

VIOLENT DAD IN CHILD SHOES A MOMENT BEFORE

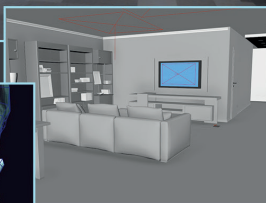
ViDaCS serious game in a multidimensional action research promoting awareness about gender-based violence perpetrators



The ViDaCS experience starts when you put the device on ...



Vidacs



a cura di Caterina Arcidiacono
e Immacolata Di Napoli

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Università degli Studi di Napoli Federico II

Violent dad in child shoes

A moment before

ViDaCS serious game in a multidimensional action research
promoting awareness about gender-based violence perpetrators

a cura di Caterina Arcidiacono e Immacolata Di Napoli

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Foreword

Violence against women is still a widespread phenomenon, largely hidden and little known; wondering why remains an obligation for those committed to this issue within public institutions of various kinds and in the many third sector associations.

But today is the time to radically change perspective.

Therefore, instead of asking what women could do differently, it is time to involve men in this huge problem in which they are the main negative protagonists. The time has come to ask them to change, because violence against women is primarily a male problem. It is a problem that arises within a sexist culture, due to the man's inability to control anger and to lead to a respectful relationship with women. For this reason, today more than ever, the issue of gender-based violence must involve everyone. Women, who need more protection, but above all, the male world.

In the last thirty years, Italy has taken considerable steps in combating gender-based violence. I am thinking of the extensive reform intervention in 1996 regarding sexual violence and, in particular, the symbolic value of the assumption of rape as a crime against personal freedom.

Since then, much has been done from a regulatory point of view, both for repression and for the protection of the victim, starting with the innovations introduced in 2001, with the protection order for the partner and the removal from the family home of the offender, and, in 2009 with the recognition of persecutory acts, better known as stalking.

During the most recent years, Italy has ratified the Istanbul Convention thanks to which, between 2013 and 2015, heavier penalties were introduced in the cases of presence of minors or crimes against pregnant women, further precautionary measures and more effective tools for assisting and protecting the victim; up to the Red Code, approved by Parliament in the summer of 2019, which aims to speed up the criminal proceedings for crimes of domestic and gender-based violence, thus also accelerating the possible adoption of protection measures for victims.

Furthermore, since 2017, a parliamentary Commission of Inquiry has been set up at the Senate of the Republic, dedicated to all forms of gender-based violence. Among its main tasks, there is bringing to light both the limits of public law enforcement policies and the issues on which even greater commitment is needed.

Indeed, it is clear that a satisfactory, largely evolved, regulatory framework is not yet sufficient.

If Italian women continue to die, killed by their torturers, a change of action is needed, starting with the ability to correctly read violence as it really is.

And it is, doubtlessly, a complex and articulated phenomenon which hides behind a great variety of crimes and offenders; a phenomenon, moreover, that has many subjects involved in the different phases, before, during and after the judicial procedure.

Therefore, statistical tools, resources and high professionals are needed, in order to correctly understand this set of elements.

Much of the violence originates in situations and attitudes that precede the violent outbreak.

There is psychological, economic and relational violence which, if intercepted in time, would prevent these situations, avoiding their degeneration into more heinous acts or, even, in femicide.

In order to do this, for example, it is necessary to identify the “spy” crimes in the relationship between the perpetrator and the victim.

But above all, a strong investment in education and prevention is needed, even towards men who struggle to recognize their violent behavior or recognize it only minimally.

The ViDaCS (Violent Dad in Child’s Shoes) project, coordinated by the Department of Humanities of the University of Naples Federico II, with his commitment to this issue, can represent an important resource to lead the violent man to become aware of his illicit behavior, its gravity and its consequences on children’s lives.

I believe this project offers a significant contribution to strengthening a preventive action that in Italy still suffers delays, uncertainties and, sometimes prejudices that must be overcome.

Moreover, ViDaCS is also a positive example of how the academic and research world, the health system and the Non-Governmental Associations can join forces and specializations, creating results to be put at the service of the entire community.

Foreword

The only way to make a deep impact is to build a broad and solid cultural response.

In order to achieve this goal, it is essential to activate the best resources of the country for a common commitment; build a solid network among universities, professionals, the courts and police to ensure that modules and shared best practices are increasingly spread in the welfare and repressive response.

Therefore, I personally thank everyone who has conceived and implemented this project, which, in addition to having been properly recognized by the European Union, I am sure will have a great and well-deserved diffusion also in Italy.

VALERIA VALENTE
President Parliamentary Committee
of Inquiry on Femicide
Senate of the Republic

Introduction

Caterina Arcidiacono

The volume describes the goals, strategies and actions of ViDaCS (Violent Dad in Child's Shoes), a project framed in the European Programme REC (*Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme 2014-2020*), namely project grant number 810449.

Its subtitle is *A Moment Before* to focus on developing an innovative multi-agency protocol for the self-assessment of intimate violence by perpetrators; it addresses the EU call purpose of preventing and combating gender-based violence under the main priority of "Treatment of perpetrators", in order to prevent reoffending.

ViDaCS project is aimed at:

- Developing, experimenting and validating an innovative practice to intercept the "silent" perpetrators and direct them towards treatment;
- Helping perpetrators to recognize, as fathers, the impact of their violent behaviour on their children exposed to domestic violence;
- Training operators specialized in domestic violence perpetrators; and
- Encouraging a multi-agency joint collaborative network between institutions and organizations working on this theme.

In particular, ViDaCS' priority has been pursued by developing an innovative emotional and behavioural self-assessment tool to direct perpetrators to the treatment that offers:

- A recognition of the difficulty in managing negative emotions that induce violent behaviour;
- An immersive emotional experience of domestic violence in the *shoes* of the child when the child sees and hears violent domestic scenes;
- A recognition, from a child's point of view, of their usual behaviour in classic "domestic scenes"; and
- An experience, in the shoes of their child, of alternative "domestic scenes" where the father decides and assumes "new" behaviours that avoid violent behaviour.

ViDaCS realized a self-assessment of emotional burden and violent behaviour based on exploratory and 4.0 CTS serious game.

The project adopted a behavioural and instructional approach to facilitate the perpetrators' recognition of the antecedents and consequence of their violent behaviour.

The game had a preventative and awareness aim to help men discover their feelings and thoughts connected to violent actions. In this vein it is worth mentioning what one of the players said, by doing the game: Ah, ah, what a "short-tempered Idiot I am" opening a whole universe of hidden meanings. These words recall the famous phrase by Shakespeare which Richard Mizen used in the opening of his article in Italian (2017) to introduce the topic of uncontrolled actions of violence: "A tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury" (Macbeth).

The game was to be played by single men, usually fathers, and by perpetrators enrolled in specific training at OLV and other service under the supervision of trained operators.

A 4.0 ICT serious game was used **for an immersive emotional experience of domestic violence *in the shoes of child*** to be played by perpetrators.

Its use is a useful protocol for the professionals that work with the perpetrators in the preliminary step of evaluation counselling to the treatment.

The ViDaCS emotional and behavioural self-assessment was directed to men able to recognize that they had committed violence against their partner. To experiment and test the serious game perpetrators, substance addiction users and/or people with psychiatric conditions were excluded.

An effective operative procedure to promote the perpetrator's adhesion to a treatment was defined and articulated in: a) training for professionals from various systems involved in gender violence; and b) development of a serious game to be played by perpetrators.

The ViDaCS program provides a procedure for professionals of services involved in contrasting gender violence with specific regards to domestic violence. The ViDaCS procedure supports the services' methodologies and competencies for the intake of perpetrators, improving their motivation to a specific Domestic Violence Perpetrators Programme (DVPP). to take the perpetrators into care and to support the perpetrators' motivation to the treatment.

The innovative tool proposed can be used by all the actors who come into contact with perpetrators who are fathers (such as health services, centres for

families; services for substance use disorders, care system for children) as a specific emotional experience of a domestic violence session that integrates their specific protocol of treatment, or as a motivational tool to make perpetrators aware of the destructive effects of their violent behaviour.

ViDaCS created and developed several outputs: procedural tools (Literature and projects repository; Map of needs/resources to contrast gender-based violence; Model analytical plan, Game design scheme; Piloting and training reports); several scientific articles (Di Napoli et al., 2019; Procentese, et al., 2019; Autiero et al., 2020; Di Napoli et al., 2020; Carnevale et al., 2020), together with the present book and a companion dissemination: ViDaCS Training kit to share research instruments and interventions (Di Napoli, Carnevale, Paparo 2020).

The project developed in continuous consultation with the end beneficiaries (perpetrators and professionals) involved in the different activities implemented: in-field research for identifying the needs to be addressed; piloting of the game; c. implementation and evaluation of ViDaCS emotional and behavioural self-assessment program, also by means of feedback mechanisms). The ViDaCS program provides a procedure for professionals of services involved in contrasting gender violence with specific regards to domestic violence.

Further ViDaCS output was an audio-video tool proposing special music-based creative training directed to all professional to enhance their building of skills, awareness and competence in dealing with gender-based violence perpetrators programmes.

A special acknowledgement to Campania Region Equal Opportunity Department and the Regional Equal Opportunities Commission that supported the project in establishing fertile links and connections with the local relevant services for domestic violence.

Fatherhood as core concept of ViDaCS

ViDaCS took in account the European guidelines (Respect, 2004; Work with Perpetrators - WWP, 2008) and more particularly, the following theoretical assumptions:

- a) Fatherhood as core aspect in the treatment of perpetrators;
- b) Violence is a choice; and
- c) Seeing the impact and the consequences of violent behaviour on partner and children encourages empathy, responsibility, and motivation to the change.

The project tested how parental responsibility can be a motivating factor for treatment through an immersive experience. This is a first pilot experience using this approach in the preliminary assessment of perpetrators. The innovative element of the project was therefore the opportunity to benefit from a virtual environment, made possible by advanced technology such as Kinect, VR and AR viewers and optic sensors, to gain direct contact with the psychological condition of the child exposed to domestic violence. Serious games are in fact an advanced frontier that reproduce the emotions of human life in certain circumstances to create virtual opportunities that can induce identification processes and at the same time lead to empowering transformative solutions.

This emotional and behavioural self-assessment program was realized in a self-reflective **behavioural approach**. Bonem, Stanley-Kime and Corbin remark on the usefulness of behavioural approach in the perpetrators' assessment procedure; although they add, "Assessment strategies that involve classification of battering, as operant behaviour and as an application of a functional assessment to determine relationships between batterer-identified antecedents and consequences of the violent behaviour, are relatively unexplored methods" (2008, p. 212). In a behavioural approach, the ViDaCS emotional and behavioural self-assessment program aimed at offering an opportunity to perpetrators: a) to deal with their unaware hidden feelings and cognitions related to their partner; b) to observe themselves, through the child's eyes, in concrete multiple exemplars (scenarios) that represent the common **antecedents that induce them to adopt** violent behaviour; c) to experience the **consequence** of the violent behaviour's impact on the sensations, emotion and thoughts of their child; and d) **to decide to adopt alternative behaviours**, during the game, and to go through the impact of these alternative scenarios on their child. The perpetrators were assisted in this decision by specialized professionals, who encourage the experience of alternative behaviours to violence. To facilitate the perpetrators' recognition of the antecedents and consequence of their violent behaviour, the ViDaCS program proposed a serious game in which the perpetrator is "in the child's shoes", assuming that this experimental position of identification in the other's body, feelings and cognitions is useful to give the perpetrators the opportunity to discriminate between appropriate and inappropriate behaviour in a domestic context. We applied this behavioural approach in combination with the feminist perspective on violence against women, which considers violence as a phenomenon due to an asymmetric power dynamic both in the gender relationships and in the family. We identified

serious games as a **behavioural lever for learning by doing** and we proposed two main methodological tools: 1) **the immersive characteristics of a 4.0 ICT serious game**. By simulating a simplified version of reality, the serious game helps people understand variables, causes and effects impacting decisions in the real world through role playing exercises; and 2) **Professional's support to the emotional and behavioural self-assessment experience**. Their participation has many advantages: to help identify perpetrators' emotions and thoughts and guide the experience of violence alternative behaviour. Moreover, our methodology included a **robust evaluation procedure** (see section 10) following the before and after comparison, and the differences in different methodology, based on the use of both qualitative and quantitative instruments. In this perspective, the complementary use of qualitative and quantitative tools was like an epistemological need to validate hypothesis on mental and social functioning, by intersecting indexes and data obtained through heterogeneous tools (Moro, et al., 2002).

ViDaCS provides an EU added value by developing, implementing and validating an innovative practice for the domestic violence perpetrators' self-assessment; this practice is based on immersive emotional experiences, such 4.0 serious game. Indeed, although several intervention programs about perpetrators have been developed in the EU, they a) do not include this kind of methodology; and b) do not deepen fatherhood as a motivating factor. These points have addressed by ViDaCS, thus providing an added value to the current EU state of art in the field: ViDaCS created also the first serious game on perpetrators' self-assessment to develop in the EU with these features. As additional value:

- a) the program itself is a multiagency protocol, involving professionals from domestic violence services ranging from health, social, educational and judiciary sectors; and
- b) the program is a pilot proposal to intercept "silent" perpetrators in all different contexts.

Although ViDaCS is a national project, its transnational impact will be guaranteed by an intensive dissemination, increasing public awareness of domestic violence perpetrators and directly involving all the Academic and non-Academic contacts already established by all the Consortium's members in previous experiences.

The analytical plan-model

The project team devoted its energy and competences to the constitution of the ViDaCS analytical plan model aimed at contrasting violence of men against women, on the assumption that this type of violence is most common in family relationships, as reported in European and national statistics (WHO, 2012; Istat, 2007, 2017; Sorrentino et al., 2020).

Specifically, the ViDaCS plan proposes a theoretical and operational model to understand and identify appropriate implementation measures for fighting gender violence, and in particular, domestic violence.

In an ecological perspective, the ViDaCS theoretical and operational model focusses on violence, regarding its trigger factors and its effects, and analyses the roles and responsibilities of all those who are dramatically involved in it.

The ViDaCS project aimed at applying an integrated and holistic theoretical and operational model for understanding and intervening on domestic violence, overcoming the fragmentation of measures to contrast gender violence. The ViDaCS model helps in defining problems and possible solutions.

The ViDaCS plan responds to the indications and needs which emerged from the personnel interviews (chapters 2 and 3) and training activities at theoretical, experiential and operational levels (chapters 8,9,10); The data collected by interviewing the personnel involved in fighting gender violence services are relevant (see chapters 2 and 3) and the research data, whilst located in a situated territorial context, confirm the international as well as national literature (See Part 3). Obviously, some data collected are specific the expression of cultural and social characteristics of the territorial context where the Project is implemented.

A brief description of the Neapolitan context, where ViDaCS is being implemented, will be also given (see chapter 1).

Our aim was then to learn from the experience of people dealing with gender-based violence acquiring knowledge from all different points of view. Therefore, the project aimed to collect the voices of school age children, gathering their experience and feelings about the most significant moments of family life. These data were very important for the construction of the serious game. From the children's experience we learn which colours, words and sounds they associate with their family life and therefore help us in the construction of the game. Chapter 6 will introduce the reader to this experience conducted in collaboration with the Department of Humanities, Terzo Settore and Roots in action.

The project innovation is in the wide use of information technology communication tools.

The communication needs and objectives of ViDaCS were related to different kinds of target groups and to different moments of the project's realization. Communication needs and objectives can be summarized as follows:

- To reach end beneficiaries in order to guarantee an adequate participation in the project activities (a recognizable logo and image of the project was useful);
- To share the ongoing and final results of the project with scientific and local communities;
- To create the opportunity for ViDaCS to be multiplied;
- To identify the right way of talking and communicate about domestic violence perpetrators.

To adequately satisfy these needs we organized a work package specifically dealing with dissemination/communication. CTS, with great experience in advocacy campaigns, has been expressly involved in the Consortium to distribute the knowledge generated by the project within its network of professionals/organizations fighting domestic violence. Target groups and multipliers addressed for dissemination were: *Relevant stakeholders* from private and public sectors working against domestic violence that could be interested in disseminating the ViDaCS program, promoting its sustainability and establishing strong relationships with our Consortium; *Scientific communities* in Social Sciences to spread methods and scientific results. The key messages of our communication and dissemination activities deal with the urgency of intercepting a high number of "silent" domestic violence perpetrators through a multiagency effort among professionals, Academia, third sector and local communities; and the importance of fatherhood in the engagement of domestic violence perpetrators. Tools and strategies were to be carefully defined in a Dissemination and communication plan. To reach target groups and ensure effective dissemination, we organized 3 main moments through traditional and web-based communication channels:

- a) The launch (M4–7) - to present the project: presentation conference (Naples), flyers, advertisement on journals, on-line bulletins, links to friends' websites, TV/radio ads, flash mob and a logo; In-itinere at Villa delle Ginesstre (M8–21); along the implementation: a) channels to spread ViDaCS in the scientific community: participation in national and international congresses, articles on international peer-reviewed journals;

- b) channels to reach web users: project website, social network page, YouTube channel, periodical newsletter; Final (M22–24); to spread results: dissemination kit with user manual, one final international conference. To facilitate further use/transferability: we realized a dissemination kit in English freely downloadable from the ViDaCS website, including the final version of the serious game and a user manual to accompany its application in new contexts. The final conference hosted international key experts to facilitate the international dissemination and exchange about domestic violence perpetrators issue.

Innovativeness in Prevention, Communication and Dissemination

Chapter 4 introduces the world of the serious game with preventative aims, also describing the procedures and the steps we followed to construct the ViDaCS serious game. In fact, as Bruna Falanga of Protom Group S.p.A. stated “Serious Games represent an important opportunity for improving education thanks to their ability to compel players and to present realistic simulations of real-life situations”.

Then a further specific chapter (5) is devoted to the description of the whole use of social media for the dissemination of the activities during the project. The construction and the use of www.vidacs.eu as well as the Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/vidacsEU/>) will be described. The aim is to bring the reader into the virtual domain, highlighting its potentiality for preventative projects.

Innovativeness in Training Proposal and Organization

Moreover, the use of music therapy, a special innovative training and communication strategy, is presented by Oscar Pisanti. Chapter 7 will explain the rationale for the use of this approach and chapters 6, 8 and 9 will specifically describe its use during the project.

Furthermore, the volume includes all the materials, procedures and findings related to the training activities for professionals conducted as Theoretical-experiential training and Operational training (8 and 9). These activities are addressed to health and social operators working in the field of *intimate partner violence* (IPV) in domestic contexts. The theoretical-experiential training was

structured in three sessions and has been planned as a preliminary action to train professionals specialized in ViDaCS project and methodology, motivated to take part in the piloting and implementation of ViDaCS serious game as a specific treatment for perpetrators. Indeed, the participation in the theoretical-experiential training was open to a large audience of professionals, in order to contribute to awareness-raising of perpetrators in the domestic environment. However, among all the participants a group of 15 operators, members of the Partners' organization, were selected to later pilot and implement the game. To this end, the theoretical-experiential training has been developed in strong connection with the operational one, reserved only for the selected 15 operators as specifically described in chapters 8, 9 and 10. The specialized training for professional was aimed at implementing the skills of operators that support men that were the ViDaCS beneficiaries, during the ViDaCS game session. This specialized training allowed all operators to experiment with ViDaCS serious game, in order to learn both useful and necessary technical and relational procedures during the game session. Furthermore, during the training activity, much space was dedicated to how handling one's own emotional experiences in order to allow greater awareness in the relationship with men who acted violence in their intimate relationship. The training days were also a useful opportunity to integrate the work group and strengthen exchanges between all the operators involved in the implementation of the central activity of the project.

The ViDaCS serious game and its evaluation

Chapter 11 then presents the effective results acquired by the use of the planned ViDaCS videogame (see chapter 4): its goals, use, strategies and a preliminary evaluation of its efficacy in contrasting gender-based intimate partner violence.

Moreover, a companion booklet presents the ViDaCS *Training kit*; here methodological and operational guidelines for running the ViDaCS training are provided, including tools and materials. The training kit has been created with the purpose of providing a wide audience with all the necessary training materials. Thus, it is in the Italian language.

Last but not least, the second part of the volume (chapters 12,13,14) present the whole planning, monitoring, and evaluation activity developed throughout the project and its final concerns. This description of the project strategies will

highlight the methodological knowledge and acquisition needed for successful implementation of a shared project.

Finally, the practical guidelines will allow diffusion of the use of ViDaCS in any EU country. Moreover, ViDaCS will be easily transferable to other EU Countries thanks to its dissemination kit that will be translated into English and downloadable from the ViDaCS website.

New funding opportunities will be explored to allow further experimentation of ViDaCS on an international scale.

The rationale for our Consortium is **multiagency**: we have included both an Academic Institution, **Dipartimento di Studi umanistici dell'Università Federico II**, experienced in research and training with a wide experience in fighting gender-based violence (whose added value is the collaboration of Mind Gender Language PhD students and scholars) and **Oltre la violenza (OLV), center of the public health system (Asl Na1 Centro)** for perpetrator treatment brought its competence on treatments. Associations with strong territorial/international links to schools, centres and child protection systems (**Consorzio Terzo Settore (CTS)** and **Roots In Action (RIA)**), special Rehabilitation Center skilled in the therapeutic use of serious game **Villa delle Ginestre (VDG)** as well as a private entrepreneur for the construction of serious game (**PROTOM Group s.p.a.**) are also part of the consortium.

These territorial organizations fulfil the call aims by guaranteeing the involvement of several agencies fighting against gender-based violence. They have worked side-by-side for the design, implementation and supervision of the ViDaCS self-assessment and treatment package, thus ensuring a multidisciplinary work. We selected Partners among the most active in fighting gender-based violence with previous collaborations among them and with DSU, to guarantee a consolidated working team. DSU has a great deal of multidisciplinary experience in gender violence issues, prevention, organizational and community strategies for the empowerment of social and health personnel in dealing with gender violence perpetrators and victims. As a strength, we have included RIA, an innovative association for social promotion focused especially on sensitization through music and creative expression. Its expertise in developing innovative prototypes of intervention based on music therapy and psychological support will provide the technical skills for the theoretical-experiential training. We choose RIA because it also includes associates with research/scientific skills and gender issues specific competencies. We also considered as an opportunity the PROTOM S.p.A. experience in management and technical facilities for research and development

in the context of the ICT of Local Public Administration. Protom Group is in fact our technological pillar, being the first Italian group specialized in designing and construction of innovative technological devices, *knowledge & technology intensive* (KTI) focused on innovative teaching and educational programs for Virtual & Augmented Reality. In this special case, innovative technologies have supported an ambitious awareness program to contrast gender-based violence.

As public authorities we then involved the Campania Region Equal Opportunities Department (MP Chiara Marciano) and the Campania Region Equal Opportunities Commission both with addressing and coordinating functions in the local health and social system. We selected public authorities for public support (i.e. the Commission to fight gender-based violence and femicide, pres. On Valeria Valente), to ensure a capillary diffusion of the project among the local social and health services, thus guaranteeing the participation of personnel in training and implementation.

The Consortium was coordinated through careful project management, through project meetings, online meetings, a Central Project Office and a Strategic Management Committee. Another strength was the multidisciplinary aspect of our core project team, to be extended by recruiting personnel with previous experience in child psychopathology prevention.

The whole project is a challenging innovative strategy for fighting gender-based violence that in an ecological approach attempts to reach men, encouraging their reflectivity on their domestic behaviour and pursuing better emotional regulation for themselves.

Part 1

1. ViDaCS model to promote awareness about gender-based violence' perpetrators

*Immacolata Di Napoli, Stefania Carnevale,
Fortuna Procentese, Caterina Arcidiacono*

Women's violence is a widespread phenomenon in the European context. 62.000 women have reported violence (FRA, 2014), particularly in the Italian context, and 27% have been victims of violence. Violence against women has traditionally been framed as an issue for women and children (European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights 2014; WHO, 2013, 2014). In some ways, men have been excluded from the conversation, the reason being that men often are perpetrators of that violence. In recent years, this issue has increasingly involved men in the search for solutions, both actively through information, education, and promotion of a non-violence and equal rights culture, and in terms of treatment programs for the offenders (see: Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women, Proclaimed by General Assembly resolution 48/104 of 20 December 1993, Recommendation Rec (2002)5 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on the protection of women against violence, Istanbul Convention, art. 16, points 1, 2 e 3).

Europe has a twenty-year experience in the treatment of perpetrators, while in Italy this is a new intervention area. In fact, the first Italian center was introduced in 2009, and it is generally oriented toward following international examples and treatment guidelines which have adopted a feminist approach (Bozzoli, Merelli & Ruggerini, 2017). In Italy the perpetrators can access a center only by a voluntary request, and there is no legal form established with the judicial system. However, the Court, lawyers, as well as social services can advise the perpetrators informally about the specific treatment available to them. Currently, in Italy there are 44 centers and organizations for the intervention and treatment for perpetrators, distributed as follow: 34 centers in the North and in the center of Italy and 10 centers in South Italy, but only 1 within the public health system (OLV, Asl Na 1 Centro). Italian centers each receive about 30 requests per year of which only 15 perpetrators (on average) undertake treatment, and of whom 40% abandon after the first phase of treatment. Merzagora (2009) explains that the perpetrators' voluntary access to treatment produces low demand, so there is a huge number of

perpetrators that remains obscure. The difficulty of thinking of the perpetrator: as a problem to deal with, as an area of possible change and as a resource; these are the principal cultural obstacles that contribute to moderate demand for treatment (Deriu, 2017). In Campania Region “Oltre la violenza” (ASL Napoli 1 center) shows the same trend compared to the number of clients as other Italian services. In Campania, the low activity of perpetrators’ service is explained in consideration of a strong patriarchal family culture and a recent spread of the culture of perpetrator treatment. In this sense, Campania shows similar contextual and cultural features as the Eastern European and Baltic countries, as Wojnicka (2015) observes. The perpetrators’ difficulty in adhering to treatment programs leads the researchers and professionals to focus their attention on motivational factors that can support perpetrators and avoid the drop out. To face a low request and adherence to treatment of perpetrators and ensure the success of the programmes for domestic abuse perpetrators, the Council of Europe (2008) stresses the importance of intervention that increase motivation to change. There has been limited focus on perpetrator’s social accountability in their role as fathers up until recently (Featherstone & Peckover, 2007; Smith Stover, 2013; Strega et al., 2008). Although the recent attention focuses on parental accountability when exposing children to abusive behaviour (Featherstone & Peckover, 2007; Humphreys & Absler, 2011; Strega et al., 2008), little attention has been paid to the role of fatherhood identity as a motivating factor to create insight into the need for behaviour change (Stanley et al., 2012). Given these premises the project Violent Dad in Child’s Shoes (ViDaCS) aims at supporting the programs for perpetrators, offering an instrument to promote an aware self-assessment of violent behaviour in domestic environment based on the recognition of the effects of violence on their children.

ViDaCS project aims at contrasting violence of men against women, assuming that this type of violence is mostly common in family relationships, as European and national statistics denounce (WHO, 2012; Istat, 2007, 2017).

Specifically, ViDaCS proposes a theoretical and operational model to understand and identify appropriate implementation measures fighting gender violence, and in particular domestic violence.

In an ecological perspective, the ViDaCS theoretical and operational model (henceforth ViDaCS model) focuses on violence, regarding its trigger factors and its effects, and analyses the roles and responsibilities of all those are dramatically involved in it.

1. ViDaCS model to promote awareness about gender-based violence' perpetrators

The aim of ViDaCS project aims at applying an integrated and holistic theoretical and operational model for understanding and intervention of domestic violence, overcoming the fragmentation of measures to contrast gender violence. ViDaCS model helps in defining of problems and possible solutions.

ViDaCS theoretical and operational model

The ViDaCS model is implemented for combating gender violence, and in particular domestic violence.

The literature supports that the prevalent domestic violence manifestation is the violence that men act on women in the presence of children (Devries et al., 2013; Garcia-Moreno & Watts, 2011). The domestic violence expressions, predominantly between intimate partners, are: emotional, psychological, physical, sexual violence, abuse, control, threatening behaviour and coercion (Ruddle et al., 2017).

Therefore, ViDaCS model is addressed mainly to intervene in ending intimate partner violence (IPV). The challenge of the ViDaCS project has been to ensure maximum dissemination of the model proposed among all those involved in contrasting gender violence services and, in particular, in domestic violence, creating a productive collaborative network that intercepts stories of invisible domestic violence reaching those perpetrators not involved in justice processes.

The invisible perpetrators are identified as the “unsuspecting” man, socially integrated but who manifests a psychological need to evacuate difficult emotional experiences to tolerate, defensively blaming women for their violent behaviour.

In an ecological perspective (Prilleltensky & Prilleltensky, 2007a), ViDaCS project proposes a holistic and multidimensional model for understanding and intervening to reduce violence of men against women; the multidimensional approach is widely supported in order to identify the risk factors of violent behaviour (Krug et al., 2002; WHO, 2010).

The ecological approach integrates different levels: individual, relational, organizational and collective/community; these levels are already analysed in the literature, but mostly separately from each other.

According to Di Napoli et al. (2019) we can see how different dimensions interact at different levels (see fig 1).

Violent dad in child shoes. A moment before

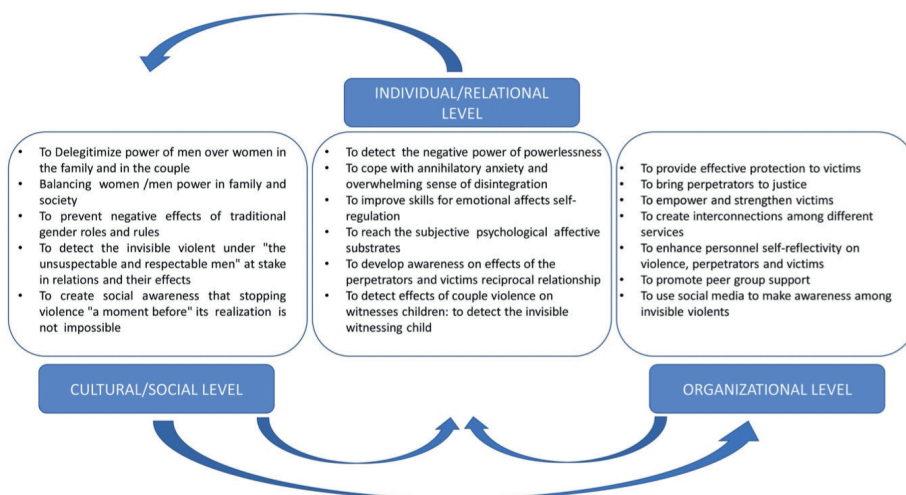


Figure 1. The ecological model and operationalization of goals and actions at different levels. Source: Di Napoli et al., 2019

The monitoring of the effectiveness of services and the main recommendations to end IPV and its effects are detailed below for each level.

