resistance to violence and examples of gender equitable practices. We need to encourage support networks of men who can sustain and foster these practices (Flood 2005/2006). DeKeseredy et al. (2000) describe this as a process of promoting profeminist attitudes among men. Men need to ensure that all aspects of their support for each other as men counter men's violence. If men passively accept other men's abusive behaviour, then they are perpetuating violence. While I argue that change in men is not the primary precondition for change in gender relations, the more men who become profeminist, the greater the potential there is to bring about structural changes in gender relations (DeKeseredy et al. 2000).

PRINCIPLES TO INFORM MEN'S INVOLVEMENT IN MEN'S VIOLENCE PREVENTION

In outlining the following principles to inform men's involvement in violence prevention, I do not claim that they constitute a distinctive contribution to the field. Many of them are espoused in anti-violence programs involving men, including by some of the writers who focus on what men have to gain from this work. However, these espoused principles often sit uncomfortably alongside other principles and intervention strategies found in this work. I argue here that these principles need to be operationalised more fully and that they should form the basis of evaluation frameworks in monitoring this work.

Ensure that men's violence prevention is linked to the promotion of gender equality

I have argued in this paper that there is a strong relationship between violence against women and the unequal treatment of women. Thus, I believe that gender equality is a precondition for establishing what Godenzi (2000) calls 'a culture of peace'. Furthermore, the absence of violence is a core requirement for achieving equality. Campaigns to end men's violence against women in the home must therefore be seen in the wider context of men's violence and discrimination against women (Kelly 2005) and must be framed by the struggle for gender equality. A public recognition by the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (HREOC) of men's violence against women as a human rights issue is a positive move in this direction (HREOC 2006).

Ensure that a feminist analysis remains as the central underpinning of violence prevention

The ecological multi-system model developed by Heise (1998) argues that prevention work must take place on individual, community, organisational and societal levels. This multi-system-level analysis has subsequently been widely used as a public health framework to address violence against women: for example, by the World Health Organization and other United Nations agencies; and now in Australia by Flood (2007) and VicHealth (2007a).

Pyles and Postmus (2004) have found, in a review of social work journals, that ecological and systems approaches have been given more space than feminist approaches. Ecological approaches endeavour to synthesise a range of theoretical approaches concerned with different system

levels of the individual to the society as a whole. In doing so, however, they fail to develop theoretical coherence.

While the ecological model acknowledges male dominance as a key dimension of men's violence, Heise (1998) and others argue that it is inadequate as a single factor. McPhail et al. (2007) point out a distinction between an integrated model such as Heise's ecological framework that incorporates multiple perspectives and a feminist framework that uses and draws upon other approaches. The difference is between regarding feminism as one approach among many as opposed to framing it as the foundation upon which other perspectives are grounded. As McPhail et al. (2007) point out, there are many theoretical perspectives that cannot be incorporated into a feminist model.

Feminist accounts of men's violence have examined the intersections between gender and other social divisions such as class, race and nationality. (Crenshaw 1997; Kelly 2002; Sokoloff & Dupont 2005; Pease & Rees 2008). While feminists are keen to embrace greater complexity in their analysis, they will not want to sacrifice the key insights about the social and political dimensions of men's violence.

Refocus primary prevention of men's violence to system interventions

It has become rhetorical to say that preventing men's violence against women has to move beyond changing individuals to transforming the system that reproduces and sustains the violence (Banyard et al. 2004). When we move beyond individual attitudes to cultural values at the broader societal level, studies demonstrate higher levels of violence against women in societies in which there are high levels of gender segregation, more rigidly defined gender roles, and cultural definitions of manhood as expressions of toughness and dominance (VicHealth 2007b). Furthermore, violence against women is higher where men have greater economic and decision making power. Some programs fail to acknowledge structural factors and other programs acknowledge them but continue to focus on individual and community attitudes towards violence.