Collective/Community Level

At the collective level, we suggest interventions to promote a new cultural system based on the values of respect and fairness between men and women, with the goal of ending gender violence and IPV, in particular. The following three specific areas for action are suggested.

Policies

- To develop policies that improve upon the actions of the legal system and enhance cultural values of respect and fairness between men and women, with the goal of ending gender violence and IPV, in particular related to acknowledging the existence of violence and overcoming it.
- Train educational, health and social services professionals to deal with their own fears.

Educational interventions

- To formalize a protocol outlining modes of collaboration with educational institutions to disseminate the values of respect and fairness with the aim of deconstructing traditional gender roles rooted in the patriarchal culture.

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- b) To support laboratories using participatory and experiential methods that are aimed at emotional experiences and which will facilitate access to the most intimate social representations learned in family contexts.
- c) Enhance interventions at schools intended to create a network between schools and the services dedicated to uncovering cases of IPV, in order to prevent its effects on children's well-being and social integration.

Promote family well-being

- a) To formalize a protocol outlining modes of collaboration with educational institutions to disseminate the values of respect and fairness with the aim of deconstructing traditional gender roles rooted in the patriarchal culture.
- b) To support laboratories using participatory and experiential methods that are aimed at emotional experiences and which will facilitate access to the most intimate social representations learned in family contexts.
- c) To enhance interventions at schools intended to create a network between schools and the services dedicated to uncovering cases of IPV, in order to prevent its effects on children's well-being and social integration.

In this regard, we recommend promoting a culture of family wellbeing where mothers are respected and fathers' responsibilities are more visible and recognized in politics, history and practice. At a collective level, this signifies a recognition of their paternal role in promoting family well-being, in addition to increasing men's awareness of their own responsibilities

At the organizational level, our recommendations aim to:

- a) Promote a collaborative network between the services that deal with gender violence, victims and perpetrators;
- b) Define common and synergistic procedures in order to avoid the fragmentation of interventions against violence, especially when the financial resources allocated towards this goal are limited;
- c) Support the development of perpetrator treatment and professional capacity building, and;
- d) Sign a memorandum of understanding with local police, urging stronger collaboration among the network that precedes victim intake and introduction to intervention services, directed at perpetrators who have been subject to legal action.

Furthermore, our model highlights the need to:

- e) Increase health and legal services and projects, where personnel are able to recognise the severity of perpetrators' treatment and to use evaluation tools to define their dangerousness, such as the SARA (Spousal Assault Risk Assessment) approach outlined by Baldry (2016). Furthermore, health professionals and law enforcement officers should be able to recognise the severity and potential repetitiveness of IPV using the appropriate tools, such as VITA (Intimate Violence and Traumatic Affects Scale (Troisi 2019), a self-reporting instrument used to assess the intensity of the post-traumatic affects deriving from IPV.
- f) Create reflection groups in service contexts to support personnel dealing with gender violence.
- g) Enhance the effectiveness of protective measures provided by services directed towards women, particularly among: Emergency units able to recognize signs of physical and psychological violence; Effective opportunities for protection (i.e., shelter houses); and opportunities for economic independence (job placements, etc.); and
- h) Support services focused on men to discover "invisible perpetrators," who may be the bedrock of femicide.

Moreover, concerning women, there is a need to deal with the denial of their own suffering, shame, guilt and terror.

At a relational level, these recommendations are directed towards staff and, in particular, towards everyone who has contact with perpetrators of violence. Specific training will be necessary, and training programs should strive to:

- Establish a specific model for understanding violent behaviour;
- Increase reflexivity, allowing personnel to become aware of their own emotions and thoughts, while facilitating their ability to avoid taking a one-sided position;
- Support staff in coping with the denial mechanisms typically used by perpetrators, while encouraging perpetrators to reduce their denial mechanisms, increasing their awareness of the harms caused by witnessing violence; and
- Increase the staff's skills in facilitating processes designed to make perpetrators aware of their violent actions and to help them find new strategies for coping with negative emotions.

We also suggest the introduction of discussion groups among staff, in order to provide them with a time and place for group reflection on their experiences in treating perpetrators.

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Furthermore, there is the need to draw greater attention to the prejudices and perceptions of the perpetrators of violence, in, addition to the denial and disdain that men often bring into treatment

Specific recommendations are aimed at reaching the “invisible” perpetrators, those who are socially well-integrated, and who are not involved in the legal system. Invisible perpetrators are those who are socially well-established but who cannot refrain from violence in their intimate relationship.

Our guidelines for the interventions should augment perpetrators’ awareness of what happens “a moment before” with the aim of increasing their motivation to request help for their unsafe emotional experiences before their violent actions; in addition, increasing their motivation to request help will be stimulated by their paternal responsibilities. Finally, the end of the patriarchy poses new emotional challenges that stimulate their paternal responsibilities and for men and women, creates the need to develop new forms of reciprocal relationships to overcome each new risk, fear and addiction.

Figure 2 summarizes the different steps of our ecological model, highlighting the goals, actions and actors and their interdependence within the given time frame.

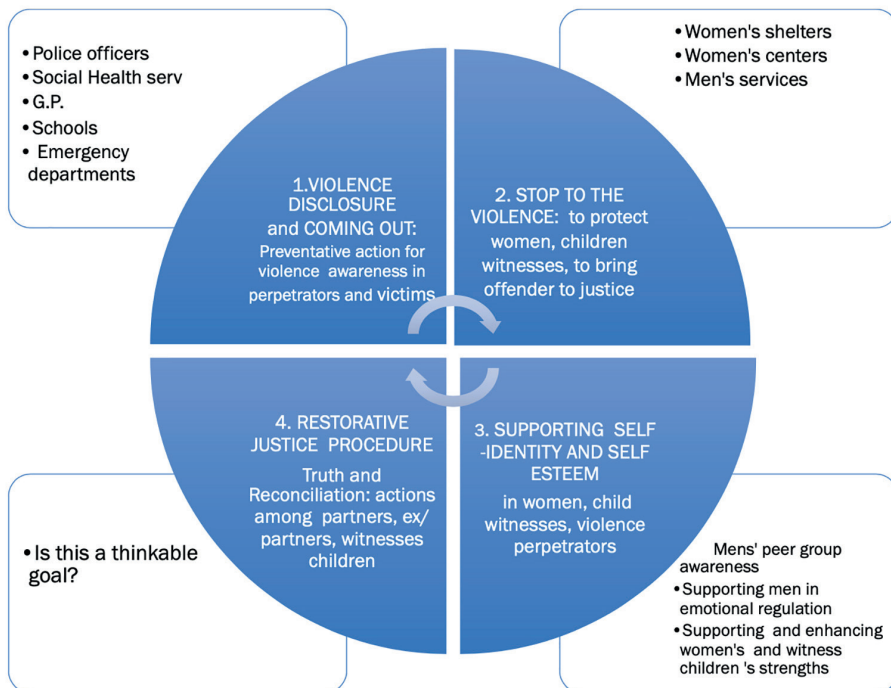


Figure 2. The ecological approach: Goals, actions and actors set at different level in their interdependence and in the time frame (source Di Napoli et al.,2019)

Last, but not least, services aimed at protecting victims and those designed to prevent and treat the violent actions of male partners must interact when handling these cases. This is the first step towards a new pact between men and women designed to prevent gender-based violence and its effects on emotional and relational life” (Di Napoli et al., 2019, p. 13-15).

To better understand the specificity of the ecological approach used in the ViDaCS model, a brief and concise description of the different approaches proposed in the literature is given in the following paragraph.

ViDaCS model and its application

In this paragraph, ViDaCS is presented in its application during the project. Following a sequence from the collective to the individual level, each is integrated by some principal data emerging from qualitative research (see next chapter) to identify the needs in contrasting IPV in the territorial area where the ViDaCS project is carried out. This description is an example of operative application of ViDaCS model.

Collective/community level

In an ecological approach the ViDaCS model assumes that the collective level in its cultural, legislative and political elements has a strong influence on the construction of the collective perception of gender violence and, consequently, has a strong impact on individual ‘psychological growth.

The ViDaCS model considers the cultural dimension expressed in social representations and in the ways of establishing social, as well as, intimate relationships.

The model that inspires ViDaCS assumes the inevitable interconnections between the collective levels that are closer to the individuals.

We introduce, as an example, a briefly description of the context where the ViDaCS project is being implemented.

Naples, a metropolitan city of Mediterranean Europe, is an interesting case study for examining domestic violence, as it is a territorial context in which historically patriarchal culture has been firmly rooted and has influenced women’s social condition.

In Italy patriarchal stereotypes concerning family life and women’s representations are still widespread (Arcidiacono, 2016). High female unemployment (only

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48.89% of women between 16-64 years are employed) is a specifically gender based problem strictly connected to women's role and their quality of life.

In the last year 30,000 women have resigned from work because of pregnancy; childcare services are inadequate (EUROSTAT, 2017) and there are only 22.5 places in child nurseries for every 100 children ages 0-3 years (ISTAT, 2016); furthermore, although Italian law is promoting life-work balance, and recent regulations according to the EU Istanbul convention are fighting against gender-based violence, overcoming gender inequality is still a major goal; i.e. the 2016 gender global index gap rates Italy in 50th position and the US as 45th in comparison with Iceland, Finland and Norway respectively at first, second and third place (<http://reports.weforum.org/global-gender-gap-report-2016/rankings/rate>).

Naples is characterized by a high rate of unemployment, which penalizes above all women, in their economic autonomy and social realization.

The poor social recognition of women's emancipation is also reflected in women's search for reciprocal support with other women.

A study with women's associations active in Naples and its province shows that the support of women offers mutual solidarity and support but not a strategy for increasing visibility and advocacy for women's recognition and empowerment (Procentese, et al., 2019b).

These socio-cultural characteristics make the Neapolitan area an interesting case study for the whole Mediterranean European area, and for the understanding of the cultural system that have influenced the relationship between men and women.

Organizational level

The organizational level examines how services, such as social services, public security, parishes, schools, neighborhoods, extended families, doctors, hospitals and the workplace, interact with each other and how they produce resources and support in the direct or indirect management of domestic violence.

Interaction between the services is an essential element, because it offers support, resources and participation, thereby creating a functional network in fighting domestic violence.

At the organizational level, the interconnections between the services contrasting domestic violence in the territorial community, where ViDaCS is being implemented, are inexistent. The qualitative data collected reveals that support among services and collaborative participation in the management of domestic violence is lacking, due to:

- *Absence of knowledge between the services that deal with victims and those who deal with the perpetrators*

Among the respondents, poor awareness of current interventions and treatment of the perpetrators of domestic violence towards partners or ex-partners emerged. This is due to either the specificity of the work setting of the respondents (e.g., anti-violence centres) or to a personal lack of interest and awareness of the issue.

All the respondents highlighted the importance and the need for sharing and collaborating among the various institutions and organizations active in the field, even though in reality there appears to be a lack of communication between anti-violence centres for woman and those dedicated to men.

- *Distrust towards possible and effective collaboration between the services*
The resignation towards the difficulty of change in men who perpetrate domestic violence brings to light the issue of the already scarce funds dedicated to anti-violence centres for women.
- *Absence of a common and integrated model of domestic violence*

From the qualitative data collected, it emerges that the operators working at the centres fighting gender violence do not share a common model for understanding violence.

Personnel working exclusively with women use a more ‘feminist’ and social approach in their representation of domestic violence, while those working in a more systemic perspective present a rather multidimensional and ecological approach to the phenomenon, recognising the different levels: individual (rational and emotional), relational and sociocultural.

The absence of a common model of domestic violence makes the exchange more difficult among the services fighting against gender violence.

On the contrary, having a common model would facilitate the creation of a network including the services fighting gender violence that intercept the invisible perpetrators, raising their willingness to request help.

Relational organizational level

At a relational level, the intervention procedures adopted by personnel have been taken into consideration. These modalities, affected by the operators’ social representations and emotions towards the protagonists of the violent scene, can inadvertently negatively influence the taking charge of domestic violence.

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In particular, this issue was stressed when the operators were faced with the perpetrator, as seen both by the interviews conducted and the activity of the 2-day workshops. In fact, operators' fear and anger towards the perpetrators as well as their collusion with the perpetrators' modality of denial lead the personnel respectively to an attitude of refusal towards the perpetrator or to the minimization of the violent act. Specialized training is useful for all those working in gender violence services to improve their procedure for managing both victims and perpetrators (see chapters 8 and 9).

Individual and relational level

At an individual level, the analysis is directed towards the individual's characteristics and their ways of establishing intimate relationships.

Based on the data collected by the interviews with those working in the field, the ViDaCS model proposes to illustrate only the main characteristics attributed to the perpetrator.

The choice of dealing only with perpetrators' characteristics is linked to the purpose of the ViDaCS project, which aims at implementing an emotional and behavioural self-assessment package dedicated to the perpetrators to enhance their motivation to the treatments dedicated to them.

The representation of male perpetrators of violence emerges as being non-stereotypical, and, as for women, there is no specific social class or generalisation to be made. However, often the men present the following traits: Fragility and pathological narcissism (power based on maintaining the oppressed); Seductiveness and manipulation (even with treatment personnel, male and female); Difficulty in communicating and reasoning; these are men who "act" out their emotions, as they find it difficult to tolerate the reasoning process. This confirms what in literature is defined as lack of emotion regulation and self-regulation (Cole, Martin, & Dennis, 2004; Cook et al., 2005) and lack of interpersonal skills (Davies & Cummings, 1994).

Concerning the perpetrators' possibilities of change, the motivation is strictly related to: the presence of children: paternity is defined as a "double-edged sword" and a grey area; it can become a cause for violence ("the beginning of the violence often starts with a pregnancy" many stated), the object of emotional blackmail, an instrument for control over the woman (denying authorisations in the case of minors); the threat of the loss of the woman and/or the role as father; the loss of a loved one (e.g. a parent); Internal and authentic motivation (support-

Violent dad in child shoes. A moment before

ed by insight) is considered the most valid for the maintenance of treatment and change; and extrinsic motivation, like that supported by law enforcement and court orders, or by a partner's wishes, brings about a higher chance of either not applying for treatment or non-compliance in a short time.

2. Intimate partner violence: victims and perpetrators in the voice of professionals

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Introduction

In-field research was conducted to give voice to the various actors of different systems involved with domestic violence in order to inspire the correct planning and implementation of ViDaCS serious game and professional skills building.

The study offers an overview of the social representation of specialists and stakeholders working in the field of domestic violence, along with the needs and resources they have highlighted within the context of the project.

In order to produce a serious game capable of representing the widespread phenomenon of domestic violence, a preliminary study of literature was carried out (see Part 3), describing the motivation and assessment of men who want to stop their violent behaviour in the domestic environment.

The research

Participants: 45 women and 5 men with experience in the prevention, management and treatment of domestic violence were selected to be interviewed. There were aged between 27- 70, both volunteers and professionals with years of service ranging from 1 to 45, with different professional roles: psychologists, psychotherapists, social workers, honorary judges, technical consultants, regional councillors, public health administrators (A.S.L. NA 1 Centro), family mediators, educators, lawyers, criminologists, nurses, emergency doctors, Regione Campania officials).

The respondents were selected among cultural, political, healthcare and social workers involved with domestic violence. 46% of the respondents had personally worked with perpetrators and the others had been directly involved with victims of violence or in the design and execution of ad hoc projects.

Procedure and methodology

Non-probability sampling was used. Contacts were made by telephone to make appointments, following the identification of the most highly accredited settings and professionals in the city of Naples. The interviews, conducted by two psychologists involved in the project, were held in the work settings of the respondents or on the premises of Federico II University. They were held in a quiet private environment and lasted from 30 minutes to 2 hours, with an average of 50 minutes. Much attention was paid to the respondents' convenience regarding appointment times and dates, offering the use of the university facilities for the interviews. Respondents signed an informed consent form and authorised the use of the data collected for research purposes.

Instruments

A focused interview format (Arcidiacono,2012) was used. This research instrument offers the opportunity of developing the researcher's themes of interest while allowing the respondent to propose themes and subjects of their own interests. It does not include predetermined questions, but offers a guideline to the themes to discuss, a 'blank canvas' which guides the interviewer in the interaction. The structure and the conducting of the interview presume a familiarity of the themes discussed and the general and specific aims of the study, along with interview conduction skills. The interviewer must be able to recognise the innovative and specific contribution of the respondents, in order to delve into the enriching new content, and must know how to not pass judgement while keeping up an active and stimulating attitude towards the interlocutor and their reflexivity skills (Suffla et al., 2015).

The themes of interest of the interviews were the following:

- a) Expectations, desires and motivation regarding the profession in reference to the management of domestic violence perpetrators; Representation of the phenomenon of domestic violence. Representation of women as victims; Representation of the perpetrator; Representation of the experiences of children who have been exposed to violence;
- b) Procedures of intervention which have been used and those suggested but not yet put into practice;
- c) Workers gender bias in therapeutic relationships; and
- d) The settings of violence.

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These categories were identified in relation to the aims of the study (to examine the experience of the perpetrator and their perception) and of the project (to construct and experiment a serious game aimed at awareness on the part of the perpetrator).

The interviews were audio recorded and transcribed, and analysed according to Braun & Clark thematic analysis (2006). The following are the thematic analysis results of the interviews, presented in the light of what has been described in literature until now.

Results

Expectations, desires and motivation regarding the profession in reference to the management of domestic violence perpetrators

Among the respondents a poor awareness of current interventions and treatment of the perpetrators of domestic violence towards partners or ex-partners emerged. This is due to either the specificity of the work setting of the respondents (e.g., anti-violence centres) or to a personal lack of interest and awareness of the issue.

At the same time most of the respondents declared themselves to be absolutely in favour of interventions for the perpetrators of domestic violence, but in settings dedicated exclusively to the treatment of women a consensus subject to economic issues came up. The resignation towards the difficulty of change in men who perpetrate domestic violence brings to light the issue of the already scarce funds dedicated to anti-violence centres for women. Funding for men seems to be seen as ‘wasted’ compared to the great need for providing for the victims of violence committed by these men, as if intervening on these men were not a resource but a useless investment.

It is important to note that only recently funding for the protection, management and support for victims of domestic violence has been granted, and that projects aimed at perpetrators fall under this general budget, both for the national and for regional funding bodies.

The respondents suggest a management intervention for the perpetrator which develops via different levels of action:

- Divulcation: information and training of awareness, especially in schools and specific and non-specific services law enforcement, healthcare settings etc.

- Education: Mostly about how childhood is the real potential turning point for the much-needed social and cultural change;
- Treatment: The non-psychologists mostly talk about the effectiveness of psycho-educational intervention, while the psychologists believe psychotherapeutic interventions are more appropriate for the treatment of these men.

In regards to communication and comparison among all the applications of treatment of the phenomenon, all the respondents highlight the importance and the need for sharing and collaboration between the various institutions and organizations active in the field, even though in reality there appears to be a lack of communication between anti-violence centres for woman and those dedicated to men.

Representation of the phenomenon of violence

Domestic violence is defined during the interviews as the type of violence which takes place “inside the home”, within the context of a relationship which “should” offer love, serenity and protection, a place of “care” in which, paradoxically, one can also lose one’s life.

As in literature (Cross Riddle, 2017), the respondents highlighted all the manifestations of violence. These include emotional, psychological, physical, sexual, abusive, controlling and threatening violence and bullying. The respondents underlined, above all, economic and psychological violence as being the least visible violence recognised by individuals and by legislation.

Respondents exclusively working with women use a more ‘feminist’ and social approach in their representation of domestic violence, affirming the role of patriarchal culture and gender stereotypes among the causes of domestic violence. This is perpetrated by men, as Chiurazzi e Arcidiacono state (2017), in order to maintain or re-establish their control over women.

Furthermore, for this reason, interviewees confirm the existence of the cyclic nature of violence which is defined in literature by Walker (2009). This manifests in the alternating of explosions of tension with reconciliation, followed by forgiveness, thus keeping the women “tied” to the man without any modification of the relationship; the forgiveness re-bonds the woman to her partner, perpetuating the violence.

On the other hand, those working in more systematic settings seem to present a more multidimensional perspective and an ecological approach to the phenomenon, recognising the different levels: individual, rational and sociocultural.

2. Intimate partner violence: victims and perpetrators in the voice of professionals

This perspective, as defined in literature by Prilleltensky & Prilleltensky (2007b), offers a more holistic and complete view of male violence towards women, and examines the issue from different points of view.

All the respondents confirm the influence of family and personal history on the perpetrator's acquisition of models of violence. According to literature, on a family and relationship level, the theory of attachment would be the most widely accepted to explain domestic violence (Dutton & White 2012; Ogilvie et al., 2014), whereby the influence of the family would be the cause of the actual violence, and can perpetuate throughout generations according to role scripts passed on from parents to children (Pollak, 2004).

As far as risk factors are concerned, Ruddle et al. (2017) also observed: inadequate family relationships, parents' violence and developmental mental disorders.

According to the respondents, confirming these aspects, this influence can be manifested through:

- Reiteration of shared family gender roles, bias and stigma;
- Repetition of experienced violent behaviour;
- The woman's belief that the violence experienced is "normal", interpreted as "too much love"; and
- A constant expectation by the man of confirmation of power as identity.

In classic feminism and sexual difference theory (Irigaray 1974; Cavarero, 1987; Muraro 1995) the real origin of male power is found in patriarchal logic, wherein the male gender is based on the concept of masculinity which is seen as strength, power, possession and superiority.

As far as conflictual relationships that give rise to violence are concerned, the interviewees confirm the aspects highlighted by Chiurazzi and Arcidiacono (2017), namely destructivity (in both a material and psychological sense) and Control and Frailness of identity.

The former manifests itself through the breaking of objects, physical violence and also through a series of demands that "cancel out" the other person determining an ongoing sort of psychological death. The woman is controlled in every move, threatened and belittled. All forms of freedom are denied to her.

The latter, it is reported, is when the man's identity is structured around the woman's identity, his strength and superiority are based on her weakness and inferiority, and she is kept immobile "at all costs" so he does not lose his identity as a man.

In addition, these types of relationships may also involve:

Connivance and collusion, not to be confused with the justification of the man, nor placing the blame on the woman. The woman “shares” the convictions and dynamics of the violent relationship, providing her motivation is not merely economic:

- Mutual affective dependency between the two partners;
- Economic dependency of the woman;
- Jealousy and possessiveness of the man; and
- Expectation of adhesion to gender roles.

Violence therefore manifests itself, according to the interviewees through:

- Destruction of material objects and “psychological destruction” of the woman through isolation, disparagement (sometimes also seen in the woman towards the man), limitations of freedom (prohibition of going out, wearing certain clothes etc.)
- Control: of devices, clothing, other relationships etc.
- Demands for silence and immobility of the woman, on whom the man bases his male identity and on whom he invests, as stated also by Mizen (2006, 2017), hostile parts of himself through a mechanism of protective identification. The Silence of the man is recognised as a form of violence because it represents a further disparagement of the woman (silence communicates that “you don’t exist” and therefore “it’s not worth answering you”);
- Emotional and economic blackmail which often involves children;
- Arguments for often “trivial” reasons (simple disagreements activate an escalation which develops into physical violence.

Often the “inadequacy” of appropriate legislation is highlighted, especially when child protection is involved; any initiative for the minor requires the father’s authorisation and this procedure is almost always used by the man as a “instrument” for blackmail, control and power against the woman.

The phenomenon of domestic violence, moreover, is seen to be underestimated by the funding bodies and according to the interviewees they are granting too few funds for the dedicated centres.

Representation of the woman victim of violence

According to the initial results of the interviews, the representation of women victims of violence emerges as being non-stereotypical; there appears to be no

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single social status, education or personality type. This is all relative, but often the following traits have been recognised among the women:

- Dependency (both emotional and economic);
- Fragility often seen as a consequence of a sort of introjection of all the belittlement and constant attacks the man subjects her to;
- Low self-esteem is also ascribed especially as a kind of “interiorisation” of the disparagement of the man: “they convince themselves that they are everything the man says they are: incapable, weak and worthless”;
- Impotence;
- Weakness; and
- Collusion with the will of the man to isolate her; the woman considers his gestures as signs of love.

The interviewees confirm the existence among the women of the Battered Woman Syndrome (Walker, 1979; 1992; 2009) which characterizes women victims of violence: intrusive memories of traumatic events, high anxiety, avoidance behaviour, cutting out personal relationships, distorted body image, and intimacy and sexual problems.

Confirming several psycho-dynamic theories (Nunziante Cesàro & Troisi, 2016; De Vincenzo & Troisi, 2018) some of the interviews highlighted the role of shame, guilt and terror in women victims of violence.

In the relationship, specialists and stakeholders believe, the women express themselves by:

- “Connivance” and Collusion; and
- “Active” role in the conflictual dynamics.

Sometimes denigration and insults, are reported, however, only by the professionals who do not work exclusively with women in anti-violence centres. Those working only in these centres report that it is the women who is mostly “subjected” to this.

But “when do women decide to break the pattern and possibly turn to services?” According to the experiences of the interviewees, women put an end to their violent relationship because of:

- Fear for their own or their children’s safety;
- The children: In the case of adolescent children it is often the children who accompany the mother;
- Development into physical violence;
- “Saturation”, when one reaches their personal point of tolerance;

- Contact with social networks which activates the awareness of the non- “normality” of violence and informs the user of “ways out” that then become “possible and real”; and
- Autonomy (work, meeting others, etc.).

Some interviews describe cases of violence of women on men and women who “stand up” to the conflict. This aspect has been examined in literature by Lysova (2016) e da Park & Kim (2017).

Representation of the perpetrator

According to the initial results of the interviews, the representation of male perpetrators of violence emerges as being non-stereotypical, and, as for women, there is no specific social class or generalisation to make. However, often the men present the following traits:

- Fragility and pathological narcissism (power based on maintaining the oppressed);
- Seductiveness and manipulation (even with treatment personnel, male and female);
- Difficulty in communicating and reasoning; these are men who “act” out their emotions, as they find it difficult to tolerate the reasoning process. This confirms what in literature is defined as lack of emotion regulation and self-regulation (Cole, Martin, & Dennis, 2004; Cook et al., 2005) and lack of interpersonal skills (Davies & Cummings, 1994). These men are often themselves victims of direct or witnessed violence during childhood; and
- Low threshold for frustration and often other addictions (alcohol, drugs, gambling).

Experiences of child abuse and substance abuse have been confirmed by research conducted by Meyer (2017), as have some other risk factors for domestic violence such as:

- Inconsistent work history;
- Low educational level and previous convictions for domestic violence;
- Vulnerable and sometimes ‘deviant’ life style;
- Highly unstable relationships;
- Patriarchal beliefs about gender roles (also confirmed in interviews);
- Cases of reciprocal violence in the couple; and
- Use of drugs or alcohol also on the part of the victim.

2. Intimate partner violence: victims and perpetrators in the voice of professionals

Ruddle et al. (2017) also recognise the role of anger as a psychological process which triggers domestic violence. This is a process that refers to having unwanted intrusive repetitive thoughts that centre around a common theme (Sukhodolsky et al., 2001; Whitmer & Banich, 2007). When this involves the experience of anger and aggressive priming it triggers a cognitive and affective attack and psychologically prepares the individual for attack (Bushman et al., 2005; Pedersen et al., 2011).

Violence perpetrators, furthermore, according to literature, present distorted awareness of relationships, attitudes and hostile beliefs, and establish poor relationships/networks with peers (Gould et al., 2012).

Going back to what emerges from the interviews, the perpetrators express, within their relationships:

- Possessiveness;
- Control;
- Affective dependency (to problems connected to the process of separation and loss of primary object);
- Constant need for exclusive attention; and
- Lack of recognition of any responsibility for his own violent side (downplaying their violence by justifying it).

These men are excessively attached both to gender roles typical of the patriarchy, and to the definition of masculinity as virility, which is recognised as power, strength and control.

None of the respondents represent the man as a “monster”: only a few reported to have done this at the beginning of their career, but then they managed to overcome it.

Many (those who work exclusively with women) assume a detached behaviour, stating that “It’s none of my business”, while others, with the expression of “the monster is often your neighbour”, confirm yet simultaneously disconfirm the idea of the man as a monster.

When faced with a possible change in the men the respondents are mostly almost “resigned”, but they recognise that there are valid reasons for the treatment of the men:

- The presence of children: paternity is defined as a “double-edged sword” and a grey area; it can become a cause for violence (“the beginning of the violence often starts with a pregnancy” many stated), the object of emotional blackmail, an instrument for control over the woman (denying authorisations in the case of minors);

- The threat of the loss of the woman and/or the role as father;
- The loss of a loved one (e.g. a parent);
- Internal and authentic motivation (supported by insight) is considered the most valid for the maintenance of treatment and change; and
- Extrinsic motivation, like that supported by law enforcement and court orders, or by a partner's wishes, brings about a higher chance of either not applying for treatment or non-compliance in a short time.

Social support, in this case, according to literature (Hilder & Freeman, 2016) can be a promoter for change on the part of these men. In fact, it has been proven in recent research that the development or maintenance of positive relations outside the intimate relationship with the partner can favour positive change within the latter.

There is also recent evidence that when a perpetrator shares his conditions with family members or friends, his motivation to face up to his violent behaviour is more solid and he is more likely to change (Fagan, 1989, as cited by Walker et al., 2013). This fact is also confirmed, according to specialists and stakeholders, in interviews which report that belonging to a group or family represents a positive factor for change in the men.