Implicit in some of the rationales for working with men is the premise that a revolution in masculinity is required before men's violence can be prevented and gender equality is achieved (Connell 2003a). Flood (2001, p. 4), for example, argues that 'if men do not change then gender justice is simply impossible'. This seems to be premised on the notion that individual changes in men's lives are a precondition for gender equality. Do all men (or the majority of men) have to change before we can transform unequal gender relations? One of the dangers of focusing on men in this way is that we lose sight of the structural analysis of men's violence. This process of challenging patriarchy man by man is neither a practical project nor a necessary precondition for gender equality. What we need are strategies for structural interventions in unequal gender relations that address the policy and cultural context of men's violence identified earlier in this paper.

Reprioritise work with men away from perpetrator programs to working with non-violent men whose silence perpetuates men's violence.

If men are to play a productive role in violence prevention, they need to spend less time in counselling violent men and more time in changing the cultural supports for violence and abuse. It is clear that one of the most significant influences on men's violence is the peer support provided by pro-abuse men. Furthermore, their peers constitute a major obstacle for men to change, as men who are changing their lives pose a threat to other men (Keijzer 2004). If pro-abuse masculinities are replaced by profeminist sensibilities among larger numbers of men, the patriarchal norms that fuel violence will be undermined. We thus need more knowledge of the factors that prohibit men from becoming profeminist (Pease 2000).

Fergson et al. (2003) demonstrate a strong case for the view that men should see it as their 'duty' to work against men's violence and the patriarchal structures that support it. However, such a duty or responsibility both involves moral courage and requires skill in how to challenge other men. Some writers propose a social norms framework (Fabiano et al. 2003) to locate these issues. This approach is used to strengthen men's ability to take action against the problematic behaviour of other men by encouraging a culture of safety and respect. This means creating new social norms that make any form of violence unacceptable.

Increase men's involvement in family work

Research demonstrates that men who are engaged in caring roles with their children are less likely to commit violence against their partners (Esplen 2006). Ferguson et al. (2003, p. 40) cite global research that demonstrates 'that the more men are seen as nurturing and caring and the more women are seen as capable, rational and competent in the public sphere, the more likely that aggression will take other routes.' Lorentzen (2004) thus identifies work with fathers as a key strategy in combating men's violence and promoting gender equality. Boggess et al. (2003) regard fatherhood as an important opening for engaging with men, arguing that it is important to bring violence prevention into the fatherhood context.

Furthermore, paternity leave, flexible work and childcare laws that encourage men to take more responsibility for childcare will have an impact on levels of men's violence. However, these policy arenas are generally neglected in men's violence prevention. In Europe, there have been important developments in fostering 'caring masculinities' where men are encouraged to undertake greater involvement in caring tasks in the family and to participate equally with women in family life. Such moves are seen as providing the possibility of democratising gender relations (Langvasbraten and Teigen 2006).

This focus on men's involvement in family responsibilities should be differentiated from the uncritical 'father inclusive' practices promoted by Fletcher (2008) and others who advocate essentialist models of fatherhood and who do not acknowledge gender power inequality in families. Such frameworks avoid challenging fathers' abuse in families and often undermine gender equality.

Make links to social justice movements

Peacock (2004) convincingly emphasises the importance of incorporating 'a strong social justice emphasis into work with men' and building alliances with progressive social movements. Because men involved in social justice campaigns are committed to equality, these men ought to support campaigns to end men's violence and 'are more likely than most to take these activities on in their personal lives' (Peacock 2004, p. 43). Such a strategy goes against the 'big tent' approach advocated by Kaufmann (2004) and others—to involve larger numbers of men in violence prevention by not promoting gender equality. In making links with social justice movements, however, we must still be alert to the possibilities of progressive men's 'blind spots' in relation to gender issues.

Locate men in their specific context

Men are not a homogeneous group any more than women are. So when we talk about working with men to end men's violence, we should always specify which men we are talking about. We must address race and class divisions when we work with men. Men from different classes and different racial backgrounds are likely to respond to challenges to their violence differently (Messner and Solomon 2007). Those of us who are white middle-class professional men must recognise more than just our gender privilege. We need to understand our class and racial privilege as well when we challenge the violence of men from marginalised backgrounds (Rees and Pease 2007).