Chung e O'Leary (2009) in referring to intrinsic motivation, found that perpetrators are more likely to comply with treatment in situations where the couple want their intimate relationship to last. The quality and the state of the relationship seems, therefore, according to literature, to greatly affect people (Gray et al., 2016) and this is amply confirmed in the interviews.

The respondents confirm the results of the study conducted by Rebecca Gray, Timothy Broady, Irene Gaffney, Pamela Lewis, Tibor Mokany e Brian O'Neill (2016) that proved that a separation or split in the couple and the connected feelings of distress and frustration can hinder the participation of perpetrators of violence in intervention programmes or reduce their commitment during treatment. This phenomenon is also confirmed by previous research describing the high improbability that domestic violence should cease when a couple's relationship ends. Actually, in some cases it increases (MacKenzie e Woodlock, 2012; Johnson, 2005). The way the perpetrator of violence views the couple's relationship also plays a part in his compliance to treatment. It is therefore important for professionals to focus on the quality and status of the couple (Gray et al., 2016).

2. Intimate partner violence: victims and perpetrators in the voice of professionals

In line with the literature (Henning & Holdford, 2006; Heward-Belle, 2016), and according to the respondents, one of the major obstacles to the perpetrator's treatment consists in his own attitude of blaming the victim and in the denigration of his relationship with her.

Most men perpetrating violence downplay, according to the experience of specialists, their abusive behaviour, blaming the victim for provoking and/or exaggerating it. According to Meyer (2017), many men maintain that they have chosen the wrong partner who gets the worst out of them: they wouldn't be violent if it weren't for the character or behaviour of the woman. These men judge their partners' behaviour as antisocial and describe them as negligent and reckless as mothers or as drug or alcohol abusers.

Both literature (Heward-Belle, 2016) and the interviews reveal that the men feel the right to abuse and control and they don't even recognise the impact and seriousness of their behaviour on their partner and on their children.

All the above factors are obstacles to achieving an awareness of their violence and the chance to ask for help. The difficulty of perpetrators in adhering to treatment programmes has led researchers and professionals to focus their attention on motivational factors capable of supporting them, thereby preventing them from abandoning treatment.

In order to face the problem of scarce demand and low compliance to treatment on the part of domestic violence perpetrators and to ensure the success of treatment programmes, The Council of Europe (2008) has highlighted the importance of interventions aimed at increasing motivation to change.

The motivation to change, however, is particularly complicated in the treatment of domestic violence perpetrators because they find it very difficult to recognise the seriousness of the consequences of their behaviour on their partner and their children (Heward -Belle, 2016). According to several recent studies, the behavioural change must occur within the couple; but it is necessary to identify further potential individual factors to motivate the overcoming of the violence, in order to facilitate the commitment of the men in the programme for behavioural change. In the light of this data the focus of research has now shifted towards the parenting roles in the couple.

Although in recent times the attention of researchers has focused on the responsibility of parents when they expose children to abusive behaviour (Featherstone & Peckover, 2007; Humphreys & Absler, 2011; Strega et al., 2008), little attention has been paid to the role of identity as father as a motivating factor in the need for behavioural change (Stanley et al., 2012). Previous literature has

mainly focused on mothers when examining parenting responsibility, due to the fact that they are the primary caregivers (Humphreys & Absler, 2011).

This is problematic, however, in the context of domestic violence, where mainly the mothers are the primary victims of abuse by the fathers, the ones who expose their children to violent behaviour, (Strega et al., 2008).

Often interventions aimed at family well-being highlight the fact that the only way of safeguarding the well-being of the family, and first and foremost of the children, is to stop the abusive relationship (Ewen, 2007; Meyer, 2011) and this need is confirmed by many if the respondents who work exclusively with women in anti-violence women's centres.

On the other hand, empirical evidence suggests that, although in some cases the relationship between the man and women may be over, the abuse continues even after separation and the children are often used by the abuser as instruments for power and control (Bagshaw et al., 2011; Meyer, 2014).

The lack of visibility of fathers in politics, in history and in practice, on the one hand, and the lack of the responsibility for family well-being on the other, has only served to further lay the burden of responsibility for the well-being of the family and children onto the mother, as primary guardian of their safety and welfare (Featherstone & Peckover, 2007; Humphreys & Absler, 2011).

Consequently, in research women have been encouraged to take charge of the well-being of the family and invited to work more on their relationships (Humphreys & Absler, 2011), but they have also been led towards simply separating, as a remedy against the family's condition. The invisibility of fathers, therefore, within the construct of family well-being, has allowed them to avoid their social responsibility towards their partner or ex-partner, and their own children (Featherstone & Peckover, 2007; Absler, 2011).

More recently, though, research on paternity has brought to light the desire of many fathers to have a relationship with their own children (Edin & Nelson, 2013; Stanley et al., 2012) and this desire is often fulfilled through contact and custody arrangements, even for the most violent of men (Bagshaw et al., 2011; Meyer, 2011). This has given rise to a shift in perspective from mothers towards fathers, leading to the exploration of paternity as a motivating factor in treatment, provided that the perpetrators become aware of the effect their violence has upon their children (Rothman et al., 2007; Smith Stover, 2013; Strega et al., 2008). Indeed, many fathers express regret for not having been able to experience life with their children adequately and completely. (Meyer 2017).

2. Intimate partner violence: victims and perpetrators in the voice of professionals

At the same time, however, during the interviews a kind of “Paradox of Paternity” emerges, as this can be a strong motivational factor for change in a man, but it can also be a risk factor when it becomes an instrument for revenge against the woman.

In line with what has been presented, some studies have shown that in cases of fathers who committed filicide, it is commonly believed that these men used violence on their children in order to cause harm to the mother or to seek revenge for having started proceedings for separation (Harris Johnson, 2005).

Gender of service' personnel

Granted that it is important to have women working in the intake and management of women victims of violence, most of the respondents stated that more than gender, what is important is the professionalism and specific training gained through experience. In the minds of the respondents, it is the worker's gender which would influence in the treatment the relationship with perpetrators in terms of:

- Male worker: offers an identification and can be seen as an opportunity for confrontation and complicity;
- Female worker: offers an opportunity to confront himself with another woman and work on his gender stereotypes and behaviour;
- Pair of workers (woman and man): offers an opportunity to compare with different models and relationship styles. Very few consider this option.

Settings of violence

The respondents described “typical” places and times for events of violence: kitchen and living room (meeting places and places that are difficult to escape from), and evening and gathering times. The interviews asked when the famous “point of no return”, the moment during the conflict when one isolates oneself from the world and it explodes into fully blown violence, would be reached. Everyone responded that this depends on the threshold for tolerance of the person, so it is quite relative.

For this question many respondents took “point of no return” as meaning the woman's breaking point and her rebellion against the violence. For this reason, many answered with what could be the woman's reasons for change: fear of her and others' safety and after having seen the terror in her children's eyes.

The main settings of violence are reported as follows:

- The man belittling the woman; few recognised the disparaging woman, as an aspect which has been widely examined in research (Lysova, 2016; Park & Kim, 2017);
- Defenestration; many respondents tell stories of the woman being pushed outside onto the balcony as if she were to be thrown out, as if to throw her out of a life which is felt as intolerable. This act, luckily, in the experience of the respondents, has never been brought to completion;
- Jealousy: caused by the extreme terror that the woman might dis-confirm the man's virility by committing adultery with another man and, in this way, he would lose his sense of possession in which the woman is seen as owned by "her man";
- Argument in the car: women told stories about dangerous car chases in which they feared for their lives; and
- Escalation of a single episode of violence, as well as in the whole history of the couple characterized by violence: the single episodes begin with mere disagreements or futile contrasts, while in the couple's history the story begins with excessive idyllic constant attention and shifts to a lack of attention and continuous "highs and lows", confirming the "cycle of violence" as described by Walker (2009).

When respondents were asked to tell the stories of scenes and episodes they had experienced or heard about from acquaintances, family members or themselves, it was not easy for them to describe a setting of violence that had affected them most deeply. The reasons for this difficulty are varied: professional confidentiality, forgetting, "There are too many events that I am told, it is difficult to choose one", "often the people's stories are not very detailed" etc. It is as if the violence were something "private" not to be discussed.

As far as the timing of the violent episodes is concerned, in many cases it is said that it is difficult to talk about the "moment before" and the "moment after" the episodes of violence; in fact often the "moment after" coincides with the preparation of the next "moment before" and it all becomes a vicious cycle wherein the beginning "coincides" with the end and vice versa. It would seem to be an infinite yet contained time in a kind of immobility sunk into a sense of helplessness surrounding the whole scenario of violence.

3. Children witnessing domestic violence in the voice of professionals

*Stefania Carnevale, Ciro Esposito, Immacolata Di Napoli,
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In order to define the key situations and places of witnessed violence we collected the results of 20 Focused Interviews to professionals dealing with WDV children.

In addition, a laboratorial experience with children ages 6 - 13, aimed at bringing out the emotions experienced in situations of conflict, was organized: four workshops involving children (attending 3rd grade classes) and adolescents (attending 1st and 2nd grade classes) offered additional materials to the objectives of this task.

Introduction

According to the latest Dossier published by “Save the Children”, in Italy there are **427 thousand** minors who, in only 5 years, have experienced violence and / or exposure to it at home; this is a truly disconcerting fact considering the primary functions attributed to the family: protection, care and growth.

Literature traditionally has mainly focused on the consequences of direct abuse on minors, neglecting, however, witnessed violence; the latter is much more difficult to recognize, investigate and evaluate through statistical surveys.

Research also shows that the parents themselves underestimate the experience and consequences of the phenomenon of witnessed violence in children; instead, children’s awareness of abuse is much higher than the parents themselves recognize.

Children are neither passive nor indifferent to violence (Buckley, Holt, & Whelan, 2007; Swanston et al., 2014); and although sometimes they do not witness it directly, they are fully aware of it (Øverlien & Hydén 2009, Swanston et al., 2014).

The consequences of living and growing in a climate of domestic violence are therefore always considerable or children, because they can greatly affect their development.

However, it has now been widely recognized that children who experience domestic violence are at greater risk of physical or sexual abuse or negligence. More generally, literature has shown that living in a violent family has negative implications for children's mental and physical health, both short and long term (Kitzman et al., 2003; Wolfe et al., 2003; Evans et al., 2008).

This is primarily because adults can be violent even against children. Secondly, because mothers who are victims of domestic violence are unable to satisfy their physical, emotional and caring needs; their psycho-physical state causes a continued exposure to violence. Thirdly, children can be physically injured during a quarrel between the parents, or they can become an object of contention between them. For this reason, interviews with specialists and stakeholders have also focused on the emotions and experiences reported by the children themselves and / or their parents, on the family relationships and on the symptoms presented by the children, as a consequence of the daily exposure to witnessed and / or direct violence.

The Research

Participants

17 women (85%) e 3 men (15%) with experience in the prevention, management and treatment of children who have witnessed violence were selected to be interviewed.

There were aged between 31-70 (M 50.95), both volunteers and professionals, with years of service ranging from 1 to 45, with different professional roles: psychologists, psychotherapists, social workers, judiciary consultants, public health administrators (A.S.L. NA 1 Centro), family mediators, emergency doctors.

Table 1: Years of professional work

| Field or work / range of years | 1 ≤ 5 | 6 ≤ 10 | 11 ≤ 15 | ≥ 15 |
|-----------------------------------|-------|--------|---------|------|
| Work in own field (m 23.55 years) | 10% | 20% | 5% | 65% |
| Work w. dom. viol (m 11.25 years) | 15% | 40% | | 45% |

The respondents were selected among cultural, political, healthcare and social workers involved in domestic violence. 45% of them had over of 15 years 'experience in that field.

Procedure and Methodology

Non-probability sampling was used. Contact was made by telephone to make appointments, following the identification of the most highly accredited settings and professionals in the city of Naples. The interviews, conducted by two psychologists involved in the project, were held in the work settings of the respondents or on the premises of Federico II University. They were held in a quiet private venue and lasted from 30 minutes to 2 hours, with an average of 50 minutes. Much attention was paid to the respondents' convenience regarding appointment times and dates, offering the use of the university facilities for the interviews. Respondents signed an informed consent form and authorised the use of the data collected for research purposes.

Instruments

A Focused Interview format (Arcidiacono, 2012) was used. This research instrument offers the opportunity to develop the researcher's themes of interest while allowing the respondent to propose themes and topics of their own interest. It does not include predetermined questions, but offers a discussion guideline which guides the interviewer in the interaction. The structure and the conducting of the interview presume a familiarity of the themes discussed and the general and specific aims of the study, along with interview conduction skills. The interviewer must be able to recognise the innovative and specific contribution of the respondents; interviewers must know how to not pass judgement while keeping up an active and stimulating attitude towards the interlocutor and their reflexivity skills (Suffla *et al.*, 2015).

The themes of interest of the interviews were the following:

- a. Relations with parents;
- b. Symptoms expressed by children victims of witnessed and / or direct violence;
- c. Emotions expressed by children.

These categories were identified in relation to the aims of the study (to examine the experience of the perpetrator and their perception, fatherhood and the experience of children victims of domestic violence) and of the project (to construct and experiment a serious game aimed at perpetrators and more generally father awareness). The interviews were audio recorded and transcribed, and analysed according to **Braun & Clark thematic analysis** (2006).

Results

The following is the thematic analysis of the interviews, presented in the light of what has been described in literature until now.

Relations with parents

Children, as they tell specialists, often feel like “little adults” who have to “take care” of their parents and have to be constantly careful not to fuel their contrasts. So, there are many children who become very suspicious and silent, while others tend to express their anger with challenging and provocative behaviour. At home they learn to understand how to prevent conflicts and to modulate their behaviour and that of their parents in order to avoid quarrels; they are always attentive, highly tense children. During violent episodes, some children tend to hide, run away to another room, plug their ears to not hear, while others defend one of the parents (especially the mother), and try to stop the violence. Children are perceived by professionals as “Overloads” of their parents’ experiences and especially those of the caregiver, who is most often the mother, a mother in need of protection, care and support.

Faced with the question: “*But are these parents aware of the presence of children during episodes of violence?*”, many interviewees answered that more men, but also women, stop “seeing” the children during the quarrels, because they are too involved with a conflict that overshadows vision and estranges them from reality.

“The moment the violent act takes place, the field of observation shrinks, as if you do not see what’s on the side, so you only see what’s happening, right? And you do not realize that it’s happening next to you, you do not realize that there are children, you do not realize anything”.
(Psychotherapist, 61 years)

According to the current literature and to specialists working in this sector, children are subjected to violence that always has psychological upheavals and the same premises that lead violence against women: prevarication and possession. Moreover, at the same time, children often become, for men, an instrument against the women, to hurt them.

According to the experience of the specialists and the stories reported by them, fathers always swing between a threatening and a seductive attitude, aimed to control the other and to exercise power (over women and children).

3. Children witnessing domestic violence in the voice of professionals

Mothers often behave in a way of collusion and / or submissiveness, but only until they become aware of the pain of their children who, often but not always, lead them to react.

Symptoms expressed by children witnesses and / or victims of direct violence

According to literature, interviews also reveal that mothers tell the services about children who no longer sleep well, do not want to go to school, do not want to leave them, who do not play or, sometimes, ask to stay at their grandparents' or uncle's house.

Very often teachers primarily realize the change of the child and report the problem to the family or services; at this point the mother often feels shame. Sternberg et al. (1993) have shown that the exposure of children to DV has psychosocial, emotional and cognitive effects, in terms of memory and learning, and therefore it produces negative behaviour.

Indeed, it is widely established that children who experience abuse, either directly or indirectly, or who witness abuse to another family member are more at risk of internalizing disorders (withdrawal, anxiety and depression) and externalizing disorders (delinquency and perpetration of violence).

Internalization and externalization are two maladaptive responses in the way in which the individual interprets violence, and the former could lead, in adolescence and / or adult age, to re-victimization, while the second to the perpetration of domestic violence (Holt et al. 2008). According to Margolin & Gordis (2004) 34 -54% of male victims of child abuse most likely become a perpetrator of violence. In this outcome, the authors see a difference based on gender: girls are more characterized by internalizing outcomes, accompanied by feelings of guilt, while the boys show more externalized outcomes, accompanied by feelings of threat. This data could explain why there are more male perpetrators of domestic violence than female.

Emotions expressed by children

The emotions of children, told by the interviewees, are inferred from drawings and stories reported by children and the narratives of parents. They were:

- *Fear*
 - *That the mother will be physically hurt;*
 - *Of losing the mother (by death or removal) and, sometimes, of losing the same father, because he could be "punished" for what he did to the mother, or removed with the separation;*

Violent dad in child shoes. A moment before

“... because the child hasn't, let us say, the awareness and the idea of death, that something can happen to him. There's a whole series of fantasies, and so on. But he is afraid of losing loved ones” (Psychotherapist, 66 years).

“... even the dishes thrown can, for a young child, be mortal, because you feel the things that fly, as well as the screams, the screams (pause for reflection); they make you think that you could not survive ...” (Social Worker, 58).

- *Of the father himself* in front of whom the children feel powerless;
- *To be taken away from the mother or father* (children often hear the real threats of both parents taking him away).

“Children do not love their father or mother; children love the couple. When the couple breaks, in children something has broken” (Technical advisor, 70 years)

“What terrifies them the most? The change, seeing, perceiving that an atmosphere has changed, that there are no longer those rather well-known parameters that are part of the daily [...] this scene suddenly changes, this immediate invasion, upsetting change is the thing that it traumatizes them more, [...] change that means change of tone, of language, of behaviour, perhaps this traumatizes them more” (Psychotherapist, 65 years)

- *Anger*

- *Against the father who is the author of violence, even if often, compared to the interviewed operators, it seems rather to prevail fear and sense of impotence;*
- *Against the mother who, according to the children, “feeds” the arguments by responding to provocations, refusing to do some things, going away or threatening the father.*

This anger is expressed by the children, according to the experience reported by specialists, especially when they are forced to move into communities and anti-violence centres, where, in addition to the removal from the house, they are alone and often among mothers afflicted by the experience of violence. In the communities they find themselves among peers, but they still feel pain for the removal and the change of environment, and, despite the violence suffered at home this shift, according to the interviewees, affects their precarious state of well-being even more.

One of the consequences of this feeling can also be the denial of all positive experiences lived with the mother.

3. Children witnessing domestic violence in the voice of professionals

- *Against both parents because their protective and restraining functions fail.*

According to the interviewees, children become “invisible” and the same anger, not being able to be expressed at home to avoid ‘fuelling’ the heated conflicts, is often “thrown” and “thrown out” in other contexts, such as at school or in the peer group.

- *Guilt*

Often supported by real dialogues of parents in which children become “the causes” of the quarrels. Teenagers seem to be the most aware of them.

- *Sense of impotence and despair*

Faced with something that is experienced as “too big” for them and where every gesture or word can trigger hell.

- *Disorientation*

The children are “*very scared and disoriented, with fixed images, that are obsessive, I would say, in their mind. Disoriented because they sometimes cannot position themselves between mum and dad, and also because sometimes mothers are weakened and frightened; they feel their mothers’ dread*” (Social Worker, 58).

Additional factors that appear to characterize the phenomenon of domestic violence are:

- *Pregnancy*, and therefore the expectation of the arrival of a child, a “Third” that interrupts the dual fusionality of the couple, which often becomes the trigger of episodes of overt violence.

“... about 40% suffered violence at the first pregnancy. What leads to physical attack is ... it’s her position change. When she starts saying “Stop”, when she starts saying “No”. That’s like it’s getting the tension up, right? [...] Also because, in my opinion, these (men) enter the relationship more ... as children than as men. No?” (Sociologist, 60 years)

- *An experience of witnessed and / or direct violence in the life of one of the parents.*
- *The awareness of the discomfort and pain of children and the sense of fatherhood were the strongest attributes to engage in a path of consultation and / or psychotherapy for men.* In fact, these aspects emerge as strong motivations for change, as half of the respondents said.

But the topic of *motivation for change* is a particularly complicated issue in the treatment of DV offenders, because of the fact that, as Meyer (2017) and the analysis of interviews show, many fathers would tend to express regret for not knowing living their children in an adequate and complete way, but at the same time, in an underlying way, they feel entitled to the use of abuse and control over them and their partners; and, under this motivation, they often fail to recognize the impact and severity of their behaviour on partners and children (Heward-Belle, 2016).

Moreover, sometimes, fatherhood is also a risk factor, because it can be used by the man as a tool for revenge against the woman (Meyer, 2017), continuing the perpetration of abuse of power, control and psychological violence and, above all, never putting an end to contact with the victim.

In this way, the children can be both resources for a possible push for positive change, and a risk factor as potential “tools” of control, power and recourse against the partner.

Because of all these aspects, in their experience all the interviewees report that working in this field requires being able to bear a very large emotional load; it is a very delicate and tormented job, because having a child recall the experience of violence, making him see it and tell it, means re-enacting the trauma. Moreover, the “denunciation” of something or someone could add the risk of a probable removal of the child from the family context. Further and more specific conclusions are in Carnevale et al. (2020).

4. The creation and use of videogames to promote social awareness about gender-based violence

Bruna Falanga

It has been estimated that the average twenty-year old has spent 10,000 hours playing games. The average gamer is thirty years old, and the gender split is pretty equal with 46% female and 54% male buying games.

Games are not just purely for entertainment though. There is a strong tradition in games teaching players, from the simple days of Tetris increasing brain-power through tumbling blocks, to the terrible ‘edutainment’ games like Donkey Kong Jr. Math, to the thousands of historical details in grand strategy games like Crusader Kings II. Video games have a power of interaction and intrinsic learning built into them like no other medium, and many game developers and charities are using that fact for good.

However, unfortunately videogames are often bad and negative for users and most of the solutions, both digitally and programmatically, don’t aim to change the culture that enables and permits abusive behaviour. In fact, social media and also Videogaming are huge spaces for misogynists and potential perpetrators of gender-based violence. Dominated by males, many video games are well known for their extreme sexism and sexualisation of females, plus the tendency toward violence (i.e. first-person shooter games). Important research has already been conducted for decades on the negative effects of gaming, including addiction, depression and aggression, and we are certainly not suggesting that this should be ignored. It is for all these reasons that many people are worried that video games make kids anti-social. But it seems that the effects of video games depend on the details.

So, in the same way, if violent videogames can affect users negatively, why can’t videogames with social themes be useful for users too?

Indeed, over the past few decades numerous educational programs have been developed to support the social and emotional wellbeing of young people (Durlak, Weissberg, Dymnicki, Taylor, & Schellinger, 2011) and many video games with social themes have also been developed. For example, in 2005, the United Nations World Food Programme released Food Force, a downloadable game in which players delivered food to people in need. Another game for social change was Darfur Is

Dying, developed by InterFUEL, LLC and spread by MTV. Released in 2006, this online game put players in the role of a refugee in civil war-torn Darfur.

Another important positive game is Re-mission, a videogame on the theme of cancer. Hopelab have created video games to give a visual representation of the cancer they are battling. Battling against something that they can't see can be one of the most draining elements to encourage the user. Aimed at young adults, Re-mission sees players fighting through the bodies of fictional cancer patients and destroying the cells that cause cancer. According to Hopelab's own research, many of the players learnt more about cancer and responded better to chemotherapy than patients who hadn't played the game. After the success of the first game, they followed up with a sequel, Re-mission 2, which is a collection of six different mini-games. Each of which play in completely different ways and parallel real-world strategies used to successfully destroy cancer.

Cinema Director Alejandro González Iñárritu's VR film also recreates the experience of refugees during the crossing of the U.S. border. Like a videogame, the Experience Is Virtual but the emotions are real. Participants are instructed to take off their shoes and socks and put them (and any bags) into a pair of metal lockers. Instructions are piped into the room through an overhead speaker. Then the wait begins: a simulation of the detention that unauthorized immigrants and refugees experience upon their arrival to the border. The processing for Carne y Arena lasts only a few minutes, but it's long enough to wear thin.

This is the power of VR, to transfer the user, and its emotive personality, into a different world (negative or positive, it depends on the themes and scenarios).

According to these experiences, ViDaCS serious game is based on an interactive computer-generated experience in VR that takes place within a simulated environment. It incorporates mainly auditory and visual feedback, and also allows other types of emotional feedback that improve the player's self-experience. The use of a VR device enables significant emotional processes and clearly presupposes an exclusive interactive mode.

Videogames and serious game

What is a serious game? In recent years, serious game has become a way of learning increasingly used not only in purely educational areas, but also applied to contexts of corporate training, as well as in rehabilitation (physical and mental) with studies that confirm positive results in behavioural and learning terms.

4. The creation and use of videogames to promote social awareness about gender-based violence

Serious Games represent an important opportunity for improving education thanks to their ability to compel players and to present realistic simulations of real-life situations. The scientific community is aware that we are just at the beginning of a proper use of gaming technologies for education and training and, in particular, there is a need for scientific and engineering methods for building games, not only as more realistic simulations of the physical world, but as a means that provide effective learning experiences.

But what actually are serious games and how are they used today? These are games in digital format, usable both on computer and on mobile devices, which take both a playful and educational approach and aim to educate the player, guide him in learning new knowledge and providing motivations to change some of his behaviours. For this reason, they are also called learning games, educational games, edugames etc. These tools allow you to create learning communities monitored and adequately stimulated by the trainer or by the employer or more generally by those who lead the virtual experience.

Game-based Learning have defined learning outcomes. They are designed to make “serious” information and game dynamics converge in a single process (output), to develop the player’s ability to learn a subject and apply it in real contexts (input). The structure of a serious game is related to different professions with specific contributions that we will discuss later.

So, the logical response of ViDaCS project would be to organize awareness-building activities about domestic abuse and promote them in targeted spaces. These campaigns can involve knowledge about rights, legal recourse, and ways to draw people into an empathic experience of being victimized.

It was important in the construction of ViDaCS projects to design scenarios which foster empathy, leading multi-channel social behaviour change communication campaigns. Another way could be working with ambassadors in the gaming spaces to address potential abusers.

This is the why ViDaCS pivots toward the so-called storyboard games, where one can be placed in the shoes of the victim and walk through the potential scenarios in their path. These kinds of games can be tailored to reflect local contexts. Similar games have been used for raising awareness around gender-based violence, refugee experiences, racial injustice and many other social causes.

We have considered that the usability is the main goal to be achieved to break down the inhibitory wall, enabling the playful mode of relationship and the emotional channel during the entire experience, enabling the player, even if

only virtually, in the scenario of everyday life. In fact, the interaction between the player's mind and the game world should be as simple as possible. The perfect controller, in this thinking, is something that could read minds and eliminate all possibility of confusion, other than that in the player's head. There would be no controls to learn, no buttons to press, and no fumbling with control pads. Input would be completely mental, and output would be a holodeck.

This currently happens allowing the player to enter into "contact" for a few moments with all the actors (man, woman and child) who are the various figures involved in the phenomenon of witnessed violence, recognizing and partially re-interpreting perceptions, emotions and representations that they normally encounter in their lives.

However, all these kinds of games, even when coupled with strong social behaviour change communications campaigns, have a harder time penetrating spaces where the abusers are.

This is also where ViDaCS project has seen greater potential for the development and all the partners step in and offer strategy and collaboration to engage directly with perpetrators or potential perpetrators. According to ViDaCS project, the perpetrators should lower their denial mechanism, typically used by the perpetrator, increasing their awareness of the harm of witnessing violence.

The guidelines of ViDaCS project, explain that ViDaCS is a complete model analytical plan that suggests intervention by increasing perpetrator awareness of what happens "a moment before" the violent action and increasing, also, their motivation to request help through emotional experiences that stimulate their responsibility as fathers. Only with these role, technology, social media and gaming/virtual experiences could present a window of opportunity to take a preventative approach to GBV (gender-based violence).

Finally, it is important to say that the serious game is not a medical treatment, but it will be only a new experimentation with the participatory and experiential method, aimed at inducing an emotional experience, which will facilitate access to the most intimate social representations, linked to violent family contexts. The most important consideration is that the Virtual technology of a serious game and its modern language can increase motivation to the treatment. It is important especially for motivation and not only for the result. The factors that make digital games so captivating, such as graphics, auditory and sensorial visual stimulation, an immersive narrative line, presentation of challenges to overcome and win a prize, immediate feedback during and after the game, etc., also stimulate the use in the therapeutic education of chronic diseases.

4. The creation and use of videogames to promote social awareness about gender-based violence

In light of what has already been experimented, ViDaCS proposes a virtual game to monitor and urge the user motivation to adhere to the treatments devoted to them to reduce their violent behaviour in cases where domestic violence emerges. The aim of the project is to try to introduce a totally new space, no longer exclusively verbal but with a dynamic, active method, helping the user to see what they normally do not see, specifically to see and hear what a child experiences when he witnesses domestic violence.

ViDaCS concept and social awareness about gender-based violence

The concept of the project and of the game, as the acronym ViDaCS stands for, Violent Dads in Child's Shoes, is to make a virtual experience in first person where a violent parent can see what the feelings of a child are during an episode of domestic violence, especially episodes that typically involve actors father against mother.

This serious game is an immersive virtual reality experience that can virtually empathize a perpetrator in the dramatic scene that the child experiences, so as to allow the user to be physically absent but virtually present in the most frequent violence contexts.

In this truly first-person narrative, it is he who will explore the story of a family told through the walls of their home, that can be the same as his home, his life!

So, the first-person exploration game changes into a self-personal dimension.

The perpetrator is plunged into the mind of a troubled child, a digital simulation of his conflictual family, into the storm of his sphere of emotions. Shift between the prospective of child and the perpetrators, the game will be a self-psychological narrative experience. The game wanted to be introspective, you're more likely to find yourself feeling uncomfortable and disturbed, rather than out-and-out terrified.

The choice to use the "eyes" of the child is very important, in fact the research confirms that the most delicate sphere concerning perpetrators is precisely that linked to the children, concerning the perpetrators' chances of change. Motivation is strictly related to the presence of children: paternity is defined as a "double-bladed sword" and a grey area; it can become a cause for violence ("the beginning of the violence often starts with a pregnancy" many stated), the object of emotional blackmail, an instrument for control over the

woman (denying authorisations in the case of minors); the threat of the loss of the woman and/or the role as father; the loss of a loved one (e.g. a parent); internal and authentic motivation (supported by insight) is considered the most valid for the maintenance of treatment and change; and extrinsic motivation, like that supported by law enforcement and court orders, or by a partner's wishes, brings about a higher chance of either not applying for treatment or non-compliance in a short time. And last but not least, video games give people access to the narratives they played as kids, which of course strikes a chord of nostalgia and old memories. Similarly, gaming provides players with emotional modelling and rehearsal.

The serious game approach is therefore only a vehicle of messages and emotions which the user / perpetrators will have to confront and from which their conflicts and moods will emerge. Precisely for the emotional suggestion and for the reflections that you want to unleash, it is essential to build the scenarios and the dynamics of the game that users will undergo, as described in that report.

ViDaCS project want to help perpetrators feel how their violence impacts on their children, empathizing with emotions, thoughts and physical sensations of children exposed to domestic violence. The game has to be considered as an innovative type of tool to be able to reach unaware men, self-detect their emotional behavioural violent burden and improve the motivation to the change of their aggressive behaviour.

Expected results of the serious game in global project:

- 1) For perpetrators: awareness of the effects of violence in domestic violence on child;
- 2) For professionals: knowledge/skills about domestic violence perpetrators; collaborative multiagency network; receiving a program to support the perpetrators' motivation to the treatment.

The game targets

Since ViDaCS specifically aims to favour perpetrators the ability to put themselves in the shoes of children who witness violence, the serious game was conceived precisely in this perspective of "double point of view", thus making it possible to see, and somehow to live, the commonly feeling of a child during episodes of witnessed violence, especially for its violent parents (perpetrators) during the often unknown violence, they totally ignore their existence and gravity.

4. The creation and use of videogames to promote social awareness about gender-based violence

To obtain an effective transfer which would allow the identification “in the shoes of ...”, the main targets that we have taken into account in the development phase of the serious game has been the following:

- 1) Realistic daily scenarios (not luxurious or poverty situations, but ordinary people)
- 2) Spontaneous dialogues among the characters (ordinary voices that talk about simple common problems, without stereotyping language or particular motivational and emotional situations)
- 3) Actions / reactions of the child (or adolescent) that show the real hardships that witnessed violence often leads to (relational disorders, eating disorders, violence towards self and / or towards others, sense of abandonment and / or loneliness, desire to escape, fears and anxieties in general).

The role player

The player of the game is unique but he “will wear” different clothes, he is living real psychological and physical transference during the experience, changing points of view that will make him perceive what happens in the scene in a different way. There is no avatar that distinguishes the player because the game is always in first person, because he is the protagonist who lives the scene actively and not passively.

During the game the protagonist is going to undertake some choices / actions to be taken to continue the experience, so there are no rules of the game, not specific objectives, but these choices will influence the progress of the game itself, and then the plot.

Gameplay - mechanics

The progress of the game is comprised of actions / choices that the user must make to move forward, the choices change the course of the game and influence the actions / reactions that follow, so there is not a single run of the game but each one will be able to live a different experience. The protagonist stumbles into the child’s world with his own experience and must interpret events for himself, project himself into a narrative experience that combines real life with gaming. He will be immersed in an unsettling psychological story with all of the tension of a suspenseful plot, combining live-action footage with environmental storytelling to unlock haunting emotions that linger long after you put the controller down.

In the development phase of the game it will be decided if this first choice will be made by the operator, who knows the perpetrators and therefore knows what the composition of his family is, or if this choice will be included directly to the game start and will also become part of the choices that must be made by the user; in both cases that choice will not have to reveal anything of the next steps to the player, actually a huge rule of the serious game is that of not knowing what will happen. The surprise effect, which increases emotional perception, is very important.

We can't define the mechanics at the start of our game design project because it is impossible to describe everything now and then never touch them again. It is critical to test and tweak the game mechanics, especially for emotional feeling. You may think a game mechanics will be great, only to find out via play-testing that it is hindering the players' perception of your game's "emotional factor." Or worse, actually hindering the learning experience. Conversely, you may discover you need to add some game mechanics that you haven't considered until you have watched people play your game. Mechanics are a critical component of a good game design. You will not get them perfect on your first design attempt. You'll want to test and tweak—but this is all part of the game design process.

For this reason, in this report we only talk about the story, and we describe our general intention, but we can't explain every details and step because now we are in a first phase of design. Of course, we have also tweaked other mechanics in the process. It took us numerous variations to get it to a place we, and the players, were happy with.

Summary of mechanism (choices):

- step 1: gender(boy/girls)
- step 2: years (ages of 3-6, 7-13)
- step n: actions - behaviours – reactions

It is very important that the actions be simple enough, usually just requiring the player to switch on/off something or find a key to open a door, but they're well-grounded within the unfolding story, never feeling like arbitrary stumbling blocks thrown in there for the flow of the gameplay.

The perspective of the camera only changes during the transfers, the moment in which the player leaves the initial body, he is not himself, to enter the child's body. During this moment the first-person perspective changes and become a bird's eye perspective; with the bird's eye perspective the player can see the instants of the quarrel with the wife to then return to being in first person when the player becomes the child (the camera moves in automatic mode).

4. The creation and use of videogames to promote social awareness about gender-based violence

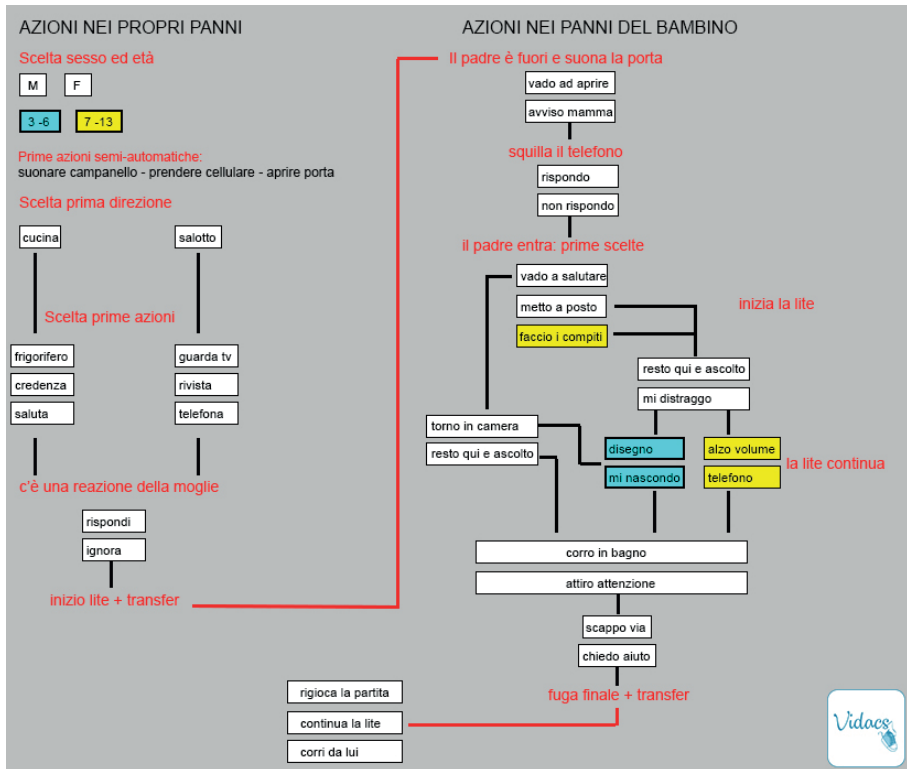


Figure 1: chart of all the actions of the game flow

The game world

Scenarios and actions were well identified after careful study of the interviews (Deliverable n. D2.2 - Map of needs and resources) and after the workshop with the child (deliverable n. D3.7 - D3.8 - D3.9 - D3.10). It is very important that the dominant scene is a domestic scenario, an ordinary home, in which the various rooms identify well-defined boundaries and cognitive spaces:

- The child's room - what is mine - your own nest (the child)
- The rest of the house - what is foreign - the outside world (violence)

The game takes place in the contrast of these environments, with different perspectives and points of view, in these environments the user will have to make the optional choices (actions / reactions) and each of the alternatives proposed will in turn open up new consequences and emotional conditions to be addressed.

The careful reconstruction of the 3D scenarios in which the user will be down, the involvement of many "senses" and the use of advanced technological

tools, will help the immersive component that today is the fundamental key, as well as the true power of virtual reality. This immersive environment will be very similar to the real world so the player can have a more realistic experience and some events can be so real that he can feel confused, he can confuse reality with the virtual life.

One of the most important aspects in the design of scenes will be related to light and colour, which will change depending on the role that the player is experiencing at that time. When he is in his own shoes the scene will be clear, bright, full of anger, but when he enters in the child's shoes everything changes, fear dominates, and therefore the colours will always be dark and often the details are more blurred. The atmosphere simulated in virtual world will expertly succeed in feeling like a good facsimile of the real world – a mash-up of twisted perspectives and realistic details.

Its heavy atmosphere, its troubled storytelling and the actions linked to the imagination left to the player will make it a unique and successful experience.

The visuals, the actions and sound design riff off each other beautifully to create a genuinely unnerving environment. The aim will obviously be to ensure that, much like a child, the player never feels comfortable in the hell that violent dynamics has created.

Criteria for choosing commands (movements and actions)

In the game all interactions take place through multiple choice menus insert in the GUI (Game User Interface), they are activated during the virtual experience and one interacts with them through simple commands located on the management controller of the wearable sensor.

As already anticipated, this choice was made to limit the actions in total autonomy of the character, above all for the movements of the body type “to walk” to avoid consistent effects of motion sickness often tied to the VR for non-habitual users. Therefore, all the movements inside the house will take place with pre-calculated animations, which will be activated after the various choices made by the player.

The interact elements of the user interface (multiple-choice menu) appear floating in the scene as suspended but not intrusive 3D elements, the user interacts with them through the use of hand controllers on the device.

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Figure 2: Examples of multiple-choice menu

Required Equipment

To allow the use of the serious game, the presence of the wearable device and a PC, on which the reference software application will be installed, is always required.

This necessary hardware kit is given to the consortium partners during the one-day learning session, then the partners will define their shared management.

The selected VR device is the Oculus Rift S, a second-generation VR headset with inside-out tracking, a technology which allows easy and immediate setup of the hardware in any room.

The Oculus Rift S offers a 2560x1440 80Hz LCD screen panel for reduced screen-door effect and a 115° field of view for a complete immersive experience.

The headset rests on the head through the special headband designed exclusively for the Oculus Rift S in order to sit comfortably on the head for hours, the band also has two integrated speakers.

The Oculus Rift S includes two motion controllers called Oculus Touch, which offers positional tracking over six degrees of freedom, three buttons, two triggers, and analogue stick and finger gesture recognition. The controllers can be used to

Violent dad in child shoes. A moment before



Figure 3. Hand controllers



Figure 4: Oculus Rift S – wearable device

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point to, grab, and activate virtual objects. As a safety measure the Oculus Rift S offers the ability to show a visual alert where obstacles could be and using the integrated cameras can instantaneously pause the application to show the real world if the user moves beyond the safe limits of the obstacle-free area.

Game flow

During the game, there are essentially 3 transferences, or role changes:

- 1) The player starts the game being himself, in the “moment before” ...
DESCRIPTION: the game starts in a typical domestic scenario, where the player (the perpetrators) is arguing with his partner, before the violence is inflicted, the scene becomes blurred and the player changes point of view ...
- 2) The player becomes a child, at the “moment when” ...
DESCRIPTION: in the game there is a change of perspective, of point of view, this is the first transfer, the eyes of those who experience the scene are now those of a child in his bedroom who listens and watches what happens in secret. Most of the game’s actions now take place in the shoes of the child. The player will discover the fears and anxieties that a child feels during these situations in relation to the choices that he has made. What to do to avoid the violence? To open the door to escape? To raise the wall of fantasy and take refuge in his fantasy world? To shout? To Hide? Each action will correspond to a reaction that will show how much these dramas affect the psyche of the child. The child who lives constantly in the fear that the violence will come back, the tension in every gesture that is accomplished, the cyclicity of time and events that are always at the same repetition!
- 3) The player returns to himself, the “moment later” ...
DESCRIPTION change of perspective, new transfer, and the child returns to being an adult, returns to being the perpetrator. The final will not be a blame, not intended to leave anger but intended to evoke the opportunity to get out of the experience just lived, to be a key to reading the possibility of choice, the possibility of being able to change themselves!

The transfer

When the transfer happens, there are real changes in the visual and perspective of the game, the character changes his identity and “enters” the child’s body. There

is a change of perception of the significant external world, the lights and the colours change, the child's world becomes more muffled and "scary", almost blurred.

In the design phase it will be evaluated if the transference will have to take place independently, so, suddenly, or if they must be emphasised in the workflow of the game, so that the user is more aware of what is happening, therefore also in these cases guided action, for example the game suggests to the tester to approach the child and take his place.

A moment before

The game starts with the perpetrators in their own shoes; a suggestion of starting the game, could be that the first scenario in which the tester is involved, is in quite a happy home... but something goes wrong and he has suddenly become the protagonist of a family conflict, just in the MOMENT BEFORE to start a bloody quarrel, but a female voice says that the son could hear them and at that point the scene freezes, he is physically projected outside, looking at the window (or behind a door or with a bird's eye view) of the room where he watches his son playing or watching TV in a muffled and happy atmosphere from his point of view... suddenly the camera view approaches the child, isolating him from the context, and it is as if the protagonist "entered" child body, so the tester's view changes and becomes the protagonist of the same scene that he was looking at the window, but the view becomes the child's point of view and everything seems different, the same scene that from the outside seemed happy and muffled becomes from the new perspective equal but narrow, with dark colours, with loud noises, etc ... and the dynamics of the game start.

The moment when

The tester in the child's shoes begins to listen to a strong quarrel from the next room, during the different phases of the game the quarrel keeps on getting stronger (first screams and insults, then noises of things thrown, until the beatings and more) and in each phase the perpetrator/child will have to do actions and behaviours responding to the options suggested by the game; for example, the game asks him what he wants to do to interrupt or ignore the violence: what do you want to do? Turn up the volume of the TV and try not to listen to them ... why don't you run away into the corridor to the room where they are fighting and stop them? ... or you can escape without them noticing ... the choice that the player will make will have different consequences and will change the story.

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Here it is important to underline that all the dialogues that suggest the action to the player are in the first person as if he were talking to his alter ego, with his conscience (read also “sound stimulation”).

The moment later – the end

This is the end of the game, now the player must experience the same feelings of the child who constantly lives in fear that everything will start again, the pain of something that can be come back at any moment.

Fear and anxiety are therefore the main emotions, those which must remain in the mind of the perpetrators who meanwhile returns to his shoes with a new transfer and becomes a spectator of a reality again that now knows better and that perhaps can change... the final message wants to be this: the strength to understand that the road ahead is not one, that everyone is the architect of their destiny that can change, they can change their aggressive behaviour.

It's to be remembered that the game does not aim either to demonize the perpetrators nor offer unique solutions, but the purpose is to make people reflect on the possibility of stopping themselves a moment before, observing and interpreting the negative consequences that the next moment has on the other!

The importance of the professional

The core of the therapy session is the presence of one of the professional during all the game experience time. The therapist must first observe behaviours, unusual gestures, words whispered by the tester, etc ...

If the tester performs actions in the game he feels involved and reacts with spontaneous gestures to visual / sound inputs, for example he seems agitated, increased sweating, etc. ... these are all actions that must be codified and considered useful reactions to the final report.

For example, when sudden things happen in the game that in reality would frighten the child (whether they are sudden noises, listening phrases, etc.) in the same way the user during the test could be frightened by all those things he does not expect, doing then instinctive movements and / or gestures; these considerations by the tutor are important because the reading of body language is already a sign of success because it indicates an emotional upheaval, be it linked to fear, to distrust. In cases of excessive emotional involvement, it may even happen that

the user, for example, instinctively takes off the device / viewer worn. In this case the emotional effectiveness of the game would be even clearer and how these signals can really indicate strong emotions with high impact.

Finally, at the end of the game there will be the last choice, the most important one for subsequent therapy sessions. This is important and indicative for the therapist who is observing the perpetrator's game experiences. The user in fact, is going to come back into his shoes and, after seeing the pain of the child, will have the following "choices":

- a) Run to your child
- b) Continue the quarrel
- c) Try again and play your game differently to avoid all this, trying to redo your choices, maybe you can change the course of your experience.

Then, depending on the choice the player makes, the game offers a last suggestion:

- If he chose A: Go to him but remember that doing it "later" is too late, the wounds, especially the non-physical ones, don't heal easily, you have to stop before all this happens.
- If he chose B: Are you sure your family deserves this? Quarrelling is not the solution, try to change your actions, your life!
- If he chose C: Try again to play, but remember that life is not a game and you can't go back, we hope you can act differently even when the choices to be made is not in a videogame, but in real life!

Now the game is over, and these final choices then start the phase of real psychological approach, following the game experience.

As mentioned above, these final choices are intended to be starting points for in-depth reflections. If the player chooses the "play again" option, a choice that implies the desire to try again, in a way to see how the trend changes when he succeeds in changing "something", this kind of player is a user who puts himself in an active mode, who wants to try again, because from a playful point of view he was attracted by the experience and wants to repeat it, even just out of curiosity, but it means that the serious game is valid because it has stimulated, intrigued the player.

The opportunity to try again then, metaphorically, wants to open the doors to confrontation, to the admission that a change can be possible, based on the principle that in life you can't go back and you can't change the choices made or the reactions that they have aroused, even more, we do not change what a child / adolescent has felt and experienced.

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Everything in the game wants us to reflect on the importance of the moment before, the moment in which we can and we must reflect on the right thing to do, the moment of the real choices.

For all these reasons, therefore, the project phase that involves the “training” of the therapist are going to be the most important of the ViDaCS development, both for conducting the game and writing the final interview from which the main reflections and reports will emerge.

5. Social media to promote awareness about sexual and gender-based violence

Emanuele Esemplio, Marcella Autiero, Caterina Arcidiacono

Communication history, as the historical reflection and reconstruction of processes of social communication in the past, cannot only focus on the communication processes that lie within today's past. It also has to cope with the challenges that present and future communication will pose"

(Christian Schwarzenegger, 2012)

Communication: cornerstone of humanity

The term "communication" comes from Latin and means "sharing". It is precisely through sharing that there is the opportunity to enter into a relationship with the other. In fact, through communication, a man is able to create and maintain those interpersonal relationships indispensable to the life of the individual and the community.

As also observed by the eminent psychoanalyst Umberto Galimberti, in his classic work *Il corpo* (1984): "*Etymologically, to communicate means "to share", to establish a relationship with something that does not belong to us, so "to be with" implies the existence of a distance, and the will of a bond, which is however able to maintain that distance that allows communication not to result in identification*" (p.189). A pooling, precisely, of the history of the group and of information mutually useful for the survival of the individual and the community. A tendency for which the human being, as we shall see, is increasingly a social user and lives his life constantly connected to a new universe which is that of the internet.

A new user comes to form before our eyes and is the user belonging to the era of the World Wide Web, more specifically, social media and applications that today dominate the global communication landscape. A very important evolution of the new media lies, in fact, in the opposite viewpoint, i.e. many-to-many, thanks to which subjects are really interconnected and no longer have to simply "suffer" a pre-packaged message, but can influence this message by answering or deciding which information to look for and which to ignore.

It is precisely in this change from passive to active user that the transition between new and old media is inserted and in which we also insert ourselves as the ViDaCS team, in order to to promote an active dialogue with the user and to adapt accordingly.

We are therefore talking about the possibility of a reacquisition of power by the user, which can mean a real step forward in the era of *hyper-communication*. There is a poignancy of the new media and the internet which can be clearly seen in the trend of hyper-connection and hyper-communication observable in very different areas of culture and society: more and more people - thanks also to the increase in the number of digital natives - rely on the web to receive reliable news and to communicate with others. This also involves the work sector, both in the sense of job search and information about the real possibilities and needs of an economic scenario in continuous evolution and change. An increase in new media engagement that does not only involve the much-discussed “digital natives”: the whole world is increasingly connected to the Internet.

Increased use of the web in Italy and around the world: social media as a mirror of society

Digital, mobile and social media have become an indispensable part of everyday life for people all over the world. More than 4.5 billion people are using internet nowadays, with a great increase in the use of social media throughout 2019 and 2020. More than half of the world’s population is now online and social media users in particular passed the 3.8 billion mark in 2020, creating a whole new online world which offers numerous opportunities to users and is slowly replacing the real one.

We can state this on the basis of various data from the report by WeAreSocial: Report Digital 2020: global digital overview (<https://wearesocial.com/it/digital-2020>). The average user in the world spends about 6 hours and 43 minutes online every day, leading to a total of 100 days spent online in a year. Clearly this data should be linked to different countries around the world, and this shows some important differences. In Italy, for example, an average user spends about 6 hours online every day: a very significant portion of individuals’ lifetime is therefore spent on the internet and in particular on social media (WeAreSocial, Digital2020, 2020).

Going even deeper into this analysis we know how socio-demographic characteristics play an important role in determining both the time spent online every day and the possibilities of access to the internet. In particular, gender and age play a role in determining internet use worldwide: the online population is increasingly young and predominantly male. The latter distinction, which sees women connected to a lesser extent, is particularly linked to the developing economies for which Mobile Gender Gap is still spoken of today. This gap, however, is slowly being closed thanks to the evolution of the online market especially in Asian countries: “Women are 20 per cent less likely to use mobile internet than men, down from 27 per cent in 2017. This reduction was driven primarily by an improvement in South Asia where the gap narrowed by 16 percentage points” (Mobile Gender Gap 2020).

Despite this: “the gender gap in mobile internet use in low- and middle-income countries remains substantial, with over 300 million fewer women than men accessing the internet on a mobile. The gender gap is still widest in South Asia at 51 per cent and remains fairly consistent in other regions such as Sub-Saharan Africa, which has the second largest gender gap at 37 per cent”(Mobile Gender Gap 2020). The gender gap, therefore, suggests that men use social media more than women, and since ViDaCS aims to raise the awareness of men who commit domestic violence about their behaviour and its effects, the use of social media is particularly appropriate.

Returning to the central theme of this paragraph, i.e. the analysis of the increase in the use of the Internet in the world and the current users to be involved in psychological intervention projects, it should also be noted that the habits of 2.0 media users are constantly changing. In particular, today users are increasingly using mobile phones and portable devices that can be employed in any place and time of life.

Thanks to the great interactivity and the possibility for users to connect anywhere and at any time, the Internet therefore becomes a privileged place of communication and the main place where people meet and exchange useful information. This is due to the countless strengths of the new media which are extremely capillary, agile, fast and, above all, highly interactive. With the advent of mobile devices, moreover, these strengths are exasperated to the improbable: devices that are increasingly small, powerful and easy to handle and capable of entering into any phase of our lives, monopolizing not only our attention, but also the communication we tend to entertain with each other and, consequently, directing sociality towards new forms and practices that impact on the world.

We can therefore say that the web itself brings about a change in the society in which we live that absolutely cannot be ignored in the different phases of the projects: in Ferri's words: "Web 2.0 brings with it a series of concatenated social behaviours linked to the practices of using software itself that expand like waves in a lake and intersect with other waves, determining new social interferences and modes of online interaction that sometimes determine technological innovations based on these practices. It is the users who determine, make sense of, with their contribution to the web 2.0 application databases" (2008, p.44), but it is also the web itself that guarantees a new meaning of the social and new possibilities of communication and information that make society tend towards a well-defined evolution, especially when it comes to issues related to the world of work and the professional world.

ViDaCS is a project aimed at fathers who commit domestic violence and aims to promote the creation of alternative realities (especially virtual ones) that serve as new places of thinking, recognition and awareness. First of all, the virtual reality experience proposed through a serious game in which fathers will live the scene of domestic violence in the shoes of their children can act as a thinking activator. The experience fathers (and users) go through can hopefully generate in them a request for help with respect to their condition of emotional fragility. But, in addition to the serious game, - and here we come back to the point - the virtual spaces of thinkability that we have tried to set up in the new places are precisely the spaces on the web (which we will analyse in the following paragraphs) through which we try not only to inform and raise awareness, but also to promote discussion and dialogue with the public. In addition to all these aims and effort, we have built, thanks to the use of the web, a bridge between the institutions and the users, inviting the latter to deepen the issues that brought us back to the web through a telephone consultation (when not possible in person) with psychologists who work in the institutions and who are part of the ViDaCS team (Sportello Oltre La Violenza della Asl Na 1 and DSU della Federico II).

Getting into people's daily lives: ViDaCS and communication via social media

For the reasons listed above, the ViDaCS project has therefore used the web and in particular social media as a fundamental resource both in terms of dissemination and user involvement and engagement, creating the above-men-

tioned “web spaces” that have guaranteed an innovative meeting with the target audience. It was understood that clearer and more direct communication, in line with our target audience’s needs and ideas, could be an essential added value. With “target audience/users” we are referring here to the different population groups that can benefit from different forms of contact with the project itself. Some fundamental categories have therefore been identified to be taken into consideration and on which to build the entire communication system.

First of all, it was understood that it was necessary to distinguish the users in two macro-categories: the generic population, to whom to communicate the existence of a project such as ViDaCS and therefore the concrete activity of psychology in the fight against male violence against women; the population directly involved in the phenomenon of gender violence and in particular within the family environment. Secondly, it was necessary to profile the population directly involved in the project into two further micro-categories: users capable of increasing the engagement of the communication system and users that we can define as “conversion users” (and on which we will focus later).

Starting from reaching as large a generic population as possible has therefore constituted the first step of the communication management of the entire ViDaCS project. In fact, one of the possible weak points of niche psychological intervention projects lies in the lack of knowledge that the general population has of these. In this way the different communities in which they will operate do not have a truly realistic conception of psychology and psychological intervention, two elements that are too often seen as being disconnected from the actual needs of the community. Moreover, communicating with as wide an audience as possible allows professionals - and consequently the projects in which they are involved - to focus the population’s attention on a specific social issue. The achievement of these preliminary objectives was therefore one of the starting points of the entire communication system of the ViDaCS project. Moreover, this communication to a wide audience allows that primary prevention process because it sensitizes the average population and not the specific one that may present problems of domestic violence through web channels.

We also think, as psychologists of the ViDaCS team, that we have the responsibility and the need to deal with emerging issues, broadening our frames of reference and intervention, taking into account the wider context that surrounds us and welcoming the new questions of the users that gradually help us to define and redefine our interventions. Certainly, one of these frames was the Covid-19 pandemic that affected the world population and had important psychological

repercussions due to the imposed lockdown condition. The condition of forced isolation that we witnessed from the month of March to the month of May certainly affected family, couple and parental relationships and, consequently, also the families who were experiencing violence in their own homes.

For this reason, one of the strong points of the project was to be able to enter into people's daily lives, also and especially in a complex historical period like the one we experienced because of the Covid-19. As we will see below, it was possible (through social media) to maintain contact with the reference users even during the lockdown that affected the whole of Italy. Even though the project was at a standstill, the users remained in contact with ViDaCS, which allowed us not to lose the results obtained in months and months of strategic communication.

This is what we mean by "entering into people's daily lives": to be able to communicate with them regardless of where or when they are and to succeed in establishing themselves as a useful and at the same time engaging communicative subject. A subject close enough - within reach of the screen, click and look - to be easily reached not only in moments of need (i.e. when fathers understood they needed help to manage their emotions), but also in all the most everyday moments of life.

How to communicate: developing online languages

As pointed out several times in the previous pages, it was necessary to create a communication bridge with the reference user. This does not only mean "creating" web spaces in which to meet the public, but also and above all identifying a form of clear, engaging language, supported by a solid theoretical framework and at the same time capable of activating a close dialogue with users.

For this reason, the whole team preliminarily identified some language modes – then developed, structured and refined over time – useful for two fundamental objectives:

- 1) Stimulating the interest and assiduous participation of the target audience, while at the same time implementing the interest also by the undifferentiated public;
- 2) Avoid blaming and consequently driving away the target audience (fathers and violent men in couples).

The pursuit of the first of the two objectives reported here has been possible by referring to the main theories of online marketing and digital communication in general. First of all it is necessary to overcome the user's indifference. This is a

growing problem in the modern communication landscape, as each user is constantly bombarded by a very high number of different messages and stimuli on social media alone. This leads to a desensitization of the user himself who must therefore be understood - today - as a subject who is difficult to attract. This becomes even more true in a niche environment such as that of the ViDaCS project which requires the user to be interested in a difficult topic, often far from the common conception and that brings with itself a strong negative emotional impact. Secondly, it is necessary to identify the right moment in which to approach the user, making use - as we have done - of some specific time periods, such as social events, situations of national social celebrations (see Mother's and Father's Day) or interpreting the different historical moments and communicating in line with them (as in the communications carried out in times of lockdown due to Covid-19). In this regard, we have therefore created a language on several levels and used different media which we will later analyse in relation to the concept of user engagement and which has allowed us to increase user engagement.

The second objective, more connected to the language used in all these steps and in the different media, required a negotiation in the way of communicating the constructs of psychological theory in order to make them closer and more comprehensible to the target audience. The initial excessively formal communication system, which risked distancing the population from the project by placing a wall between institutions and users, was replaced by a more direct and involving language. This was done through the use of short press releases, blogs, short interviews and small video projections. More specifically we worked to create a communication that could go beyond the "denial" typical of men interfacing with the theme of violence, through the use of language that was the least stereotyped and blameworthy as possible. Clearly, in the form of a compromise, a register suitable for the intervention has been maintained, thus operating a negotiation between the needs of the project and the institutional framework.

We are therefore talking here about an agile, rapid communication, based on the principles of instant marketing and above all supported by a psychologically oriented reflection. The use of terminology that is conceptually and operationally adequate, although not blameworthy (see the avoidance of terms such as perpetrator, executioner etc..) has therefore required a deep and developed expertise throughout the project. Only by fully understanding the problem of violence in families and couples, examining the point of view of both perpetrators and direct and vicarious victims and acting as direct interlocutors, was the ViDaCS team able to welcome a wide male audience.

The audience was built, as we will see below, through a project divided into three stages - short, medium and long term - aimed at increasing the engagement of an online audience appropriate to the project aims.