As I have argued elsewhere (Pease and Rees 2008), in working with violent men in refugee communities, it is important to recognise these men's experiences of class oppression and racial discrimination. This may also assist them to see the connections between their experiences and women's experiences of discrimination and violence (Lang 2002a). Thus, any strategies for working with men must acknowledge other dimensions of inequality. This means also, that some men's interests may align with some of the interests of women (Connell 2003b).

...Indigenous men's violence against women needs to be located within the context of colonisation, disempowerment, dispossession of land, poverty and cultural dislocation.

Men and women experience violence differently in Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities (Daly and Stubbs 2006). How men as individuals and as a group respond to this violence is related in part to the significance of culture in Indigenous men's lives (HREOC 2007). Furthermore, Indigenous men's violence against women needs to be located within the context of colonisation, disempowerment, dispossession of land, poverty and cultural dislocation (Cheers et al. 2006; Nancarrow 2006). Many writers have acknowledged the tension between a white feminist agenda and Indigenous women's priorities (Calman et al. 2006; Nancarrow 2006; Philips 2006). Violence prevention with Indigenous men that is based on white understandings will not work (Hovane 2006/7).

An important question is: how do we acknowledge Indigenous men's experiences of racism and marginalisation without excusing them for their violence towards women? (Larson and Peterson 2001; Daly and Stubbs 2006). How does one engage with the notion of 'traditional' violence where punishment is regarded by some perpetrators as part of customary law? Many Indigenous people challenge the view that Aboriginal customary law provides support for some forms of family violence and abuse of women (HREOC 2007). In this latter view, the preservation and revival of Aboriginal culture is promoted as a strong anti-violence norm to combat family violence and abuse.

Interrogate masculinity

A gendered approach to men's violence must involve an interrogation of men and masculinities. There is global research on men and masculinities that demonstrates a strong link between the definition of masculinity and manhood in a society and the level of violence in that society (Ferguson et al. 2003). The challenge for men is that as patriarchal culture declines, they will need to develop a different sense of themselves. They will need to let go of any construction of their manhood that depends upon the subordination of women. This will mean developing

a more humble view of what masculinity means. Otherwise, they will continue to feel a sense of loss and grief as their male power is eroded (Willis 2007).

It is clear that while some forms of masculinity encourage violent behaviour, men can construct alternative models of masculinity that are non-violent and egalitarian. We must develop a conceptual framework for understanding how dominant forms of masculinity are internalised within men's psyches. Otherwise, we will not be able to promote shifts in men's subjectivities.

Ensure that men's violence prevention work is accountable to women

There is currently no consensus among men about respecting women's leadership in violence prevention. It is thus necessary to emphasise the importance of ensuring that men's anti-violence work is accountable to feminist women. When I was involved in setting up Men Against Sexual Assault, we consulted widely with feminist anti-violence groups. In all our campaigns and workshops, we sought feminist women's input and encouraged monitoring of our work. Such accountability measures should go beyond consultation and liaison and be guided by women's leadership.

Evaluate men's involvement in violence prevention projects against these criteria

While there have been some evaluations of men's violence intervention campaigns, to date such evaluations have not addressed the impact that men's involvement has had on reducing violence or challenging patriarchal gender relations. Such evaluations need to be incorporated into existing programs before men's involvement is further promoted and extended.

CONCLUSION

In discussing the dangers and problems associated with men's involvement in violence prevention, I am not arguing against the possibility of either progressive masculinity politics among men or constructive partnerships with women's anti-violence groups. Such alliances are important and possible. I am not suggesting a return to women's only approaches. However, we should not underestimate the obstacles in the way of such alliances.

For alliances with women to work, more men will need to do more to allay women's suspicions and scepticism about men's willingness to relinquish privilege. We also need to develop a clearer understanding of the best forms of such alliances and to determine the minimum conditions that need to be met. There is currently no mutual understanding between men and women about what the goals of this work are.

If working with men in violence prevention is to be supported, we need to ensure that it lives up to the two key benefits claimed by Lang (2002b. 14): that working with men will 'help to transform gender relations' and that it will 'complement ongoing work for the advancement of women'. We have to be careful that, in involving men in men's violence prevention, we do not replicate the same structures and processes that reproduce the violence we are challenging.

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