Engagement of the public: involving users

If being a positive communicative subject was therefore the first fundamental step in the online communication process, it was equally important to understand how to increase the mutual interaction between ViDaCS and the target audience. We are talking here about engagement, i.e. the involvement of users with the project, i.e. the extent to which they feel part of the ViDaCS internal process and the extent to which they are willing to act for the very purposes of the project.

The first step, as mentioned above, was to increase both the undifferentiated and the “profiled” audience. In order to increase the audience, i.e. the public aware of the project and its implications, a Facebook page has been built, with care taken both in terms of social marketing and the presentation of the project itself. It was necessary to start from the adoption of a sufficiently direct and comprehensible way of communication for the users, which would be able to keep together the specific objectives of the project and the active involvement of the public. We therefore started from a redefinition and rewriting of the “about” section of the page and more generally of the entire information section. Through repeated brainstorming sessions involving the entire staff, we negotiated a method of communication that we felt was more appropriate to bring the audience, especially the male audience, closer to the theme dealt with by ViDaCS.

The short, medium, and long-term projects aimed at balancing the engagement of the male population were then established. Through the analysis of the page’s trend in the first year of the project, a basic problem was identified in the actual reach of the page: although it was aimed at male perpetrators of violence, it almost totally reached a female audience. This problem is also widespread in other areas of psychology (and not only) that more easily attract an audience similar to “victims” rather than perpetrators. The reason for this problem is sufficiently clear and brings us back to the languages to be used today to take root on the target population on which we want to act: if projects speak to the target audience in a guilty way, they will clearly move away from it. In a following moment we had further damage in terms of communication and dissemination: the approaching of an inadequate public to the project aims.

5. Social Media to Promote Awareness About Sexual and Gender-Based Violence

In order to avoid this long-standing problem, an online sponsorship project was structured in order to totally increase the coverage of the male audience. Posts on social media were published on a regular basis over the eight months examined. These were posts with paid sponsorships aimed exclusively at a male audience, aged between 25 and 65, mainly residents in Campania. In this way it was possible to rebalance the exposure of the Facebook page and consequently of the entire ViDaCS project, bringing the project into the field of vision and action of the target men of the project. Clearly, a line of action including also female users has been maintained, but concentrating economic resources and not on reaching the male audience. The results of this strategy have resulted in a massive increase in the male audience (in Figure).

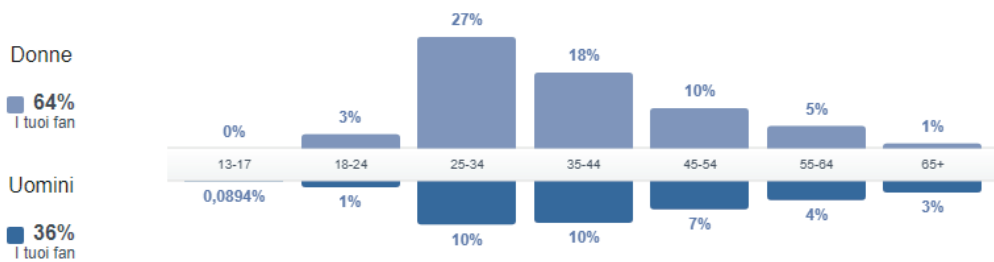


Figure 1: Actual Male/Female Facebook exposure of the ViDaCS project

As we can observe, Women still form the majority of the Page's audience, but to a much lesser extent than in the first year of the Page's life and to a smaller extent than other social realities focused on gender-based violence.

Afterwards, a program of graphic and textual posts was created to inform users about the objectives and methods of action of the entire ViDaCS project. The use of this type of post is known to be used in online marketing and has therefore also been applied to the ViDaCS project. Through the sponsorship of these posts it was then possible to reach as many people as possible within a population identified as "potentially interested" and "necessary" to the project. In order to identify this population, a better profiling of the audience for the page was necessary. Since ViDaCS is a project aimed at fathers and more specifically at perpetrators of violence, a typical user profile was drawn up to be involved in the project, i.e.: male user, preferably between 25 and 60 years old, living in Campania, preferably with children. Thanks to these socio-demographic characteristics, it was possible to sponsor the different posts precisely to the desired population,

thus increasing contact with users who were useful to the project and who could at the same time benefit from the project itself.

However, this also led to an increase in the undifferentiated population, marking an intense increase in the “likes” on the Facebook page and in the number of people reached from time to time through the published posts. An increase that was even more intense at the time of the production of the live videos that guaranteed a massive increase in the population reached by the page. One example above all: with the post of 27 March 2020 in which Prof. Arcidicono spoke about gender violence on Facebook live, 29,498 people were reached (Only by counting the direct audience of the ViDaCS’ Facebook page, to which to add additional users from other institutions and institutions in collaboration (such as OLV, Fanpage etc..). This goal was made possible thanks to the work of video design, live management and the subsequent post dissemination, spread and sharing by the authors of this article. This means, in the final analysis, entering into people’s daily life: entering their homes by informing in a direct and engaging way, using languages, methodologies and tools designed to allow users to have a new and more direct relationship with the ViDaCS project.

In this wake and in order to further increase engagement, a number of surveys have been proposed and some initiatives have been promoted to involve users even more. Since ViDaCS is a project mainly aimed at fathers - and consequently at family systems - Mother’s Day and Father’s Day were exploited with ad hoc posts aimed at involving families in a virtuous circle. For Father’s Day, videos were produced in which the fathers themselves told us how they experienced the family environment in quarantine. The purpose of these contributions was to bring the fathers closer to the theme we were proposing and at the same time to create a space for shared reflection on the emerging problems of parenthood in the days of Covid-19. The interactions obtained impressed us positively, as if to underline, from a psychological point of view, the need for fathers to talk about their own parental function, sometimes imbued with taboos and hidden by a domination of the maternal function within the home and public spaces. For Mother’s Day, on the other hand, we produced posts in which the children, with the help of their fathers, told us about their fantasies and/or desires about the relationship between their parents. In order to share the role of ViDaCS against witnessing violence, we thought it was important to give the children a voice when they too were still affected by quarantine and lockdown restrictions. Among the posts that struck us the most, there was certainly that of a child who openly expressed his or her wish for his or her father to cooperate more in do-

5. Social Media to Promote Awareness About Sexual and Gender-Based Violence

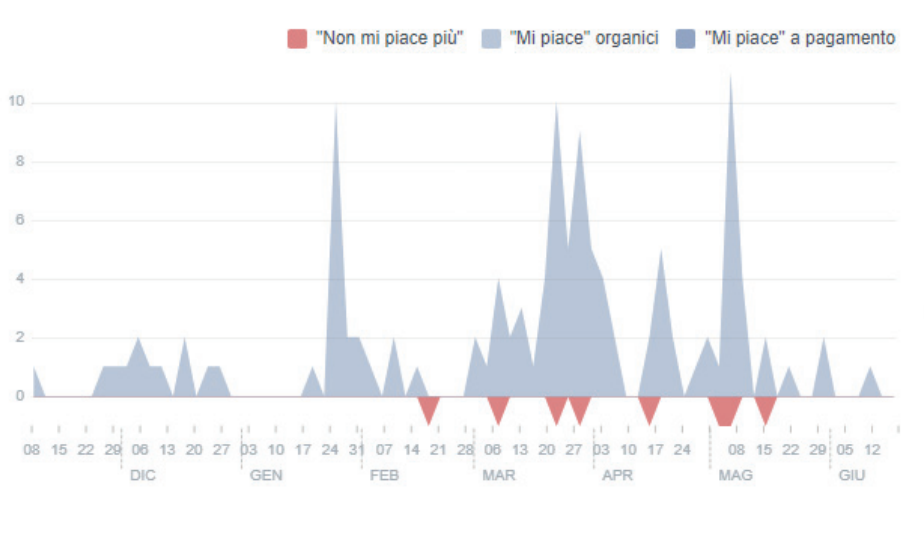


Figure 2: “Likes” and interaction growth due to ViDaCS communication strategy (8 months span)

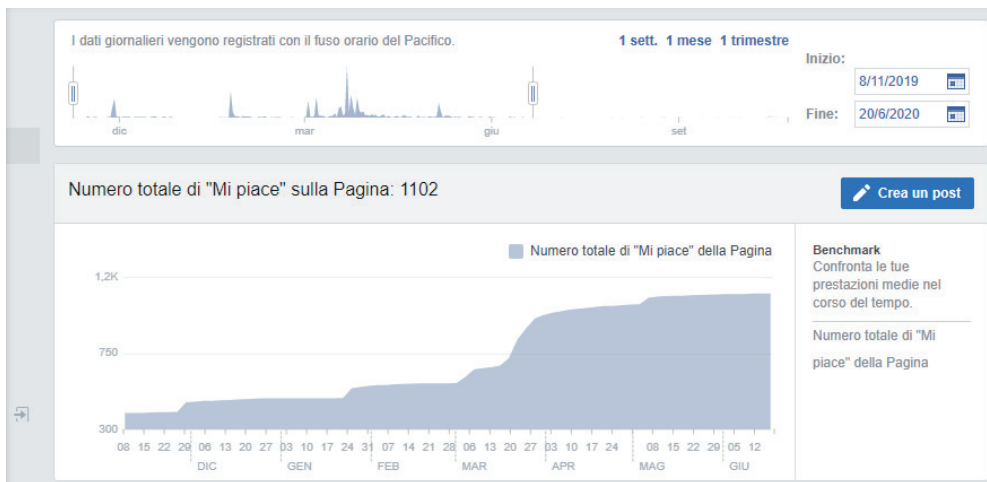


Figure 3: “Likes” and interaction growth, 8/11/2019-20/06/2020

mestic life, with particular reference to household chores. We find it interesting because within this initiative it was possible not only to give voice to the desire of a male child who was able to question some family stereotypes, but also to re-launch the question to the father, so that the latter could question himself about the same stereotype.

In short, an instant marketing strategy has been adopted which, although bland, has brought interesting results and important synergies between users (who collaborated in the production of the content itself) and institutions (which have provided a meeting space within which to talk about gender-based violence and family systems). This was a successful mode of action and has led to the 822 % increase in page coverage in the period between 1 March and 1 June, i.e. in the period of average and maximum online activity of the page.

Finally, using social media also means creating important partnerships with strong players in terms of online communication. In this sense, the partnership with Fanpage has also made it possible to increase the coverage of the page, even if, in terms of engagement, the process is still in progress and it is not possible to identify the final results. In any case, the use of the online social world has become one of the cornerstones of the ViDaCS project and has led to a previously unprecedented involvement of an increasingly large slice of the population. A population with whom to talk both formally and informally about gender-based violence, family violence, secondary victimisation and, above all, ways of combating these serious phenomena. In this way, social networks become a gateway to people's lives and, at the same time, a window that users can use to take a new and more informed look at the phenomena mentioned here. Moreover, social media, thanks to their essence as many-to-many media, allow users to contribute to the construction of interventions. This means that the user re-appropriates his communicative power, setting up a two-way dialogue with the projects that know how to use this very important tool. It is no longer, therefore, a monologue from the institutions to the population, but a constant exchange that leads to a construction of better and deeper meaning for all parties involved.

This proved to be extremely true with the ViDaCS project, in which the users had a fundamental role of cooperation and discussion together with professionals, thanks also to initiatives promoting webinars, real virtual spaces, mediated by an expert psychologist, in which they could share and reflect on the issues proposed by the project. In particular, the Webinar experience allowed users to reflect on the implicit premises and gender stereotypes that substantiate violence, opening a dialogue with a male who is too often excluded from the discourses on the subject.

Thanks to the two-way communication space made up of social networks, it has been possible to collect the contributions of the online population and to better understand the action to be taken, while at the same time informing users about gender-based violence today. This is a way to increase the awareness of the population about violence against women and, at the same time, to build a new and more competitive communicative know-how for projects that really want to engage, involve and care for the target population.

Funneling: hooking and converting users into participants

The last step of the online communication strategy of the ViDaCS project is also the most complex one from a psychological and online marketing point of view: to create a real funnel for the users included in the previously profiled audience. By the term funnel, borrowed from the world of marketing, we mean the theoretical path that channels a user towards the purchase of a good or service or, in our case, towards the production of a specific action required by the project.

Specifically, the action required of the user is to become experimenters of the serious game ViDaCS. An emotionally significant and demanding request, difficult to make and even more difficult to propose in order to be accepted by users. The preliminary difficulty consisted of two factors:

- 1) Convincing users to leave their emotional comfort zone by testing themselves with an emotionally “challenging” experience;
- 2) Going beyond the widespread denial of male violence, trying to create a communication in which one can recognize oneself and not defend oneself;
- 3) Shifting the user’s interest from the virtual world (clearly more comfortable, convenient and immediate) to the real world. This means investing time in the first person to undergo a probably unpleasant though important experience.

This was clearly a difficult task, made even more difficult by the lockdown imposed by the spread of Covid-19 right in the time of experimentation and which therefore led to a preventive stop of the experiments for clear reasons related to the health of the experimenters and the team.

For this reason, there are no clear results from this point of view, but the strategy put in place remains. The first step was to disseminate the video trailer of the game, so as to inform users about the experience they were going to have. Secondly, through direct videos and posts (both graphics and recorded videos)

the game itself and the aims of this has been explained in more detail and using the above-mentioned language. A step that may seem redundant, but which is fundamental in an online world where users have a constantly declining memory and attention span and which must therefore be helped by a repetition of the contents that is not repetitive (thanks to the help of the different formats and media reported so far), but at the same time capable of re-proposing the same contents even if in a different guise. This technique, on closer inspection, comes from the world of advertising and serves precisely to create the first level of funnel, the most superficial level in which the undifferentiated population is gathered.

Secondly, going into the funnel that the ViDaCS team has created, the second level of the funnel provides greater attention to fathers and men in general. In addition to the sponsorships mentioned above and the events already reported, a direct involvement of male users as content producers has been envisaged. Contents that, then, have bounced on the page and on the different institutional profiles and not in order to attract differentiated users. We therefore used the mirroring - possible thanks to the content production by the dads involved - of the users to overcome a widespread image problem. Here we are talking about the problem that very often it is almost exclusively female professionals who talk about gender-based violence in projects such as ViDaCS, leading to the perception that this is a niche problem that paradoxically concerns only women. By involving the dads in first person, instead, the second level of the funnel took shape, leading the users (as it appears from the private messages received from the page) to ask for information about the experimentation. This information, moreover, was provided through numerous text posts with both an institutional and more appealing approach, which made up the third level of the funnel.

A process of conversion of online users into experimenters was activated, and the images described above confirm a clear increase in the interest of the male population as well as a more marked interaction of the male public with respect to the reference values.

It should be underlined that, at the moment when we pushed more on the conversion process, there was a lockdown. This condition inevitably “blocked” the actual conversion process, above all because there was the suspension of the experimentation itself (in person) which resumed haltingly only in September and October.

In addition to the lockdown, however, this process was also hindered by the specific problems of violence, i.e. those related to denial, of which we have always

been aware. In fact, they questioned us and still question us about the messages we want to propose in order to interest the male audience, placing us in a continuous process of redefinition and re-modulation of our work. However, we are at the same time aware of the need for much wider and more complex work in this sense, to be done on several fronts and synergistically to other institutions.

Promoting awareness of gender-based violence through social networks

According to the ViDaCS project we can therefore affirm that it is absolutely possible to promote social awareness about gender-based violence today. The positive feedback, in terms of audience and engagement of the target population, has confirmed to us that the world of social media and the World Wide Web in general is a privileged stage on which to work in order to educate the whole population.

According to the thousands of people reached by the social attention messages produced by the team following an intense psychological study, the online presence of the ViDaCS project has contributed to a 2.0 dissemination with a strong impact. With a maximum coverage threshold of more than 250 thousand units (thanks to the collaboration of Fanpage.it) and with a threshold of interactions of about thirty thousand units with the sole use of the internal resources of the team and related in particular to the live video of prof. Arcidiacono of 27/03/2020, we can say that the online communication of ViDaCS has entered the homes of the population as planned. This was a very important result in such a prohibitive period such as the one due to the global pandemic that has affected the entire social, academic and economic world throughout 2020.

In this sense, the online communication and dissemination of psychological intervention projects is the best way to bring the population closer to the world of psychology, making it closer to the subjects it aims to help and consequently more effective in intercepting, understanding and intervening on the social problems underlying the interventions.

As demonstrated by the surge of involvement obtained by ViDaCS thanks to a management team capable of approaching the project as an element of social marketing and taking on board the principles of social media management, it is therefore possible (and advisable) to use social media as a powerful means of promoting the population's awareness of gender-based violence. Social media and more generally the online communication system have therefore proved to

be one of the cornerstones of the project and it is now understandable how the importance of online presence and work is so far an unavoidable factor for projects that really want to make a positive entrance into people's lives, with positive effects that, in other ways, would probably remain relegated to a restricted circle of participants.

A significant step in the whole process was the dissemination of the video edited for ViDaCS (https://www.dropbox.com/s/itrnotzskryrtu4/16.11.20_VIDACS_Def_youtube_eng.mp4?dl=0) by fanpage, online newspaper and related press releases, filmed on the project's web page and Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/vidacsEU/> <https://www.vidacs.eu/index.php/it/>).

This initiative gave resonance in the whole journalistic media system to the guiding principles of the project and to convey an increase of stakeholders interested in the experimentation of the game.

Two branded articles and a branded social video-story were produced. Those aimed to tell the story, life and goals of the project as directly as possible to the widest possible audience.

The first branded article, published on May 6, 2020 and entitled "A virtual game against domestic violence" reached 278,458 users, with 12,882 views and 5,307 social interactions.

The second branded article, published on October 28, 2020 and entitled "From virtual reality a help to curb domestic violence" was distributed, according to a multi-channel strategy, on the various social and web platforms of Fanpage. In this way it was possible to reach 328,584 users, with a number of views equal to 4,539 and 5,537 interactions.

This product was also distributed according to the multichannel logic mentioned above.

6. Sounds and images of witnessed violence: working with children through group interaction, participatory drawing and music therapy

*Valentina Manna, Oscar Pisanti, Stefania Carnevale, Immacolata Di Napoli,
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Introduction. Why a ViDaCS workshop with children?

The whole approach to Domestic Violence provided by ViDaCS is consistent with an ecological vision which gives relevance to all members of the family involved in the experience of violence. In this perspective, our Consortium considered it essential to also directly collect the children's visions, fantasies and attitudes towards conflictual family interactions. For the project purposes, this was a really important point: "ViDaCS" is the acronym of "Violent Dads in Child Shoes". This title has been chosen because it refers to the main objective of the project: to put the perpetrators in the shoes of their children exposed to violent behaviours in the domestic environment. That is to let the perpetrator experience, during the game, the impact of violent behaviour on their child's emotions, sensations and thoughts. Thus, understanding domestic violence through the eyes and voices of the children was the first step to reproduce violent scenarios under the serious game, in order to use them with transformative purposes on the perpetrators playing ViDaCS. On this basis, the project team conducted a participatory workshop addressed to children in schools, as a part of the Game Design for the ViDaCS serious game. This preliminary action aimed to collect direct experiences and imagery among children potentially exposed to WDV.

The importance of exploring children's views of Domestic Violence is also derived from literature, which defines the witnessing domestic violence (WDV) as the exposure of children to any act of physical, verbal, psychological, sexual or economic violence upon an adult from his/her family, who is affectively significant for the child, usually the mother. Children may experience the violence directly (when the violence occurs within their own field of perception) or indirectly (when they do not see the violence but they know that it is occurring, e.g. hearing noises or seeing wounds on the mother's body) or by perceiving the effects of violence itself (CISMAI, 2017).

Given this definition, WDV can be considered to be a phenomenon at the interception between gender-based violence, with special reference to domes-

tic violence, and violence against children. Indeed, as stated by the European Council since 2010 (Resolution n° 1905 and n° 1714), being exposed to violence against one's own mother is a kind of psychological abuse which may have particularly dramatic consequences for the child. Thus, the Convention of Istanbul introduced the WDV as a kind of child abuse, requiring the need for appropriate interventions in this field. The interconnection between the two types of violence is also due to the fact that the detection of WDV is usually possible only if the gender-based violence suffered by the mother has been already recognized or reported (Serughetti, 2014).

The problem appears to be particularly complex: indeed, WDV can assume several forms and it can result in various and severe psychological effects on the child. For example, violence can be experienced even when parents are divorced, during the visits from one parent (Echegaray et al., 2014); the child may be obliged to take part in the violence against the mother (FRA, 2014); the child may be involved psychically in the violence, being hurt himself/herself as revenge upon the mother, sometimes being killed, as reported by the chronicle.

Literature has widely reported the psychological consequences on children of WDV, resulting in post-traumatic disorders, depression, problems with schools and concentration, low self-esteem, self-depreciation, drug or alcohol abuse (in the long term) with a general compromising of the individual well-being and relational abilities (Tsavoussis et al., 2014; Moylan et al., 2010; Williamson et al., 2017). In terms of emotions, the children exposed to domestic violence often suffer from guilt and they usually show a disorganized emotional code, accompanied by the stratification of gender-stereotypes (Echegaray et al., 2014; Anderson, et al., 2017). Indeed, a relevant risk on a transgenerational level occurs: the child may consider the abuse and the gender-based violence as something acceptable or to be inevitably repeated. Children re-exposed to this type of violence show a greater tendency to emulate the aggressive behaviours and to adopt violent behaviours (especially for males) by identifying themselves with the perpetrators, or to show remissive behaviours which expose them to a greater risk of suffering violence (especially for females, in identification with the mother). In both cases, violence is perceived as a legitimate relational instrument, with special reference to the couple (Galvàn & Barefoot, 2014). This may produce a chain of violence among generations, thus revealing the need for strong interventions in this area with the double purpose of supporting children exposed to domestic violence and prevent the further development of new violence.

6. Sounds and images of witnessed violence

Moreover, the exposure to domestic violence often compromises the affective relationship between the child and the non-violent parent as well. Mothers lose their ability to assume the role of reference adults for the child, since their energies are employed in the preservation of their own safety and that one of their children, who, in turn, lose confidence in the mothers (Dargis & Koenigs, 2017). Thus, another important need seems to be the development of interventions aiming at the recovery of the relationship between the child and the non-violent parent.

In 2014, the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights has estimated that domestic violence involves at least 62 million European women among 17 and 74 years old. Moreover, a strong correlation between the violence against women and that against children has been highlighted: domestic violence re-doubles the risk for violence against children (United Nation, 2006). Reliable estimates about the incidence of WDV are not easily available due to the overwhelming nature of this unreported phenomenon. Available data report that every year worldwide from 133 million to 275 million children are exposed to episodes of domestic violence (UNICEF, 2006). According to Istat (2006), in Italy among the 674,000 women who suffered domestic violence by their own partner and who were also mothers; 61.4% of them reported that their children have witnessed one or more episodes of violence, 19.7% rarely, 20.1% sometimes and 21.6% often. In 15.9% of cases, the children were also hurt by the father. The same report also confirms the trans-generational link of the spiral of gender-based violence, highlighting the key role of gender and stating that:

- 7.9% of women (16-70 years) have been exposed to domestic violence between their parents: later on, 58.5% of them have become victims of violence themselves;
- 30% of male perpetrators have been exposed to domestic violence between their parents; 34.8% have been hurt by the father, 6% by the mother.

These data surely suggest an alarming phenomenon on which professionals working in the field of domestic violence should operate in a preventive manner.

How to work with children around witnessed domestic violence: some ethical issues

But *how* to work with children on this issue raises a series of ethical and, consequently, methodological questions. Firstly, the risk of traumatization and re-traumatization should be considered when introducing such a delicate theme

in the children's discourse. Secondly, finding an appropriate way to communicate this *un-communicable* theme required us to move towards tools and methods which overcome the verbal channel; in our work, the latter became a point of arrival only after having passed through new communicative ways.

Keeping this in mind, during ViDaCS workshops, the children were offered a safe and warm environment where exploring their feelings during conflictual family interactions (in connection and contraposition with positive ones) and imaging strategies to better manage them. It is really important to us to underline that the activities conducted in the schools have had primarily and solely preventive aims, and that they have been carried on by respecting the ethical guidelines for working on Domestic Violence as described under the Child Protection Policy signed by all Partners of the Consortium.

As a first point, ViDaCS workshops were not addressed to traumatized children already clients of care services, but they involved students from local schools, not previously signalled for such reasons. Secondly, the workshops themselves were planned as tools to improve children's psychological wellbeing by only tangentially touching on the theme of violence. Indeed, in order to avoid and prevent any case of re-victimizing/traumatizing children victims and witnesses of Domestic Violence some concrete safeguards were adopted during the activities:

- The team leaders did not expose children to traumatic videos and stories about domestic violence; the term "violence" was not directly mentioned, unless children used it directly;
- Any children who were not willing to take part in these sessions, were not obliged to (only one case occurred, from a couple of parents who did not authorize the participation of their son in the activities);
- The Consortium had preliminarily planned to potentially individually meet children not wanting to participate, to understand their reasons and respect their silence;
- If needed, contact with parents, school and health system had been planned to be undertaken.

However, working with children not already signalled for reasons due to episodes of Domestic Violence did not ensure that the project team would avoid cases of violence not previously detected. For this reason, in any case a warm acceptance of all children was guaranteed to help them in expressing possible feelings and emotions of fear and rejection. Keeping in mind the importance in professional care of not re-traumatizing potentially already traumatized children, we worked on the idea of ViDaCS workshops as a prevention

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program. It means that children participating in our activity got the opportunity to potentially discover their trauma thanks to the workshops and to the experience of our team. Therefore, in our case we are not talking about the potential re-traumatization, but rather more about early detection of traumatization and the opportunity for support for trauma in unaware children witnessing violence. It is evident that if we had detected traumatized children, we would have undertaken contact with the health institution of the school responsible to adopt adequate measures.

To be prepared for these eventualities, the professionals involved in the workshop were selected based on their competences to assure, if needed, individual contact with traumatized children, their families and the judiciary system. All groups were conducted by our project leader – prof Arcidiacono, who has worked for 20 years as supervisor of a family centre directed to the clinical treatment of men, women and children subjected to serious family conflicts, violence, incest and abuse. Therefore, in her experience avoiding the revictimizing/re-traumatizing of children victims and witnesses of Domestic Violence is a high priority. Secondly, Valentina Manna (from Roots In Action) has strong skills in dealing with children, since she is a child psychologist and psychotherapist, working as assistant in the school primary service of Naples. Oscar Pisanti, music therapist from Roots In Action, works daily with people affected by intellectual disability who have undergone traumatic experiences. Finally, Stefania Carnevale and Immacolata di Napoli have experience in the field of violence, based on their PhD studies and practices on gender.

Methodology

From a methodological point of view, literature shows the efficacy of prevention programs aiming at empowering children's ability to self-protect against any forms of violence, by increasing their related skills and knowledge, e.g. teaching basic prevention concepts against potential abusive situations (Wurtele & Kenny, 2010). However, as a Consortium, **we were not interested in a pedagogical approach**, but in developing, together with children, a way to *explore* and very gradually *symbolize* the contents related to violence as imagined and experienced by young people witnessing it. In our view, this is a more effective way of reaching the scope of reinforcing children's own ability to self-protect against violence, instead of an instructional approach.

The Partners involved in this task, i.e. the Department of Humanities and Roots in Action, firstly met in order to define a common methodological approach. The meeting resulted in a workshop procedure (3.1) aimed at helping children in bringing out the emotions experienced in situations of conflict between the adults. The methodology combined different skills from the two Partners, with special reference to *music therapy* and *psychological participatory tools* (3.2), requiring the involvement of a multidisciplinary working group.

Procedure

The action research team defined a format ad hoc for conducting the workshop, implemented and tested here. It consists of a 2-hour session addressed to the group class in a neutral setting, the school theatre was selected as a particularly appropriate place for the dramatization and expression of emotional contents. The workshop was conducted by two representatives of DSU as researchers, two representatives of RIA (one psychologist and one music therapist) and one representative of CTS (mediation role with the school), in the presence of at least one teacher of the class.

The workshop aimed at letting children share their feelings and thoughts by using imaginary tools: indeed, participants had an active role in imaging conflictual situations and possible resilience strategies for other children eventually undergoing similar situations. The key experts acted as facilitators for the group thought and imaginary process. The workshop activity followed a structure inducing a shift from rational thinking to the emotional one, and from the verbal channel to the non-verbal one. Indeed, it was articulated in the following moments:

- 1) *Get in contact stage* (based on verbal exchanges)
 - 10 minutes: Presentation of the team and the purpose of the activity
 - 10 minutes: Brainstorming “Good and bad things in your home”
 - 15 minutes: Identification of the most shared dimensions
- 2) *Core stage* (based on non-verbal channels)
 - 20 minutes: Drawingvoice “Drawing of bad things at home” (2 subgroups) and “drawing of beautiful things at home” (2 subgroups) for first grade classes; or “Movies about bad things at home” (2 subgroups) and “Movies of beautiful things at home” (2 subgroups) for second grade classes; each group was supported by the monitoring of a psychologist during all the joint activities.

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- 50 minutes: Music therapy session “The sounds of bad and good things of your house”
- 3) *Final stage* (with the purpose of restitution and emotional containment)
- 15 minutes: Conclusion of the workshop.

At the end of the workshop, the key experts remained to share impressions about the workshop and discuss it with the principal.

Instruments

A variety of tools were *adopted* and *adapted* to the age of the participants.

In the first stage of the workshop, a Brainstorming (Bezzi & Baldini, 2006) session was held by asking the participants to think about the good and bad things in their home, i.e. what makes them feel good and bad in the family. The answers were listed on the wall and discussed by the team leader with the whole group, in order to identify the most shared dimensions. This is a significant basic activity aimed at opening the participants to the themes of the workshop and creating a group atmosphere necessary for the following phases.

In the second stage of the workshop, the group is divided into four subgroups, each one supervised by a key expert, working through two different methods, depending on the age of the participants:

- a) *Drawingvoice* (for students of elementary school)

This is a visual methodology for defining conceptual dimensions through graphic representations and group sharing. It provides the opportunity to share meanings and co-construct new viewpoints to bring out transformational and developmental practices (Carnevale, Di Napoli, Esposito & Arcidiacono, 2019). The instruction given to the subgroups was “draw something good (or bad) happening at home”. Then, the drawings were shown and subgroups told the others the story emerging from their drawing. Thus, narratives were collected and discussion about common points was elicited.

- b) *Movies* (for secondary school students)

Thanks to this instrument, participants become screenwriters in order to investigate the group’s emotional experiences, dominant and marginal narratives in reference to conflictual family interactions. The technique consists in asking the participants to write a film script concerning the theme of the session (Francescato et al., 2002). The group has to choose the genre (e.g. documentary, fantasy, police, historical, comedy, drama, fantasy etc.), the

title, define the main characters, develop the plot and construct a precise ending in the present and, if desired, in the future. At the end of the task, the participants act out some scenes and present their screenplay. Then, the scripts are commented on by the group to share and discuss the emerging cultural models, the language used, the interactions and the projective-introjective dynamics. Therefore, it is an interactive methodology acting on the emotional rather than on the merely cognitive, making participants question themselves and their points of view, through sharing and dialogue.

As a final step of this core stage, the key experts conducted a sound session based on *active music therapy techniques* (Bruscia, 1989). Through the use of one's own body and specific musical instruments, the experience of free musical-sound improvisation allowed participants to "put into sounds" unexpressed parts of conflictual family interactions and emotional experiences that, due to their intolerable contents, were not possible to "think" in the form of words (De Backer & Sutton, 2014; Bion, 1962). Indeed, we consider a non-verbal channel such as music to be an alternative mean of communication for "unspeakable things", as well as one of the primary ways children and adolescents enjoy communicating with others, thus providing a way to address sensitive issues (Scholes et al., 2012). Following this perspective, music therapy has been largely employed with youth as a method of developing symbolic thinking through the combined use of music, sound and movement, and as a working tool for trauma (Robarts, 2014). In this sense, we adopted a **clinical approach** in our music therapy sessions, even though they were not conducted in a real clinical setting: the clinical aspects of our intervention deal with the clinical sensitivity of the key experts and with the direction towards which the sessions moved, i.e. to increase the capability of symbolizing violence starting from an emotional experience with the others, in the safe container of the group. To optimize peer to peer interaction, participants were divided into two subgroups, each one alternatively playing or listening. When playing, participants were required to think of "bad moments" at home and to "make them sound". When listening, participants were asked to keep their eyes closed and imagine what those sounds recalled to them; free associations in terms of sounds and images were encouraged by the key experts. In this way, the "sounds of violence" were explored, by using music as a medium to share project themes in groups.

In the very last part of the workshop, the whole team of experts tried to re-connect and summarize what had emerged in the various stages of the work-

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shop, with the help of the participants, thus finding a common outline of the meeting. In this way, unspeakable things now became verbalized. Suggestions for further implementations were collected here.

Participants

Four workshops following this structure were realized in the “Comprehensive Institute Antonio Custra, a local school. The school was selected among the contacts already established by the Partner CTS, who usually works in close contact with the education system. The school is located in a suburban area on the outskirts of Naples, where violent behaviour is the “norm” in families. Thus, it was selected because its students could be considered an “at risk” population. The school was contacted by CTS and the key experts involved in the workshop to explain objectives and methodology. Then the principal identified the classes considered most needy of the enhancement of children’s wellbeing and prevention of witnessing Domestic Violence. Particularly, two workshops addressed children from the elementary school (attending 3rd grade, 8 years old) and two workshops addressed pre-adolescents from the secondary school (attending 2nd year, 12 years old). Each workshop involved 20 participants, for a total of 80 participants.

Findings

Our research interest was primarily directed to identifying what participants mean by “bad things at home”, i.e. negative happenings ascribable to conflictual family interactions and how they live them. Thus, in this section we will mainly describe findings related to these aspects. In effect, the participants themselves expressed a great need and urgency to talk about the negative ones, as in the case of the movies in the third workshop: all participants wanted to write a plot about a bad happening and none about a positive one.

In our view, what were described by the participants as “good things” should be considered as *protective factors* to take into account when planning preventive interventions. The older students (from the secondary schools) mainly refer to the “**online world**” as a protective, alternative universe where they may find refuge when reality provides sufferance. It is represented by participants as a place where intimate relationships with peers may be maintained (as in a movie from

the last workshop), or where the youngest experience freedom, as in the movie entitled “Being online makes you free” (last movie of the last workshop). Of course, this has an ambivalent power: to escape into another world also means detaching from reality in a defensive movement. The online world, manifested as chatting, using the smartphone or playing the X-box/PlayStation, appears as a protective armour when participants do not want to hear or know what is happening around them. It also influences participants’ mood, fears about relationships and it is used as a metaphor for describing the strong emotions related to violent behaviour: “to lose control” is ironically reported by the participants in the more acceptable image of “losing the controller” of the console (throwing it away) when the violent emotions are increasing. In fact, the online world is the field of immediacy, power, regular connection to others and their continuous presence; when you can’t find immediate answers, you can destabilize yourself and “lose control”, the same control that the online world allows. Therefore, at the same time this protective factor by its very nature can become a frustrating factor.

Protective factors for children from the elementary school, instead, derive from **being together**, expressed in the form of love and friendship, and illustrated via natural and colourful elements, such as the rainbow, flowers and gentle animals, or in images also showing experience of togetherness such as eating an ice-cream with parents, dancing together or having a walk with the family. Staying together is also the strategy that participants identify for facing the negative things at home as represented in the workshop; indeed, they held hands when hearing the sound of violence in the music session, to feel safe and not afraid. In E.’s words: “now that we are together, the sun has come up”.

Even if we had never mentioned them, **violent behaviours** surprisingly emerged in the spontaneous verbal and non-verbal dialogues among the participants, thus highlighting the presence of this kind of experiences in their lives. They mainly result in the image of the **murder of a family member** (namely the mother, but also the son and, in one case, the father), often following an emerging **madness** due to trivial reasons. A common point in the drawings and in the movies as well, is that the murder is realized by **superhuman forces**: in a story from the first meeting the mother is killed by two serial killers who arrived at home during the night; while, in another one, a haunted house is the place where terrible experiences of violence happen. This probably refers to the difficulty in attributing violence to the “human” aspect of people and of their relationships. The fact that violence mainly happens during the night or due to the action of

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ghosts seems to suggest the perception of secret or obscure areas of the family relationships, living as a phantasmatic presence in the family environment. This seems to be confirmed by the genre of the movies most often chosen by the participants: horror or drama.

It is interesting to notice that the violent aspects of the family interactions appear in a softer and lighter version during the “rationale” starting phase of the workshop: in that moment, “bad things” like arguing, slapping or screaming were collected. They become more and more cruel while the workshop evolves in the direction of non-verbal and emotional phase (drawing), with a peak during the music therapy session. Here, images referring to more intense and basic fears emerge associated to the sounds of violence: the fear of breakdown (e.g. image of a balcony that collapses) or a volcano that blows up, or a storm/earthquake in the house are some examples of what precedes and announces a violent behaviour. Participants named the emotions connected to these images as anger, sadness and loneliness. They often revealed the fear of not being able to manage ambivalent aspects of the family relationships and the desire not to be alone when feeling so.

The images collected refer to two specific kinds of difficulties related to conflictual family interactions. The first one is the **impossibility to digest** (i.e. to elaborate) bad things and emotions: the image of *an indigestible mozzarella* eaten before going to sleep was used by a child to express this kind of process. In one drawing, it has taken the shape of a large spider vomiting green poison, something dangerous that can kill. But the mouth is the organ that throws out something “bad” and is also the “weapon” of screams to call for help.

Therefore, indigestible emotions cannot be contained and they need to be evacuated: vomit, poop and the need to escape are the images used by the participants to symbolically express the difficulty of linking emotions linked to potentially traumatic events. The older participants also referred to this aspect as “something blocked in the ass”, i.e. that prevents a complete process of digestion and liberation.

Most of these emotions and reactions to violent contents were also expressed by a singular student as a spokesperson of the group. It is the case of M. with his hyperactivity or L., a girl who experienced the whole workshop from under a table, showing the tendency to hide herself when something around is perceived as fearful, and requiring the closeness of the key experts. Indeed, what also emerged from the narratives collected is the helpless condition of the child when he undergoes the fighting at home: in the story drawn by the subgroup that named itself “cold blood”, the main character is a child whose parents have been killed.

In the participants' words: "he did not understand anything of what happened but he had to tell it to his aunt". This probably refers to the concurrent sense of guilt and responsibility that often invests children victims of witnessed domestic violence.

When facing these controversial emotions, **the children found a safe place in the group of peers and experts where overly intense emotions may be remediated**. This process appears to be particularly evident during the music therapy session: in all the workshops, the session moved from an initial and unbearable chaos to the possibility of creating harmony by playing all together. At the beginning, the participants reported the sensation of ears bursting and a feeling of confusion ("as when there are gunshots"). Then, acquiring gradually the capability to listen together, the desire and possibility to follow the same rhythm - even if playing with high musical dynamics - becomes reality, with a great sense of gratitude coming from all the participants. We became able to express strong emotions (through strong sounds) without creating an unbearable chaos, thanks to the group.

A final consideration is about the participation of the students: they very easily understood the process activated and its potentiality. They really became co-authors of the organizational and operational aspects of the workshop and expressed the desire to continue it in new sessions. Teachers as well appeared grateful for the experience, having stimulated them at a profound emotional level. The key experts expressed their availability in case anything interesting or worrying should emerge after the workshop.

Discussion

By conducting the ViDaCS workshop in the school, we found a very powerful tool to give children the opportunity to elaborate hidden feelings, to express them and eventually to talk about them, in a safe environment. Indeed, by combining brainstorming, drawing/voice/movies and music therapy we defined an expressive lab that seemed like the best way to address such delicate issues, difficult to be verbally expressed, thus requiring non-verbal means of communication having a great emotional value. Moreover, the presence of adult professionals facilitated the emotional and cognitive experience of the participants, supported by peer-to-peer interactions. The role of the key experts is of facilitators of the verbalizing process.

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As a strength, the combination of different skills from the various Partners involved resulted in the development of an innovative prototype for preventive and explorative interventions with children about witnessed domestic violence, to be potentially exported and replicated in new contexts.

As a point of weakness, given the structure of the ViDaCS project, we could conduct only one workshop for each group of participants. That limited a deeper exploration of the emerging themes due to the restricted time available. However, this was not a primary objective of the activity, which only aimed at providing a starting point for reflections on the theme. For further implementation, this might be a point to be organized differently.

The ViDaCS workshops produced some useful suggestions for the experts for the definition of the scenarios of the serious game, with specific reference to:

- The scenes when violence appears: e.g. “normal” daily interactions that transform their nature at night, or in unexpected moments;
- The typical children’s reactions to violent interactions (including psychosomatic ones): e.g. hiding, escaping, refuge in a virtual world, vomiting as in refusing movement, screaming;
- The emotions felt in these cases: e.g. confusion, anger, loneliness, fear of breakdown;
- Images, sounds and visual effects to be adopted in the construction of the game: e.g. noises deriving from the music therapy session (e.g. noise of steps running away, dishes breaking, music background creating suspense), images symbolically linked to violence (e.g. storm, earthquake) and visual effects such as the perception of something happening elsewhere, as in the next room, that is not properly visible by the child (e.g. happening in the kitchen while the child is in the bed, or noises heard when the light is off).

These suggestions and contents have been then properly discussed throughout the construction of the game.

Conclusions

Working with children around the theme of domestic violence revealed itself to be not only a delicate issue but also an area which the young ones expressed the need to explore and name. Emerging as a “hidden happening” within conflictual family interactions, violence stimulated the mobilization of feelings of anguish and fear, becoming more and more tolerable as and when we abandoned

the rationale level of communication to reach non-verbal and more primitive kinds of expression. What we want to underline is that what allowed this careful exploration were three setting conditions:

- *The graduality of our movement from the outside to the inside and vice versa:* as said, violence was not proposed as the key theme of our meeting; we created a safe scaffolding to eventually give it voice and, then we worked to connect what emerged externally in the forms of images and sounds to what may be intended inside in terms of feelings;
- *The use of devices helping the symbolization of emotions into thoughts:* the combination of tools using the non-verbal channel of communication (drawing, drama and music) strongly helped the possibility to put previously unthinkable or “indigested” emotions into forms. Sound and images are primitive forms of representations leading to verbal communication as the final stage of our sharing experience;
- *The group dimension:* the peer group functioned as a supporting and holding environment where children appeared to be safe and not alone. This particularly emerged as a protective factor since it helped children in sharing their visions while feeling accompanied by the experts.

7. *Around* and *within* the trauma: Clinical music therapy as a preventive tool in the field of domestic violence

Oscar Pisanti, Valentina Manna

About the relation between music and trauma

ViDaCS' work around Domestic Violence has applied a combination of several instruments in a preventive manner. Among them, music therapy has been introduced as a working tool to explore fantasies and representations *around* violence, with children and operators, and to examine them by going *within* the trauma as imagined and/or lived by the participants. This kind of work was based on the experience carried out by the Association for Social Promotion Roots In Action, as a Partner of the Consortium. The Association usually works with children, adolescents and at-risk families, in order to provide psychological support and clinical therapy through the adoption of psychodynamic oriented techniques, including psychoanalytic psychotherapy and music therapy. The latter will be the main focus of this contribution.

To be concise, music therapy “can be defined as an (individual or group) expressive therapy focused on the use of sounds and music, and on the relation that the therapist and the patient establish through them. It can be applied both in properly clinical settings – as in case of psychopathologies where the relational, symbolic and linguistic skills are particularly compromised – and in (not-clinical) circumstances in which the logical verbal thinking cannot adequately elaborate the lived experience. The techniques adopted in music therapy are conventionally categorized into active (when specific musical instruments are used) and receptive (providing a shared listening of sound-music tracks)” (Pisanti, 2020). Both in active and receptive music therapy, the work proceeds from a non-verbal communication (through sounds and music) towards the verbalization of contents previously expressed by musical means.

Starting from a psychodynamic perspective on sound-music and from a clinically informed therapeutic approach, the idea of a “psychoanalytic function” of music will be proposed here, as a key feature of our approach to music therapy and of its implementation in the work about domestic violence. This function implies that music allows the listener to establish a relationship with himself and

his own inner world, to do conscious and unconscious psychological work with the evoked emotional experiences, thus generating a personal symbolic meaning. This may be particularly effective in the area of trauma, considered as an emotional experience which, due to its overwhelming nature, cannot be mentally worked through. That is, it subjects the individual's psychic apparatus to a "quantitative level of stimulation [that] exceeds what can be transformed [...] and rendered thinkable" (Ferro, 2002, p. 2). Sense impressions "in excess" remain inscribed at the level of the body, "outside the sphere of symbol-formation and thought" (Meltzer, 1986, p. 36). Such experiences, which cannot be thought or recovered in the form of memories, can only be *evacuated* in the form of compulsively repeated actions and behaviours or symptoms (neurotic, psychosomatic, etc.) (Bion, 1962).

In the light of this model of trauma, the psychoanalytic function of music can promote processes of psychic transformation and working through of traumatic experiences. This approach is aligned with part of the literature underlining the power of music in relation to trauma. It derives from the consideration that "music has a unique quality that enables direct access to an affective and corporal dimension of the human psyche. This is music's intimate dimension, and it plays a central role in the fundamental process of symbolisation" (De Backer & Sutton, 2014a, pp. 16-17). According to De Backer and Sutton (2014b), "music takes place at the same level as the trauma experienced by the patient and thus is an ideal modality for treatment in this way. [...] Thus, psychic problems can be addressed in musical improvisation through a form-giving process that moves towards a musical form. By this we mean that psychic problems can be given shape in musical form. This is at a musically symbolic level, where the process of musical improvisation or listening to music occurs in tandem with verbal reflection within a therapeutic relationship. By alternating verbal reflection with musical improvisation and listening, there is the possibility of conscious or unconscious layers of the human psyche tapping the often untapped (i.e. that which is at the frontiers of the psyche). [...] However, in not involving word, musical processes are closer in essence to what is not yet able to be spoken about. [...] In psychoanalytic terms, we think of the term *sounded dreams* to encapsulate this idea about music. Patients may free associate musically as they improvise, a process by which they and we may hear in sound their inner world – their mind" (ib., pp. 16-17).

In this process of exploration and symbolization for *unthinkable affects that gradually become thoughts*, a key role is played by the relationship between the

music therapist and the patient, as well as by their reciprocal attunement and by the transference and countertransference movements affecting their external and internal “connection”: “Through the traumatic event, the psyche is so compressed and filled up that thinking becomes impossible. [...] The music therapeutic process we have observed in patients, who move toward an inner image or a musical form, suggests that, in this compacted mass, a small opening can emerge. This become possible when the therapist can be on the same level as the emotions of the patient, waiting for a moment to arise in which his or her musical play can come into resonance with the different layers of the trauma of the patient. A part of the patient’s compact psychic space can therefore be appropriated because of such a moment opening up, after which mentalisation can occur, a process possible specifically through the appearance of a musical theme or of rhythms or a melody from patient and therapist *working together* (my italics). This indicates the first presence of a small space that could allow a first step toward symbolisation. In this first opening in the compacted mass one can see brief moments of attunement happening” (De Backer & Sutton, 2014a, p. 43).

Within this framework (which here is specifically referring to active music therapy but can be extended to receptive techniques as well with some necessary adjustments), a relevant contribution was provided by Amir (2004) who realized a study adopting improvisational music play as part of treatment for people who were sexually abused. Her practice is based on the assumption that music is a tool to “bring out hidden, unconscious material and make it conscious and available to the client” (ib., p. 96). Her work is also consistent with the centrality we attribute to the relationship between the music therapist and the patient, since she states that the psychoanalytic exploration of the improvisation experience “depends on the mental, cognitive, and emotional state of the client, on the amount of trust she has in the therapist, and in her motivation and readiness to do this kind of work” (ib., p. 98). Thus, a relational process towards symbolization is what we are going to talk about.

Music therapy practice and domestic violence: previous experiences and best practices

Some previous experiences and best practices adopting music therapy as a working tool in the field of violence will be now described to better compare and define our model of preventive intervention. We are going to analyse them

considering three elements: (1) the beneficiaries of music therapy practice; (2) the music therapy techniques adopted; (3) the preventative connotation of their aims.

As far as the first point is concerned, literature highlights that music therapy is a well-consolidated practice for addressing the issues faced by **women** victims of Intimate Partner Violence. As is known, there are several and disrupting consequences of domestic abuse on women's psychophysical well-being; among them, according to De Juan (2016) "the most outstanding is perhaps the harmful impact on self-esteem due to the destruction of their sense of self-worth, putting women at a greater risk of other types of disorders. This feeling of debasement tends to erode personal power and sense of rightfulness, as well as the ability to relate to others and act freely. A weakened identity linked to lowered self-esteem leads to a process of deterioration and dehumanization, resulting in a feeling of having lost an identity" (ib. 19). This produces effects such as anxiety, depression, withdrawal and feelings of guilt (Fernández, 2008; Fernández & Pérez, 2007; Kirkwood, 1999).

Several studies have demonstrated successfully adopting music therapy interventions with these women to work on the abovementioned symptoms: anxiety (Walworth, 2003; O'Callaghan et al., 2008), depression (Brandes, 2008; Oliveira & Cordeiro, 2008; Steenbock, 2008), identity crisis (Tangarife, Petersen, & Mouta, 2008) and self-esteem (Curtis, 2000; Sharma & Jagdev, 2012). The majority of these music therapy interventions focused on: promoting relaxing treatments to improve sleep (Hernández-Ruiz, 2005; Lasswell, 2001), increasing patients' ability to set goals (Parra, 2008) and valuing the need to create a safe space for themselves (Teague, Hahna, & McKinney, 2006). There are several pieces of evidence of the efficacy of music therapy in reaching these aims: Hernández-Ruiz (2005) found positive effects of music therapy upon anxiety levels and sleep patterns of women living in a battered women's shelter; Teague and colleagues (2006) registered a relevant reduction in depression; Miner (2015) obtained a decrease of the distress levels among victims of intimate partner violence with both expressive and receptive music therapy techniques; while de Juan (2016) demonstrated the effectiveness of music therapy techniques in increasing women's level of awareness about violence.

As pointed out by Curtis (2016), the emerging practice of music therapy with abused women increasingly embraces the Feminist Theory as conceptual framework converging into a sort of Feminist Music Therapy (Hadley, 2006; Curtis 2000; York & Curtis, 2015): "This makes sense since this particular approach

adheres to the most recent and best informed conceptualization of male violence against women with a socio-political understanding of its nature. It also involves a broader understanding of women's lives and experiences which encompasses not only the influences of sex/gender, but the complex intersection of the full array of possible sources of oppression" (Curtis, 2016, p. 4). Given this, York and Hearn (2008) have described the concept of "finding the voice" of women survivors of abuse. They mean that music therapy, working with women's vocal sounds and communicative power, may help women in finding the conviction of the right to be heard, restructure their lives and encourage self-care. In the same vein, Curtis (2008) considers Feminist Music Therapy to be a tool to facilitate a socio-political understanding of women's experiences about life and abuse; to empower them at a personal, relational and political level; to overcome the cycle of violence and to produce their own personal and social transformation. Even if this integration between feminist theory and music therapy is a recent development (Purdon, 2006), it appears to be a promising way to help abused women in finding new symbols and shapes for their inner world (Shembri, 1996).

Music therapy practice is also directed to **children** involved in violence, and reflections about this therapeutic practice applied with sexually abused minors is considered by past and present literature. Rogers (1995), for example, assuming music therapy as a valuable work for this kind of patients, analyses concepts such as splitting, conflict by proxy, transference and counter-transference as key methodological aspects to take in account when considering the nature and effects of abuse on children. In more recent times, Strehlow (2009) examined the use of analytical music therapy in treating sexually abused children, starting from the assumption that the experienced trauma determined three main effects on the patient: a) the destroying of instances of good relationships; b) the sexualisation of the relationship; and c) the restriction of the ability to mentalise. By presenting a case study, the author illustrated how to do interpretations with a focus on interaction patterns and on how music is used, to gradually restore vitality and confidence in the child.

Nevertheless, music therapy work with abused children appears somehow less conceptualized when compared to that one addressed to women victims of violence. It is mainly presented via case studies and only in recent times the use of music therapy interventions with children not directly abused but **victims of witnessed violence has been recorded**. This is probably due to the late recognition of witnessed violence as a form of violence itself, thus delaying the enhancement of similar interventions. Some key suggestions about the adoption

of music therapy with children who have witnessed domestic violence come from the European Project “B-SIDE: a Barrier to Stop the In-door Domino Effect”, funded by the European Commission under the Daphne Program, whose main results are reported in a comprehensive report (Pangea, 2014). The project adopted music therapy both in a preliminary phase as an assessment tool (also involving the mothers in collecting information about their children) and as a proper intervention (individual or in group) with rehabilitative purposes. The aims were to (a) increase children’s self-esteem; (b) improve the mother-child relationship; (c) facilitate the recognition and expression of children’s emotions by providing a safe place where communication about violence is possible; (d) work on the psycho-emotional and behavioural damages by restructuring in children values and behaviours associated with violence. We also have to say that in several countries music therapy with children who have witnessed violence (or coming from violent domestic environments) has become a proper *commune practice*. As in Birmingham (UK), where since 2013 the Ashram Housing Association has adopted music therapy as one of the instruments to fill the gaps in service provision to address the impact that domestic violence has on children. Through innovative, low-cost activities and partnering with other agencies, volunteers and local musicians, the Association has found ways to help alleviate the effects of domestic violence on children by opening a pioneer therapeutic music studio for children. Here, the latter are offered a way to express, through music, their feelings about the abuse they have witnessed, obtaining a sense of achievement and confidence, but also increasing key skills in communication, listening and technology.

While music therapy interventions with children witnessing domestic violence are more recent and less conceptually organized, those addressed to **professionals** working in the area of domestic violence are quite rare or scarcely recorded in literature. To the best of the authors’ knowledge, academic repositories of journals and publications show no traces of group music therapy interventions addressed to operators working around domestic violence as a way of exploring their representations and attitudes towards the phenomenon. A study (Annesley, 2018) partially touches on this area by qualitatively analysing the professionals’ perceptions of an integrated project for families exposed to domestic violence including music therapy as a tool for intervention. The study provides data about perceived benefits for families, the evolving perspectives of the professionals involved and the degree to which processes in music therapy were communicated and understood, but it does not refer to a proper use of music therapy as a way of exploring these attitudes and representations.

From a methodological point of view, the **music therapy techniques** adopted in the studies mentioned - that is the second focus of our attention as stated in the premise of this paragraph – are very rich and heterogeneous. Among the others, Borczon, Jampel & Langdon (2010) introduced improvisation, composition, lyric analysis, and music imagery as effective music therapy treatments for people who have experienced trauma. The music therapy interventions implemented with women victims of domestic violence are often carried out in women's shelters (Fesler, 2003) and they tend to privilege a group setting. For example, Teague and colleagues (2006) identifies active music therapy within a group context as an effective intervention for ameliorating mood in women recovering from intimate partner violence, in combination with other creative arts methods. Formerly, Whipple and Lindsey (1999) had used music therapy in a group counselling format for battered women and children. Generally speaking, some specific techniques adopted have been:

- “re-scripting nightmares” consisting in asking the client to “recall a nightmare that he or she had, or imagining a nightmare situation. The client then creates music that reflects that nightmare image” (Miner, 2015, p. 17) as a way to work through traumatic experiences;
- “music in storytelling” which gives an opportunity for self-expression by music: the patient is asked to use music for creating a story that reflects his/her inner world (Borczon, Jampel, & Langdon, 2010);
- “lyric analysis” moves from listening to pre-recorded music offered by the therapist and concerning stories similar to the one of the patient, towards performing live in the group under the music therapist's guidance. This technique appears particularly useful for helping people in breaking the perception of social isolation and promoting process of identification (Curtis, 2013);
- song writing and recording are frequently used within the framework of feminist music therapy as an opportunity for abused women to give voice to their own experiences, in contrast with the experience of having been silenced by abusers; in addition, music-centred relaxation has been used to face the psychophysical stress emerging in the victims, while improvisation and drumming are considered empowerment opportunities for these women, which allow “intimacy and honesty without fear of judgement. Drumming which makes use of large powerful instruments and large powerful sounds provides unparalleled opportunities to address the important issues surrounding body and power that face abused women” (Curtis, 2016, p. 294).

Within the music therapy interventions addressed to children victims of abuse or of witnessed violence, mixed methods are often preferred. For example, Kang (2017) combined music and imagery in addition to sand play as a therapeutic treatment to improve emotional and behavioural adaptability for children witnesses of domestic violence. In the same vein, professionals under the abovementioned European Project “B-SIDE: A Barrier to Stop the In-door Domino Effect” (Pangea, 2014) combined methods derived from Juliette Alvin and Mary Priestley during weekly or biweekly music therapy sessions for minors in individual or group settings. In this case, music is used at the same time as a recreational, educational and therapeutic tool under several activities with mixed materials: construction of musical instruments, collaborative song writing, music themed murals and narratives. In a recent study by Fairchild (2018), collaborative song writing has been specifically used with children from violent environments as a research method to co-construct knowledge: children were interviewed on what music means to them in their contexts and, then, group song writing helped them work through main sufferance and cultivating hope for the future, in order to increase their personal resources and capacities against trauma. This allowed the author to identify six main themes in children’s representations around the experience of violence: seeking refuge, wanting to feel safe, hoping for a better future, feeling cared for, being self-determined, protecting self and others.

Finally, considering clinical music therapy from the point of view of its scopes, the main music therapy interventions around violence were to adopt preventive aims for the young, both adolescents and children (Nöcker-Ribaupierre & Andreas Wölfl, 2010; Wölfl, 2019), especially in schools (McFerran & Hunt, 2008). However, though directed to preventing violence, they mainly focus on the latter as violence among peers or as expression of individual aggression that flows into behavioural or emotional difficulties to be prevented (Derrington, 2012; Wölfl, Drexler, Ferdig, Fromberg, & Uffelmann, 2010; Wölfl, 2014; 2016; Baker & Jones, 2005; Gold, Saarikallio, Crooke & McFerran, 2017) not facing the theme of witnessed violence. In this perspective, a gap has to be signalled in literature and filled in practice in order to define a theoretical-operational model suitable for addressing the theme of witnessed violence with both children and operators by means of music therapy in a comprehensive preventative direction.

Our approach to music therapy: which psychoanalytic function in music?

Having described the core connection between music and trauma, and collected the main works adopting music therapy intervention in the area of violence, we are now going to describe our approach to music therapy as a premise for its operational implementation under ViDaCS project.

Our approach, clinical in its nature and inspiration, as anticipated, develops from a transformative model of the mind – as conceptualized by the British psychoanalyst Wilfred R. Bion (1962; 1965) and subsequently elaborated by authors who have been extensively inspired by his thought (Civitarese, 2014; Ferro, 2002; Grotstein, 2000; Meltzer, 1986; Ogden, 2005). According to such a model, the primary function of the mind is the “symbolic transformation of experience”: sensory, perceptual, affective and motor data are continuously transformed into mental images (i.e. into symbols). Therefore, in this perspective, symbolization is the fundamental activity of our psychic life as well as the essential requirement for thought processes – of which emotional experience represents the “*primum movens*”. However, at birth the baby does not yet have a mind with such transformative abilities. The healthy development of an “apparatus for thinking the thoughts” – the alpha function, as Bion (1962) defines it – will depend on a mother’s good enough care (Winnicott, 1960) and on her ability to process (unthinkable) emotional experiences of her child. Therefore, in this perspective a mind always needs another mind in order to develop. If these “premises for symbolization” (Godfrind, 1993) should fail or prove inadequate, as a result of traumatic events or due to specific organic damage, a mind will develop that is not sufficiently capable of transforming sense impressions and emotional elements for thinking and “learning from experience”. In this case, a therapeutic intervention must necessarily involve the processes of symbolization and have as its main purpose that of creating for and with the patient a “space” in which it is possible for him to “develop [or recover] his own capacity for thinking and feeling his experience” (Ogden, 2008, p. 23). In such a model of the mind, verbal language represents one of the most important and articulated symbolic transformations. However, as Langer (1942) observed, there are “transformations of experience in the human mind that have quite different overt endings” (p. 36). The limits of language, continues the author, “are not the last limits of experience, and things inaccessible to language may have [...] their own symbolic devices” (ibid., p. 344).

Therefore, the musical expression is one of those “symbolic devices” that the mind uses to explore and work through experiences that are not accessible to

words. Indeed, the music therapy device, similarly to the psychoanalytic one, aims to serve as a “transformation system, through which unconscious somatic-psychic processes acquire the conditions of representability and become susceptible to binding themselves in thoughts and meanings” (Riolo, 2002, p. 827). From this perspective, we define our theoretical-methodological approach as *psychoanalytically informed music therapy*, which is based on the assumption that music and psychoanalysis both share the potentiality to give place (i.e. space-time and “figurability”) to the unspeakable and unthinkable aspects of the human experience. In this sense, we assume that music serves a “psychoanalytic function”, similar to the psychoanalytic function of our psychic apparatus. The latter refers to the abovementioned alpha-function (Bion, 1962), as capability of the human mind to transform sensorial data of the emotional experience into α -elements – among which we find “the visual images, the auditory patterns, olfactory patterns, and [all the material that] are suitable for employment in dream thoughts, unconscious waking thinking, dreams, contact barrier, memory” (ib., pp. 54-55). That is, he suggests that “the human personality is constitutionally equipped with mental operations that generate a personal symbolic meaning, consciousness and the potential for unconscious psychological work with one’s emotional problems” (Ogden, 2008, p. 24, my italics).

Following this perspective, by “psychoanalytic function of music” we refer, first of all, to the potential of the musical experience of “viewing an emotional situation simultaneously from the perspective of the conscious and unconscious mind” (Ogden, 2008, p. 24). Both creating music, in active music therapy work, and listening to music, in receptive music therapy practice, evoke emotions simultaneously drawing on two different dimensions of the personality – or, with Matte Blanco (1975), on two different logics: a rational (conscious) one, based on a logic typically asymmetrical and heterogeneous, expressible in ordered verbal propositions, coexists any time with a symmetrical (unconscious) one, which does not take into account the principle of non-contradiction, the parameters of time and space, nor the verbal language which pertains to the logical thinking. What makes this possible is the substantial “duplicity” of the musical phenomenon (Di Benedetto, 2000, p. 167), i.e. its nature as a “transitional object” (Winnicott, 1951), that makes music present and absent (i.e. invisible, impalpable) at the same time. Indeed, a musical track, as well as a sound-musical improvisation, is always simultaneously *found* and *created*: it shows a cultural, intelligible dimension that contains the conscious aspects of identity perception, but at the same time it produces a sense of mystery, untranslatability, which refers to

the unknown and unexpressed parts of the Self. Thus, music – both listened or produced – introduces an experience that takes place at the same time outside and inside: the physical properties themselves of the sound-musical stimulus are themselves something “that is both *around* and *within*, which at the same time envelops our skin surface and penetrates our body” (Di Benedetto, 2000, pp. 56-57), something that is there (as you can feel it) but you cannot see.

Moreover, the psychoanalytic function of music in therapeutic work appears even enhanced in a group setting: when listened to in a group or produced by group improvisation, music works as an object of mediation [objet de médiation] or object of relationship [objet de relation] (Lecourt, 1988; 1993; Manna, Pisanti, 2018). In other words, it allows “a connection between conscious and unconscious communication and as an articulation between the subjectivities of two or more people” (Privat & Quélin-Souligoux, 2000, p. 52, my translation). What is projected into the sound forms from the group members is brought by each one from his/her own unthought story into the therapeutic relationship. In this sense, it seems to be something individual. However, it can be “modified, remodelled and transformed by the playing of the intersubjective exchanges” (Vacheret, 2017, my translation). Once it has become an object of relationship, music “gives shape and thematizes what remains “waiting for meaning”“ (Gimenez, 2003, p. 44.), that is, it allows to share and work through “what was unthinkable until then” (ib.). It is an inter-relational work that the music therapist can guide and evoke if exercising a rêverie function (De Backer, 2004; Lecourt, 1993): his/her role is to help participants in finding “the music in the words and the words in the music” (Priestley, 1975, p. 250).

This process sinks its roots in the very early period of life, when, as noted by Lecourt (1987), the new-born is absorbed in a “sound bath”, i.e. a “group-music-origin” made of the set of noises, music, words and silences produced by the family environment. Only from this primary group dimension of the sound, an individual vocal-sound may emerge as and when a process of differentiation begins from the first sound exchanges that the child has with the people around: “[the various] vocal qualities, [the] rhythms of the sound exchange come to organize spaces and relational times of a common area” (ib., p. 172, my translation). The first distinctions appear in terms of mother/the others, males/females, children/adults, pleasant/unpleasant emotions. Susanne Maiello (1995) states that these processes for the child take place starting from the sound qualities of the objects. She introduced the concept of “sound-object” to mean that the sound expression, the melody, the rhythm constitute a first channel for the infant to

enter into relationship with the others, but having the great potential of putting the baby contemporarily in relationship with something that is inside (one's own inner world and the other's inner world) and which has to deal with preverbal emotions and affections. As a key example, the author supposes that the maternal voice perceived by the foetus from the fifth month of gestation constitutes the "raw material" for the formation of a proto-object. The maternal voice – with its volume, timbre, cadence – together with its absence, could represent, according to Maiello, the first realization of a "preconception of the breast" (ib., p. 27) and therefore a basis for the construction of the postnatal maternal object.

Similarly, the psychoanalytic function of music (together with the psychoanalytically informed approach of the music therapist) allows the person or group of people involved in the shared musical activities to perform a psychological work that from a condition of non-representability, through a music-evoked preconception, allows the working through of emotional experiences which provide all members with a greater understanding of oneself-with-the-others.

Implementations on the ViDaCS project: some operational criteria and considerations

It is now possible to outline the procedural and methodological aspects involved in the model of psychoanalytically informed music therapy that we intended to define here. If, on the one hand, having a psychoanalytic orientation in music therapy means "reading" the relational and communicative dynamics through the meta-psychological constructs and theories of psychoanalysis, on the other hand it implies the willingness of the music therapist to assume a particular way of feeling and experiencing the therapeutic situation. In essence, it is a matter of exercising a "negative capability", that is, knowing how to listen and be with the patient without letting "memory and desire" prevent us from opening up to the possibility of going through new experiences (Bion, 1970). This means, for the music therapist, being able to tolerate the lack of understanding, the not-knowing – even for long time – without pushing the patient to do what he or she (the therapist) feels is right to do at a given time. Many times, this implies a silent and steady therapeutic listening; other times, the music therapist has only to follow the patient in his confused, uncertain or frantic movements; still others, it means to settle for "drawing" meaningless sound squiggles with the patient. In other words, it means giving value to (co)inhabited time, but

also making room for unexpected moments of insight in which “from the naive pleasure of playing, from the free combinations of images and sounds, we move towards the perception of an order, of a law internal to the playing itself” which transforms senses into sense (Di Benedetto, 2000, p. 131, my translation). In this way, new symbolic forms of lived experience can emerge from the semiotic background of shared sensory-motor activities, of listened silences or sound improvisations: gestures, rhythms, fragments of melodies and sudden harmonic consonances become (audible or visible) traces of not-yet-mentalised contents which within a therapeutic relationship can approach the state of representability (in the form of music, thoughts or words). An oscillation from moments of non-integration to moments of integration that recalls the primary aesthetic emotion of a “psycho-somatic collusion” (Winnicott, 1974), when the child begins to feel itself be a body (separated from the mother), a psychic envelope capable of containing (by itself) emotions and sensations (Anzieu, 1985). It is therefore evident that, according to this model, music therapy is considered a therapeutic intervention aimed primarily at the psychic reality of the individual (or group) and only consequently at the physiological and behavioural dimension. In this framework, the sound-music represents a transitional dimension – a symbolic area in which you can discover new forms of expression that allow you to experiment and communicate mental contents that are not otherwise accessible. The music therapist is fundamentally called on to perform, through sounds and music, “the alpha-function of which the patient is incapable” (Meltzer, 1986, p. 36), in attempting to dream/play/work through what Ogden (2005) defines the patient’s “undreamt and interrupted dreams”.

In our opinion, the outlined approach can be extended not only in the work on already traumatized patients but also in a preventive direction aiming at empowering both children and professionals. Such work has an *explorative* and *therapeutic* value at the same time: in the first sense, it uses the psychoanalytic function of music to give shapes and representability to the violence as imagined and perceived by the participants, thus facilitating a process of recognition of what violence is or appears to be, as well as of related fantasies and fears that might hinder proper recognition of violence or a reaction to it. In the second sense, the symbolization process itself can obtain a therapeutic effect since it helps people in sharing collective fears and acquiring ability to self-protect against violence, by providing a safe place where experiences of violence may eventually emerge or where violence may be counteracted at a first imaginative level. If this is particularly important for children, who might be unknowingly exposed to violence at home and needy

for help, for professionals, instead, it is a preliminary work on their selves and on their attitudes towards violence, victims and perpetrators that appears indispensable to consciously position themselves in a role of professional care.

In other terms, during our music therapy sessions under ViDaCS project, we intended to work not on the overt trauma, but on the *preconception of violence*, as evocable and expressible through sounds and music. We conducted brief cycles of active music therapy in groups, during which the musical improvisation by the group was focused on the production of sounds solicited by imagined scenarios of domestic violence (for professionals) and “bad things happening at home” (for children) and was followed by a verbal discussion on what was collectively played. The discussion, following the flow of free associations by the participants in terms of images and feelings, helped us to work *around* and *within* the violence as a trauma, protecting, at the same time, the participants from a traumatization effect, through the safe container represented by the group. We will not examine the peculiarities of the two target groups (children and professionals) here. This will be specifically addressed in the two chapters of this volume focused on them. What we are highlighting here is the innovativeness of such an intervention that transposes the music work on trauma from the concrete level of experience to the *sensorial and emotional level of prefiguration*, meant as *a primary figurability*.

Protection from traumatization is guaranteed by the setting itself: “during the musical improvisation with the therapist, while the uncontrolled, terrible, dreadful traumatic core remains, there can be created at the same time a manageable, aesthetic distance – a new space” (De Backer & Sutton, 2014b, p. 54). This help participants to not remain trapped in a fearful representation of violence, since the safe, supportive environment provided by the setting facilitates a creative transformation of it: “by encouraging the client to use music, both client and music therapist have the possibility of gaining access to parts of the client’s unconscious world, where there may be found threatening and painful memories, but also possibilities of converting feelings of shame, anger and helplessness into a creative force that eventually brings power and healing” (Amir, 2004, p. 97). From this point of view, our preventative work acts, somehow, on the expressiveness of trauma, transferring to the participants the psychoanalytic function itself, i.e. a psychic apparatus to think and digest violent images and feelings, together with a sort of “idiom” about how to self-protect and care.

At an operational level, we were not interested in a pedagogical approach, but in developing, together with children and professionals, a way to explore and very gradually symbolize the contents related to violence as imagined and

7. Around and within the trauma: clinical music therapy as a preventive tool

experienced by participants. In our view, this is a more effective way to reach the scope of reinforcing children's own ability to self-protect against violence, instead of an instructional approach.

Although they were differently structured due to the peculiarities of each target group, our music therapy sessions under ViDaCS project were characterized by some common methodological points:

- They were conducted in small groups (max. 15 participants) and articulated in brief cycles (3 meetings of 3 hours each) with the use of active music therapy sessions, with special reference to musical improvisation. This approach was combined with techniques including the use of visual expressions (images and drawings) and gave space to a verbal discussion after the group musical improvisation;
- The sounds emerging from the group were considered and treated as suggested by Amir (2004): "every sound that the client produces in improvisation expresses something about him. The improvisation mirrors who the client is, how he organizes his external and internal worlds. Any musical structure that the client presents in an improvisation can serve as a mirror of the client's psychological organization. [...] Usually, the more the client's playing touches unconscious material, the more it becomes chaotic, confused and impulsive. The improvisation might bring images and blurred pictures of the abuse and the abuser, and expose the trauma. Later on, the role of the improvisation is to process the trauma and heal the wound" (ib., p. 98). Thus, the chaos that originated during the musical improvisation was considered the real *port of entry* to the traumatic imagery and its collective resolution;
- The music therapy work was oriented towards an *inter-relational movement of sense* about violence which also helped the reinforcement of the self within the participants. Indeed, as noted by Robarts (2019):

"music can be used in ways that not only adjust in a split-second, but also provide a firm framework for building new pathways of relationship and self-experience in a practical ongoing process of enactment through movement and gesture that is sounded and re-sounded. It is those levels of self-experience that early trauma impacts so devastatingly at the core of self in intersubjectivity, where procedural levels of relating or "implicit relational knowing" forge our fundamental experiencing of self and other. In cases of early relational trauma, these processes that are part of secure, healthy attachment go away, put tragically off course invariably with long-lasting developmental-psychological consequences. Music's properties regulate and engage people at sensorymotor-emotional levels and contain, transform, and develop mentalizing and symbolizing toward expressions of a coherent self" (Robarts, 2019, p. 370).

We consider this aspect as the real preventive connotation of our ViDaCS music therapy sessions, which acted on the self, empowering it while reinforcing one's own capability to express, share and symbolize.

Even if the music therapy sessions were conducted by experts from Roots In Action (one music therapist and one psychologist), the Consortium collaboratively defined a common methodological approach, which was consistent with the whole theoretical-operation framework provided by the ViDaCS project. Thus, the methodological guidelines defined an experiential procedure which mixed music therapy and psychological participatory tools, requiring the involvement of a multidisciplinary working group constantly comparing observations and reflections about the practice.

Conclusions

When defining and integrating our music therapy sessions in the ViDaCS project, we started from a larger consideration of the potential contribution of music for the exploration and working through of violence as a traumatic experience and concept for our psychic apparatus. Given the amount of mentalisation work that it requires and considering the surprising lack of prevention programs using music therapy techniques for the specific prevention of witnessed domestic violence, we tried to transpose the key value of this kind of program onto the area of prevention as preliminary work to empower both children and professionals *before* the encounter with the violence, or, to recognize this encounter *in retrospect*.

This required us to enter the theme on tiptoes during the sessions, providing visual and sound stimulus recalling the violence without explicitly naming it. Nevertheless, the theme emerged powerfully on its own, thus revealing the need for a clear mention and a common request, by the participants, of being helped to express and, then, think what domestic violence may be in the experience of those who witness it.

Following the outlined clinically informed and psychoanalytically oriented approach, we found in the groups' verbal and non-verbal way of thinking *around* and *within* violence, some recurrent themes and positions which had a subtle connection with the typical functioning of a violent relationship: e.g. the strain of asking for help, the feeling of entrapment, the need for refuge, and an initial repetition of sound, similar to a sort of "compulsion to repeat" which usual-

ly characterises our way of treating the trauma. From this point of view, some similarities may be found with what De Backer and Sutton (2014a) observed in abused patients as a sort of “musical psychopathology”: “we can see from work with traumatised patients that there is a clear musical psychopathology (sensorial play), but with a recurring theme of moments of being something other than this (moments of synchronicity) that coalesce towards more of a new musical embodied self (musical form). Moving through this process (both backwards and forwards) enables the patient to re-experience him or herself as an active participant, rather than a passive victim trapped in an endless cycle. When the patient can find release from the confines of their traumatic prison, and discover a means of giving the trauma a form of expression through musical improvisation, it can only happen through the presence of a creative process in potential space” (ib., p. 44). The authors identified, inside the repetitions, also some moments expressing the desire for evading the trauma, that were used by music therapists to work on, after opening a new space for creative working through. This similarly happened in our sessions, where the group somehow revealed to be the key element for allowing the creation of the potential space: both with children and professionals, from an initial experience of musical chaos – unconsciously representing the emotional chaos determined by violence and characterizing the domestic environment when being violent – have passed to a harmonic and coordinated sound which recalled in both groups the feeling of being supported as a way of overcoming violence. In the children’s words this was expressed as “being together” (with also joined hands to face the fear), whilst in those of the professionals it emerged as the importance of the “network” to work on domestic violence. This feeling of *being connected* made it possible to work collectively to on passing through and finding symbols to figure out what domestic violence represented to all of us, from being passive potential victims to being actively reactive to violence.

In the very end of this contribution, we can recall another lesson from De Backer and Sutton: “as therapists we must find ways in which to come to terms with the unbearable nature of the life experiences of our patients, in order to remain present when traumatic material fills the therapy room. In the gap between the traumatic event and the response to it [...] another kind of space can be found to exist: the potential space. We have argued that, in musically perceiving, experiencing, feeling and thinking about such spaces, we can be alongside our patients at the same level at which traumatic material is experienced. Through musical listening and improvising, we can discover a potential space within traumatic experience” (ib., p. 55). In the same vein, in our experience we had (and

we gave) the chance to open a potential space in the gap between the prefiguration of violence as a trauma and the actual traumatic experience of violence, between the imagination of domestic violence and its happening. This allowed the co-building of a common semiotic and pre-representative background from which to begin to “playing” “with the unspeakable and on which to be able to gradually re-construct/re-elaborate the “text” of the traumatic experience” (Manna, Pisanti, Moro, Gneccchi-Ruscione & Picariello, 2020, p. 124) of witnessed domestic violence. Overall, the potential space we opened through this experience, consisted in not waiting for the violence to happen to find adequate (psychic) tools to face it.

8. Representations and stereotypes among professionals and the perpetrators of violence

Antonietta Bozzaotra, Marcella Autiero, Alice Gargiulo, Giovanna Vasto

The **Istanbul Convention** (2011) on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence, adopted by the Council of Europe in May 2011, is an important international milestone on the path and actions to be taken with the aim of pursuing and eliminating violence against women and domestic violence and promoting gender equality. Article 15 of the Convention, dedicated to the training of professionals, supports the importance of **training for professionals dealing with victims or perpetrators** of all acts of domestic violence and violence against women in the prevention and identification of such violence, equality between women and men, victims' needs and rights and the prevention of secondary victimisation.

Secondary victimisation refers to situations where violence is not recognised or where the responsibility and blame for the violence lies with the woman, not listening to her reasons, not protecting her, affecting also the children involved. Women affected by secondary victimisation are predominantly mothers when, after reporting domestic violence, they are placed in courtrooms on the same level as their perpetrators in terms of parenting skills. They are therefore often deprived of the protection and tutelage together with their minor children to which they would be entitled (Protocollo Napoli, 2019).

Aiming at the training of professionals and operators working in health, social, educational, judicial contexts seems to be one of the primary ways to avoid the perpetuation of violence in the home, but also in those of services, and is also recognised as such in the Lanzarote Convention (2007), in recent National Laws (Law 119/2013, Law 77/2013, Decree of the Prime Minister of 24 November 2017, Law 69/2019), in the Campania Region Law (Law 11/2005, Law 2/2011, Law 22/2012) and in the Guidelines (by Cismai “Minimum requirements for interventions in cases of witnessing violence by mothers”, 2017; Guidelines of the Department for Equal Opportunities of the Council of Ministers for the promotion of territorial interventions to combat the phenomenon of gender violence, 2014; Naples Protocol: Guidelines for technical advice on child custody following parental separation, 2019).

What is still unclear today are the modalities, contents, useful and necessary methodologies for thinking, planning and building adequate training interventions addressed to professionals. The effort to be made is the need to develop a training path aimed at the theoretical, experiential and operational training of professionals working in services in contact with domestic violence.

“OLV- Oltre La Violenza” project

This context led to the birth of the “Oltre la violenza” project, an experimental project activated by ASL NA 1 Centro (U.O.P.C. ds 31), which is part of a legislative framework - which takes into account international, national and regional legislation - and a theoretical framework, including research, discussions, conferences, literature on the phenomenon of male violence against women carried out in recent years by experts in the field at national and international level.

Within this framework, OLV was born from the awareness that for a real effectiveness of the interventions against gender violence, it is necessary to act at different interconnected levels. It is necessary to integrate preventive and contrasting actions aimed at victims with interventions aimed at men who are perpetrators of violence and that the latter are not only repressive, but also preventive, educational and/or therapeutic. There is also a need for interventions aimed at educating and raising awareness among communities, professionals, citizens, able to promote *“socio-cultural changes of women and men, in order to eliminate prejudices, customs, traditions and any other practice based on the idea of women’s inferiority or stereotypical models of women’s and men’s roles”* (Istanbul Convention, 2011).

The OLV project includes:

- A **listening desk “Oltre la violenza”/ “Beyond violence”** which is proposed as a place for men who act on and/or fear inflicting physical, psychological, economic or sexual violence with current or former partners or wives; but, also for operators, professionals who feel the need to confront themselves on this issue. Within this space, in Naples at the headquarters of the Clinical Psychology Operative Unit and the first one set up in the field of public health in Campania and in the whole of Southern Italy, work is being done to: promote a more aware attitude of one’s own actions, emotions, behaviours, resources; going beyond prevarication and abuse in sentimental and affective relationships; promoting the recognition of the inherent potential of encountering differences.

8. Representations and Stereotypes among Professionals and the Perpetrators of Violence

- A **study and reflection space** aimed at deepening the phenomenon of violence against women and domestic violence from a legislative, theoretical, cultural, social and experiential point of view.
- The creation of a **network with the operators** of the Social and Health Services, Schools, territorial Agencies, Associations and the realities of the Third Sector that deal with the issues of gender violence;
- The **implementation of projects** aimed at combating, preventing and raising awareness;
- The **training** of operators and operators, professionals who work in close contact with situations of domestic violence, violence against women, witnessing violence.

Within these activities, Olv has taken part in the ViDaCS project as an expert partner in the treatment of abused men, participating in the development of the project, and particularly in the training of operators.

The epistemological framework

In recent years, the Oltre la violenza/Beyond violence group in its training practice has been accompanied by the idea that if the aim is to accompany men and women to seek different possibilities of self-care and contact with their own experiences and to help the members of a community to increase their awareness of the psychological and cultural representations of gender-based violence, it is necessary to start with themselves, the working group and the training group.

To use an observation lens, we must observe the “lens”, i.e. ourselves.

Every practitioner, in fact, brings their **own view of the world**, which they cannot disregard and through which they observe the other, themselves, the relationship. This gaze on the world, one’s own “lens”, is constructed over time by a series of aspects that have to do with one’s own history, one’s own preconditions, cultural dimension, context and much more.

In an epistemological framework that refers to **constructivism** and second order cybernetics the observer is inside the field of observation and actively participates in constructing the observed system; at all times he relates to the system with an understanding that changes his relationship with the system (Varela, 1979).

Constructivism and second cybernetics have underlined that operators not only have a technical responsibility, but also an **epistemological responsibility**.

The latter refers to the duty of the operator “*to reflect on his own way of thinking, on his own systems of reference, so as to evaluate the consequences on the social and interactive level of the cognitive operations that he carries out towards the patient and his significant system*” (Fruggeri, 1998).

Within this epistemological framework the operator is therefore called to question himself, to reflect and to recognize his own premises about the intervention context, the problems and the issues he will face.

When dealing with male violence against women, we are first of all dealing with a socio-cultural phenomenon that is the manifestation of historically unequal power relations between men and women, one of the social mechanisms through which women are forced into a subordinate position with respect to men (Istanbul Convention, 2011). A dominant cultural system, the masculine one, in which we all grew up, which is present in our lives more than we can sometimes see.

Technical competence and professional preparation alone are perhaps not enough to exclude the **danger of sharing or colluding** with certain cultural assumptions that have existed in our culture for decades. It therefore seems necessary that those who deal with male violence against women participate in the reflection on the cultural premises that support and structure values, beliefs, definitions.

The parallel attention that the operators will pay to the representations of themselves, their role, their action, the epistemological models with which they conceptualize their relationship with the users is important:

“The recognition of an experience of suffering due to violence is not a fact that can be treated impersonally or technically. Listening to and perceiving this experience calls us into play as human beings before as technicians and professionals. Whether we are aware of it or not, these stories evoke our fragility, our sense of helplessness, our capacity to suffer but also, our capacity to inflict pain and inflict it on the vulnerability of others. By this I mean that our ability to “meet” and “recognize” these experiences depends on human, inner and relational dispositions, even more than on technical or professional resources” (Deriu, 2012).

Theoretical-experiential-operational training according to the ViDaCS model

The project team has developed a training model for professionals that is highly consistent with the ViDaCS approach to domestic violence, i.e. based on an **ecological perspective** (Di Napoli et al. 2019) that considers training

for professionals as a tool to work on the relational level of the phenomenon of domestic violence.

In fact, defining specialised training for those working in the services for the fight against gender-based violence means equipping them with useful tools to improve the procedures for taking charge of both victims and perpetrators of violence.

The ViDaCS methodology considers the interaction of the participants as an integral and fundamental part of the training path and is a participatory type. Therefore, it adopts, in each phase of its implementation, a **group-type device**.

In order to encourage the **active involvement** of the participants in the training, groups of about 15 people are expected to be formed. It may therefore be necessary, in the case of larger groups, to create two or more subgroups.

A psychologist experienced in leading groups and in combating violence against women is in charge of conducting the training.

The methodology foresees the writing of the **report** both by the conductors and by the participants, as an important reporting tool to reflect on the path of the group, on the dynamics and contents that emerge. Reporting means using categories that refer to the relation, to think about the emotions evoked within the psychological relation and to talk about the relation itself according to specific objectives (Carli, & Paniccia, 2005).

In our opinion, some **recommendations** are particularly necessary for operators who come into contact with the perpetrators, and have led us to consider the following key aspects in the ViDaCS training to promote adequate capacity building actions in professionals:

- Attention to prejudices and perceptions about perpetrators often shared by practitioners themselves (Procentese et al., 2020; Di Napoli et al. 2020);
- Attention to the “rejection” that men “bring” to the treatment;
- Construction of the treatment space: “How to create a transformative space?”
- Reflection groups as a fundamental resource in this work context.

The ViDaCS training programme for professionals is, therefore, directed towards each professional to:

- a) Achieve a specific model for understanding violent behaviour;
- b) Enhance their reflexivity, thanks to which they become aware of their emotions and thoughts, and, are consequently, facilitated in not taking a unilateral position in the helping relationship;
- c) Support the practitioner in facing the denial mechanism, typically used by the perpetrator of violence;

- d) Increase one's competence in facilitating the process of awareness of the perpetrators about violent actions and in helping them to find new strategies to deal with negative emotions.

Theoretical training

For each session the training is organised in three different phases:

- 1) **Introductory phase** in which the presenter introduces himself/herself, asks the participants to introduce themselves and introduces the focus of the day. In this part, theoretical/legislative contents are shared with the support of slides, books and/or articles;
- 2) **Interactive phase:** the conductor, through the technique of the Focus group (Corrao, 2000) and, starting from the shared theoretical cues, stimulates the group reflection with the aim of sharing reflection, thoughts, emotions, memories, experiences related to the contents treated; it is possible to guide the discussion in this phase starting from clinical experiences, through the reading of a report and/or the narration by voice by a participant;
- 3) **Concluding phase:** in the final part the conductor will end the training meeting with feedback on the meeting and participants will be asked to share their reflections and fill in an evaluation questionnaire.

In organizing the theoretical part of the training course, the "I 4 Passi Oltre la Violenza Model" (The 4 Steps Beyond Violence) elaborated by the working group of the project Oltre la Violenza (Beyond Violence) has been taken into account, adapting it to the needs and peculiarities of the ViDaCS project.

The 4 steps are:

- Analysis and study of legislative references;
- Analysis and study of the scientific literature;
- Analysis and reflection on naive theories;
- Reflection on the observers/observers.

The contents

In the field of theoretical training, the aim is not only to focus on certain aspects of scientific literature and/or legislative references that can help the group of practitioners to acquire greater knowledge of the phenomenon of violence, but also to stimulate reflection from their own experience.

The theoretical references adopted refer to the framework of the integrated perspective of the ecological model (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) (Di Napoli et al.,

2019), which “makes it possible to consider the pervasive role of cultural and social factors, as well as psychic ones, which activate violence and also pervade the organizational procedural measures to combat couple violence” (Napoli Protocol, 2019). The model, taken up and recognised by the World Health Organisation (WHO, 2013), as the one that best takes into account the complexity of the phenomenon, provides an **integrated reading** of the elements that allow us to understand the phenomenon of Intimate Partner Violence (IPV). The ecological model argues that violence is the result of factors operating at different levels: individual, relational, contextual and social.

Moreover, this model identifies risk and protection factors as variables that influence the occurrence of violence, taking into account the different aspects and how they are intertwined.

Looking inside yourself: working with stories of witnessing violence

When, as a working group, we started to reflect on witnessing violence (Carnevale et al., 2020), including in our work the possibility of widening our view to this other aspect of a complex phenomenon that is male violence against women, we realised that it was perhaps a difficult step for the group. Even if that of the minors involved in the history of violence has always been a present vertex, often also central in the interventions with women and men, even if we had been reflecting on witnessing violence for some time, we realised that we had to go through a step.

In the discussion between us, but also with other operators, during team meetings, training courses, conferences, one aspect that makes the invisibility of minors visible emerged: it is often said that the minors are viewed from a distance, settling for an unclear blurred image. In other words, we often realised that we talk about boys and girls without focusing on gender, age, socio-cultural context and many other aspects that make those children with a face, a history of violence difficult to accept.

We therefore decided to start with us, with an exploration of our experiences, representations, emotions, from the baggage that as a group of operators and operators we could build to carry on our work.

One of the methods we chose to use to work on ourselves, but also to explore the history of the group, was writing and sharing stories. Each person had the assignment of writing a story of witnessing violence to share and read to the group.

The methodology used is that of the “equality group” (Bozzaotra, 2019), which comes from a reflection on the decision-making methods in the groups, which work on the mechanism of the majority, which is a violent mode, which feeds the conflict, as the minority can express their opinion only by entering into opposition. Conflict in the group is reduced when the minority’s thought can be brought into the group.

It consists in establishing rules for the equal conduct of the group. Time is the rule that we established to promote equality, to put everyone on an equal footing, and time corresponds to the time of conduction, i.e. of responsibility for the group.

The equality methodology is based on three elements: *responsibility*, *reliance* and *intimacy*.

Responsibility is everyone’s responsibility towards what comes after/before and towards the group. Everyone is responsible for respecting time. Those who lead, but also those who come after, because they have the responsibility of interrupting. What comes after is a limit; time is the limit (and condition) of everyone.

Everyone has the responsibility to make sure that the conduction allows others to *rely* on who is conducting and the group, experiencing the possibility of feeling intimate.

Intimacy characterises the group experience: even if I declare myself not to be involved or if I participate aggressively, I am inside an intimate relationship.

Of course, within the same time everyone can express himself/herself as he/she can/wants, but in those minutes, he/she is responsible for the group and the objective: to allow others to *rely* on, to carry on the activity.

We agreed that for each meeting we would write a report and a record.

This work was very intense, it put us in touch with stories of painful lacerations, which, although sometimes presented as “other than us”, we felt “ours”, we could somehow recognize them again. The shared stories represent the invisible side of witnessing violence: each of us, in telling and sharing a story or listening to the stories of others, came to terms with having been in a position where we were able to experience witnessing violence. In which a child felt mistreated, exposed to violence, unrecognised in their emotional, relational and material needs. Each one of us recalled the wounds present within himself, in his own history, in family and non-family relationships.

Recognising the wounds of one’s own history, one’s own pain, makes the invisible visible: being able to explore one’s own wounds with the lens of mistreatment, prepares the conditions so that the boys and girls with whom we enter into relationships as operators can be seen and heard.

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From an operator's report: *"During this work the emotional dimensions of the group emerged and a strong desire to get to know each other even more was perceived. Everyone felt free to open up, had confidence in the rest of the group who seemed to support those who were telling a piece of themselves in one way or another"*.

The moment before, the moment after: the time of violence

One of the aspects that seems to emerge as central to the group narrative is the importance of working on the concept of time. A time that seems to be marked by a cyclical return of the "moment before": the "time" that precedes violence, physical and/or verbal aggression.

In the group we experience the flattening of the temporal dimension. Time repeats itself in a cyclicity in which each "moment after" can become the moment before a "new" history of violence. Anxiety, suffering, tension can return from one moment to the next. This dimension seems to resemble the traumatic block, often found in stories of violence, also characterized by the illusion of being able to control the relationship in a unidirectional way and prevent the worst from happening again.

In the group confrontation it emerges that the moment before is not seen as a single moment, but as a path of prodromes. The moment before is the "place-time" where responsibilities can be built. The idea of gradualness and crossing to identify a relational complexity, which cannot be reduced only to the minutes that precede the violence, to what triggers it. This vision often fuels the idea of raptus, loss of male control and female provocation. This moment must be inserted in a story, in a relationship and in a story of relationships.

And yet in putting oneself in the child's shoes those moments before the violence seem to assume a centrality. In the moment before, a very evident change of emotional climate emerges. We pass from the child's reassuring routine (drawing, playing, preparing dinner, house noises linked to moments of sharing) to a change of mind, it is the moment where everything is possible.

"It's a summer afternoon: suddenly screams burst into the lives of three people, breaking the fragile balance of their daily lives".

"It was an evening like any other, a "normal" evening. I was on the sofa playing with mum and Angelo. I always like this moment because mum is just like us, she does the selfie, and the game is always to see who is the ugliest in the picture.

At a certain point Dad came in from work and we finished playing, because when he comes back from work it means it's late and we have to eat.

Mum becomes another person when he comes in".

Violence is described as a change in actions, colours, noises, faces and bodies that go from reassuring to frightening.

“Mum becomes another person when he enters. [...] Dad looked bigger than usual and yelled at Mum as a slut and asked her where she had been in the morning”.

“He was blinded by rage and, furious, he took off his belt to keep hitting her”.

“The expressions on your face change and darken you more and more”.

“She hears her father walking back and forth in the corridor, with a heavy step and in his voice the signs of growing anger”.

The aftermath has to do with “how can you reconstruct after what happened?”, “how do monsters become normal again?”. Sharing, with this, also the importance of working on monstrosity and how it can be integrated and reintegrated.

“Daddy, I can’t remember what he did, then I went back to drawing.

I took a new sheet of paper because I had punctured the old one and wrote my name many times. Then I drew me and mum next to each other all over the paper, I didn’t draw dad because I can’t draw boys, I can only draw girls.

In the days after, Dad gave me a new album, maybe he wanted to make up with me because he got angry when I started screaming. He was good to give me the album because I was bad to ruin it and pierce it all. Mum also yelled at me because I punched holes in it. Maybe mum and dad are angry with me and that’s why they shout when I’m at home.”

What emerges is the importance for the little ones to return in some way to “normality” to the habitual, to actions that seem to have a consolatory function, such as drawing. And yet “normality” seems to be that of violence that returns.

One of the central points is to reflect on the integration, from the child’s point of view, of all these faces of the father: the father “monster”, the father as father, the father as the mother’s abusive husband/partner and the father as the man. These representations, all different from each other and somehow split and fragmented.

“When she hears him shouting at her mother, she tries to bring to mind the good memories with her father, those of when she was a child; but the phrases he repeats to his mother are more overbearing in her mind”.

This aspect seems to be very important for practitioners who work with abusive parents because they are in continuous contact with a very strong ambiva-

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lence, contrasting feelings, with the need to see and welcome the “good” and the “bad” (Cirillo, 2005).

One needs to be able to stay in ambivalence in order to be able to grasp “*the mistreating aspects of protection and the protective aspects of mistreatment*” (Boz-zaotra, 2019).

9. Theoretical-experiential training and specialized operational training for professionals

Antonietta Bozzaotra, Alice Gargiulo, Giovanna Vasto, Valentina Manna, Oscar Pisanti, Immacolata Di Napoli

This chapter summarizes the activities and related findings described in the previous chapter 8 (Theoretical-Experiential Training for professionals and Specialized Training for professionals), i.e. all the participatory training activities addressed to operators working in the field of the IPV.

The training was structured in two kind of experiences: 1. Theoretical-Experiential Training and 2. Operational Training. In these training activities we aimed to:

- Spread knowledge about men who adopt violent behaviour in the domestic environment, sensitizing and improving their motivation to treatment and increasing the professionals' skills building (by means of the Theoretical-Experiential Training);
- Train professionals specialized on the ViDaCS project to support perpetrators in their motivation to participate in specific treatment (by means of the Operational Training).

Three theoretical-experiential seminars were held, organized in theoretical and music-therapy sessions. For this training activity 90 operators from the local health services were reached.

Among them, we selected 15 health care professionals for the operational training:

- 5 from OLV (Psychologists); 3 from DSU (Psychologists); 3 from RIA (Psychologists);
- 2 from Terzo Settore (Social workers); 2 from VDG (Social workers).

Moreover, a technician from VDG took part into the Operational Training in order to support the Serious Game experience.

This article is composed of two parts: (I) Activities of the Theoretical- Experiential Training and (II) Activities of the Operational Training.

Each training activity is described as following:

- a) *Procedural issues.* The working group adopted a clearly defined format for the training activities, multidisciplinary in nature and participatory driven,

based on the various skills of the co-conductors. However, due to organizational matters, some activities may slightly differ from what was established together. Here the authors describe the coherence of each activity with the shared plan for training and, if needed, report any procedural issues concerning organizational aspects, such as setting and timing.

- b) *Findings*. Qualitative results derived from the training experiences are illustrated here. They are reported as general comments explaining the knowledge acquired about operators' feelings, representations and operational strategies as emerged during the sessions;
- c) *Strengths and weaknesses*. Here the working group analyses strengths and weaknesses of the training activities, from a methodological point of view.
- d) *Suggestions for the ViDaCS serious game and for its implementation*. The last section is reserved for highlighting useful suggestions for the final design of ViDaCS serious game and for its later implementation.

The Theoretical-Experiential training "Un attimo prima"

The Partners involved in this task, i.e. OLV and RIA, firstly met in order to define a common methodological approach, together with DSU, who was responsible for the evaluation of the activities. The meeting resulted in the definition of a procedure for the Theoretical- Experiential training, as defined under the Plan for Training.

The methodology combined different skills from the two Partners, with special reference to music therapy and psychological participatory tools, requiring the involvement of a multidisciplinary working group.

These theoretical-experiential seminars included theoretical and experiential sessions, both with training, explorative and expressive aims.

In order to guarantee the participation of the operators and a strong continuity of the experience between the two kinds of training. On the same day each group of participants took part in one theoretical session and one music-therapy session. Thus, each participant attended 3 days of training of 6 hours each (3 hours for the theoretical training and 3 hours for the experiential training) for a total of 18 hours of training.

The training was conducted at OLV, to facilitate the participation of operators from this service, more experienced in the field of Intimate Partner Violence.

Theoretical Sessions

Procedural issues

The theoretical training had as its general objective to raise participants' awareness of the recognition and fight against gender-based violence and assisted violence.

With this aim, an interactive methodology was used, and the group was divided into two subgroups. Considering that the participants were a heterogeneous group by age, work contexts, but also homogeneous because they were professionals of health care services; the criterion used was their experience in the field of violence. So, two subgroups were created: one (Subgroup 1) with less professional experience and one with more (Subgroup 2).

The main methodological difference between the subgroups was that Subgroup 2 reflected on the theoretical topics through the sharing of cases and clinical situations while Subgroup 1 worked mainly on stereotypes, representations and emotions related to contact with male violence against women.

Findings

Both the subgroups were collaborative.

In Subgroup 1, the theoretical constructs related to gender-based violence and the reflections around "Un attimo prima" stimulated important reflections:

- 1) **Firstly**, the difficulty of making contact with violence, especially when violence is acted and not suffered. Although on a rational level it has been recognized by the group that violence belongs to everyone, on an emotional level it is very difficult to imagine oneself as the author of violence, indeed putting oneself in the perpetrator's shoes activates a series of resistances. Let us reflect together on the fact that there is a dark side, "another part" which is unknown, which resists our gaze. The metaphor used to describe the trend of the group was that of the neglected person, who perceives reality in a partial way, just as professionals, even operating in this field, when they approach the issue of gender-based violence.
- 2) **Secondly**, the difficulty of the task is also due to a whole series of prejudices to which the operators are linked, for example the perpetrator of violence is in the grip of an uncontrollable force, a moment of uncontrollable anger. The

group, in fact, shared the idea of the loss of control, of the reflexive inability, of an explosive rage, of a pressure cooker full of boiling water and whose lid can no longer contain. This boiling water burns and injures everything that is around and the image evoked was that of an overflow that could explode at any moment.

- 3) **Third**, the group shared the idea of an “empty space”, which could only apparently be opposed to the “full one” above. The image of the void seems to describe the moment when some participants tried to carry out the task, as the void that they imagine in the mind of the author of violence: a void as absence of thought, as an inability to put into words what can inhabit his mind. In this sense, the group referred to the absence, to what it is not, rather than to what it is. A part of the group, therefore, managed to imagine the first moment as a “negative”, being able to describe what is missing in the mind, what might have been there but was not.
- 4) **Fourthly**, the difficulty of “thinking” the *moment before* translates into a need for physiological description, in particular of physical and bodily sensations that accompany the moment before: breath, physiological state, heart rate, position, body attitude, blood rushing to the head, blurred vision, the state of obstinacy and isolation, confusion.
- 5) **Fifthly**, for part of the group, the **moment before** does not exist, or at least it is not a moment but rather a gradual, habitual and continuous process. The *moment before* could also be the next moment and vice versa, especially if you imagine violence as cyclical. In this sense, the moment before would only be a point in the circle, a point in the loop. For this reason, part of the group preferred to talk about escalation leading to violence rather than a moment. The group discussion highlighted different aspects of the phenomenon: strong experiences of fullness but also a void, a premeditated violence, but also of instinctive violence, due to the loss of control, the difficulty in managing emotions.

We also referred to the sadism of the author, to a structure of personality so unstable as to resemble a crystal castle, whose basis would be the victim, the woman in this case. In this regard, let us think of the oppressive, perpetrator-victim dynamics, which foresees the interdependence between the two subjects: as soon as the woman, the base of this crystal castle, moves, the castle falls, shatters into pieces. This image refers to the anguish of annihilation that an author of violence would feel in the moment in which he becomes violent and aggressive against his partner or wife. Let us reflect, then, on the fragility of identity, or

rather, on one identity that is structured in this sense: violence would be organizing, structuring the perpetrator's personality

Culture is structured on the basis of certain dynamics, such as prevarication, profit, violence, within which there is a prevarication of one part of society over another, over a minority. We are affected by these aspects, but we are also part of another dynamic, denial, for which culture does not recognize a part of itself.

In Subgroup 2 group reflections focused on:

- The importance of reflecting on the epistemological premises of those who work in services that directly or indirectly deal with prevention and / or combating gender violence.
- The risk of splitting between emotional and technical aspects in the relationship with the perpetrator.
- The need to remove violence by oneself as if it were difficult to work together with the perpetrator to end intimate partner violence.
- The sense of control that the operator feels when she/he starts to think about how to do the "right thing" to control the intimate partner violence. -The line between intimate partner violence and quarrel.

In Subgroup 2 it was decided to continue the group discussion on some clinical cases. A child neuropsychiatrist and a psychologist told two different stories of femicide, while another psychologist told a story of Intimate Partner Violence witnessed by children. Anguish, impotence and the weight of responsibility were the main emotional experience of the group.

Reflections: Strengths and weakness

During the theoretical sessions the main strengths were linked to the adoption of an interactive methodology, which did not include frontal lessons, but the active participation of all the operators.

The main strengths were:

- the possibility of studying the phenomenon of gender-based violence also from the perpetrator's point of view;
- the opportunity to reflect on IPV and to have the opportunity to discuss in a group, composed of different stakeholders dealing with gender-based violence
- the possibility of recognizing and managing one's own prejudices and experiences with stories and situations of IPV.

The main weakness was related to the discontinuity of the group, as the participants were able to take part in one or more seminar. The limit of this condition was that it became more difficult to reach a climate of trust, like being able to share aspects of one's professional life or one's emotions more spontaneously.

Suggestions for the ViDaCS serious game and for its implementation

What emerged from the theoretical experiential training is the importance of a constant supervision of the experiences of the specialized operators, during the implementation of the serious game.

Indeed, the operators that will accompany the perpetrators in the experience of the game, should be supervised as far as their emotional reactions to the perpetrators are concerned.

Music therapy sessions

Procedural issues

The working group adopted a clearly defined format for the sessions, implemented with no great differences from what had been established under the Plan for Training. Indeed, it consisted in three sessions lasting 3-hours each addressed to two sub-groups: one made of up of experienced practitioners from the health-care sector and the other one made up of trainees, students and volunteers. The planned contents and methodology were respected. The planned warming up phase, to be introduced by means of photos that portray scenes of gender violence as stimulus material, were articulated better by referring to the techniques of *Photolangage* (Vacheret, 2000; 2002; Zurlo, 2008; 2017).

The sessions were conducted in a setting that was the most neutral possible, a meeting room at OLV, a particularly appropriate place to host a group and play instruments without disturbing outside, nor being disturbed inside. To this end, a Do Not Disturb sign was positioned on the door. The venue was sufficiently large to place chairs in a circle and to arrange a workstation with a PC and speakers. The setting was adequately protected and respected by the whole personnel of the ASL Na 1 Centro structure. However, during the first session, two participants expressed that this room was significant to them due to previous experiences conducted there. This means that the place was emotionally significant

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to them; in our view, this helped the two participants to express their feelings more spontaneously and improved their affiliation to the place.

The timing of the meetings was carefully respected by both the participants and the conductors of the two sub-groups. Only one participant from the first group often left the room due to work reasons, strongly connected to the theme of the project: she was an operator from an anti-violence center who was on call for urgent matters.

The training was conducted by two representatives of RIA (one psychologist and one music therapist), who later provided notes and memos about the meetings with the support of a student. The sessions were audio-recorded.

Findings

Session 1 – receptive music therapy

Group climate and brainstorming

The participants approached the first session with an attitude of curiosity and a great expectation towards the power of music in shaping emotions. Some operators also expressed a professional interest in music therapy. However, at the beginning of the session, a spokesperson from the second group expressed the suggestion of “having something on their stomach”; this probably refers to the theme of violence remaining undigested after the immediately previous theoretical session. This element recalls some images which had emerged from the ViDaCS workshops with children: “something blocked in the ass”, the vomit and the indigestible mozzarella as referring to the difficulty in elaborating violent contents.

Listening to soundtracks

During the listening experience of receptive music therapy, the first group (with the experienced operators) tended to take distance from the experience (e.g. looking at the smartphone, appearing distracted), while the second group (with trainees, students and volunteers) seemed highly absorbed in it. Most participants in both groups listened to the audio with their eyes closed and hands on their face, manifesting a state of absorption and general looseness. These two opposite attitudes seem to express an ambivalent disposition in terms of wanting and not-wanting to be in contact with the theme of violence in the role of pro-

professionals who listen to patients (victims or perpetrators). Maybe the longtime of experience in the first group might evoke a sensation of being “full” of thinking about violence.

Group discussion

In the verbal feedback following the listening experience, the first sensations recalling a state of ‘looseness’ emerged. The predominant image, common to the two groups, is one of travelling through different emotions, with a transformative value; in the words of a participants: “at the end of the last audio, nothing is the same as before”. However, the image of travel conducts the groups towards negative feelings, with special reference to the second group, where a participant suddenly and violently expressed having felt bewildered while listening, as not knowing who she is and where is she going. This sentence opened up in the group a long series of violent acting out and attacks towards the conductors and among the participants. At this stage of the session, Intimate Partner Violence had not been named, even if it appeared present in background: probably these attacks appeared to be the only way for the participants to “talk about” the violence. In the group of the experienced operators, this attitude was more clearly declined into their initial tendency to take the violence out of door, but the sound of an ambulance siren outside suddenly reintroduced the theme and offered the group the chance to verbalize violence as non-thinkable from an emotional point of view, even for them who face this theme daily.

Thus, in both groups, it is a violent element (the ambulance siren or the shouted sentence of a participant) which destroys the patina of cover that tended to emphasize only the positive and relaxing aspect of the listening experience. Then, a sensation of precariousness, a sense of alarm and the presentiment of something terrible going to happen emerged in the group’s discourse. In F.’s words: “At a certain point, while listening to the songs, I felt the violence, like something that breaks down ... first I felt love, knowledge, birth and then suddenly something that is ruined, then again serenity and then again ruined”. These words recall the spiral of violence alternating with peace, violence, peace again and then violence, often described by the victims accustomed to receiving abuse. In the second group, the imminent presentiment of something violent that is about to happen is symbolically recalled through the association with a board game, “Lupus in Tabula”, where during the night, in a calm peasant village, a wolf kills several people. The similarity between the wolf and the perpetrator is discussed by the participants, together with the question: “can we trust this new-born group? Can

we close our eyes or might something happen if I let myself go on exploring such a dangerous subject?”.

At this point, the references to violence became more explicit: in the first group (experienced operators) the following images were evoked in association with the listened music: a man who is indifferent to the painful song of a woman; a woman who has been segregated in a house; a boat in the sea that is first cradled and then suddenly capsizes. The group seems to be working on the idea of a violent bond as an illusory happy one that is then betrayed.

However, the intensity of the images and emotions evoked leads the group to activate some movements for self-protection. For example, in the second group (trainees, students and volunteers), the audio reproducing a heartbeat solicits in a part of the group a persecutory sensation, that the remaining participants turn into a more reassuring image of the heartbeat of a fetus during monitoring, or of a child resting on his mother's chest. In the other group, the same operation was conducted: the image of a boat ruled by the sea that can capsize was reclaimed through that of a mother cradling a child.

The evocation of such strong images was followed, in addition to self-protection movements, also by protests and dissociative mechanisms. For example, one member of the group of the experienced operators complained that the session of music therapy today should not have had as its object violence, “nobody said to think about violence”. In the eyes of the conductors, the participant was becoming the spokesperson of that part of the group that was unconsciously choosing to defend itself against the emergence of violence, refusing it. In the second group, (trainees, students and volunteers), someone asked the conductors to repeat what they had just said because “I was distracted, almost asleep”, embodying an almost dissociative attitude or, in any case, distancing herself from the hot topic.

It is possible for the conductors to give back to the group that they are asking us whether to create a space to think about violence or not, where to place it, whether to trust the group ... Dilemmas that perhaps reappear in the daily routine of their work.

Finally, the group discussed how all this it could be viewed in connection with the dynamics that characterize violent relationships. For example, a state of dullness, reported by a participant, that may resemble the one experienced by a woman victim of violence; or, a sense of isolation during the listening, also reported, similar to what a woman suffering Intimate Partner Violence may feel because she is entangled in a relationship that keeps her away from the world.

In brief

The first session of music therapy seems to have activated a very intense involvement on the part of the participants, partly contrasting with the apparent expectation of an experience imagined as solely relaxing. The group acted in dynamics closely related to the theme of violence, not only through real aggressive movements within the group, but also by showing emotional and cognitive states close to the experience of violence. Examples are: the difficulty in recognizing violence and naming it, a feeling of bewilderment and blunting, a tendency to defend oneself defensively from it, feelings of precariousness, imminent dangers and dangerous ties. It seems that the groups polarized on two fronts, one more inclined to recognize its emergence, the other more frightened by the effects of its contents, both necessarily close to them. It was a complex session, indicating that it is difficult, even for the operators of this field, to allow oneself to enter into contact with the emotions elicited by violence.

Session 2 – active music therapy

Group climate and brainstorming

The second music therapy session took place one week later. The setting was quite different because on that today the group would produce musical-sound improvisation. Thus, within the circle of chairs there was a set of musical instruments, that clearly captured the attention of most of the participants entering the room.

The session started with a question from the music therapist conductor: what about the previous music therapy session? The participants' reflections referred to time collocation of the first meeting: in both groups, for some it seemed very long ago, for others, being together again, the session seemed to have just happened. What was widely shared was the impression that the first music therapy session allowed participants to "listen" to their inner voice: a kind of practice to listening inside something that was happening outside.

In the second group, someone said that perhaps the listening experience had something to do with the theme of violence: being forced to listen to something, even if we don't like it, even if a soundtrack was distressing. The music therapist conductor invited the participants to reflect on this paradoxical condition: to have chosen to take part in this training, and, in the meantime, to experience a sense of imposition of having to stay and "listen to" something

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that we do not like. This is a situation which could be observed in the context of the helping relationship as far as the operator is concerned when he/she is somehow “forced” to listen to a story of violence (by the victim or the perpetrator).

And what about the new starting session? Participants said they felt curious and quivering about the activity they were about to do.

Photolanguage activity

The conductors show the participants an image of a woman and two hands that seem to exert violence on her: one holds her hand locked on a surface and the other covers part of her face (see Appendix of the training kit). Her face is very visible, while his face is not seen in the picture, only his arms and hands are shown. When the participants were asked to share their emotions and impressions deriving from the photo, the following were collected: punch in the stomach, anger, helplessness, loneliness, suffering, fear, annoyance. Initially, the participants’ focus was mainly on the victim: she was described as frightened and desperate. In both groups an issue emerged as being relevant: some members of the group would have liked to turn the image (so that the woman victim of violence would have turned out not with her face on the wall but on the floor). This activates a flow of associations about the “correct perspective” to look at the photo: should we look at it in a vertical position, so that the surface upon which the woman is blocked is a wall, or in a horizontal position, so that the surface is a floor? Someone thought it was a floor because the woman seemed completely immobilized by the strength and weight of the man, while another said that it looks like a wall because the woman’s hand is positioned in a way that suggests the desire to climb, to want to “get out” of that situation by force. This question seems important to the extent that it determines a more or less tolerable experience in the participants, a more or less manageable rage.

These differing viewpoints seem to recall our idea/image of violent submission but it also helps the group to imagine about what could be the story behind that moment represented in the image. Some imagined that the man knew the woman, because resignation shows in her face. One participant said that his hand on her face made her think that maybe the perpetrator didn’t want to see the suffering he was causing her. The psychologist conductor, in the first group, wondered, bringing children to the scene, if the woman had children and was thinking of them as some hope to hold onto or if the children were realizing all that was happening and how they would react.

Both groups rarely managed to dwell on the author of violence: there is no face and they cannot imagine it. When questioned specifically about the appearance of the perpetrator, the collected answers are: “he must be a big, tall man with big hands”; “young like her, but not very big”; “I imagine him hairy, like a wolf”; “with big, thick eyebrows, bad and violent eyes”. Someone imagines that the perpetrator could be a man in his forties, maybe even good looking, who “transforms” when violence acts. The psychologist conductor suggests: “like a werewolf”, underlying that this recalls the image of the perpetrator as a wolf, as had emerged in the first session. Some argued instead that the author of violence does not have typical traits, so it is hard to describe him. Perhaps the difficulty of imagining the author of violence has to do with this double aspect: on the one hand, he could be anyone, so it is difficult to find his own identikit; on the other hand, there is a strong resistance to putting oneself in the author’s shoes and / or thinking of oneself as an author of violence. Slowly, a new idea began to circulate: that even the author of violence needs help and that the emotions aroused initially by the photo may concern him too. Now, anger and impotence do not concern only the victim and not even just the operators who witness, just like children, the violence between parents, but it also concerns what the perpetrator might feel. The group was approaching the possibility of identifying with the experience of the perpetrator (topic of the day), as well as of the victim. In both groups, the reflection closed thinking about how frustrating it can be (in daily relationships as in the helping relationship) to have to stand by and watch helplessly - without knowing or being able to do anything - a situation that we don’t like. With specific reference to the group with the trainees, students and volunteers, what emerged was the importance, in the helping relationship, of understanding of whom is the circulating anger but also of whom is the desire and how we are positioning ourselves on these two dimensions.

Musical-sound improvisation

When the discussion evoked by the images seemed to have concluded, the music therapy conductor presented the musical instruments to the participants and proposes try to play them freely, being inspired by the theme of the session and by the images previously shown, starting the free musical-sound improvisation. The music therapist conductor indicated how many minutes they had to play and asked them not to verbally talk during the sound session. In both groups a few minutes of silence preceded several moments of great intensity and

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rhythmic-dynamic synchrony. Only few participants decided to remain still on their chairs, but most of the group gave life to harmonies and sounds, which oscillated between union and disunity, coordination and confusion, between silence and very loud noise, almost deafening in some moments. In the second group, a moment appeared to be specifically noteworthy: after a great chaos, silence fell on the group. One male participant came alone in the centre of the room and started playing a delicate melody with the glockenspiel. The whole group contemplated the scene. Then, a girl from the group joined the participant in the centre and she started playing with him on the same instrument. This was the final part of the improvisation for the second group.

The music therapist conductor signalled the end of the time with his hand and the participants lay down the instruments.

Group discussion

In the first group, made up of more experienced operators from the health services, some minutes of silence followed the improvisation. This broken by one participant who expressed her initial discomfort when facing all that noise, which reminded her of the chaos and the noise of violence. In the phase of loud volume, instead, there were those who felt like the author of violence, who imposed himself through loud noise, on the others. Finally, there were those who did well with the noise, found comfort, because violence is silent, slow, gradual and cyclical, while asking for help is “noisy”. Thus, the group immediately focussed on the moments of loud volume, i.e. on what is more evident.

Then a participant stated that, after all this chaos, the group became able to “play in rhythm, all together”; this moment came after a very distressing sound sequences that reminded her of the violence perpetrated up to the limits of endurance (one participant produced several very strong, pressing plate shots). For her that moment was incredibly relieving: “it has been a cathartic experience; I feel that all that initial tension and that fragmentation have taken shape”.

Another point of discussion was about the number of instruments played: two members of the group underlined that they had played just one instrument. The first one stated that she felt like she couldn't any other instrument apart from the one she had initially chosen; the group discussed this perception of an inexplicable limit as similar to what usually happens to a victim: not feeling able to interrupt her relationship with the man, to not be able to choose another investment object. Instead, the other participant who played only one instrument says it was to him a positive element indicating the need for time to gradually

become familiar with one's own "instrument" and to be able to use it at will. The group reflected on this perception as the operator's capability of using oneself as an instrument in the helping relationship, to be gradually practiced. The meeting ended with a shared feeling of intimacy and intensity of everyone's experiences, evidenced by the fact that many participants often sought each other out during the activity.

In the group of trainees, students and volunteers, the discussion started immediately after the improvisation, as if it were based on an urgency to share feeling and thoughts. The first to speak was the girl who had joined the boy in the centre in playing the glockenspiel; she claims to have felt, initially, like the woman victim of violence: in the throes of all those loud sounds and with the fear of exposing herself, to denounce, to be heard. The rhythm that was created at certain times also made her think of the habit of suffering this violence as a paradoxical addiction: I don't like it, it hurts me, it scares me, but at the same time it seems to me that I can't do without staying in and participating or getting carried away. There was one instrument in particular (the glockenspiel) that she wanted to get close to play but she didn't find the courage to do it until one of the participants started playing it very melodically. The consonance of those sequences of sounds (so different from the loud and insistent sounds of percussion) and the presence of that person who from that chaos brought out a "beautiful shape", reassured her and gave her the courage to approach the instrument and start playing with the other participant.

In line with this perception, the psychologist conductor reported her feeling about the moment we are talking about: what happened during the first part of improvisation (very loud sounds, in evident synchrony, alternated with moments of very low sounds, random, almost silences) made her think of the voice of the woman victim of violence who, from time to time, tried to make herself heard, but who then fell into unheard silence. The moment when the participant who had just spoken had approached the participant who played the glockenspiel, evoked the vision of a misunderstood victim, unheard, who discovers that she is no longer alone, isolated, like a victim supported by an operator who helps her and gives her strength. The whole group shared the feeling of intimacy of that moment, when the two participants started playing the same instrument together. There are those who thought of a child, for the delicate sound of the instrument. In particular, it was thought of the loneliness that a child can feel when his father acts on his mother, his invisibility, his tendency to isolate himself, then reached by a mother who finds the courage

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to devote herself to the child after having suffered violence from her partner, to reassure him. Moreover, there are those who thought of two brothers who share the same pain and the same loneliness, and the feeling of tenderness and delicacy that this aroused.

Some participants then expressed their astonishment at having produced - all together, without verbal agreement and without possessing (for the most part) musical skills - very structured, musical sound sequences, almost like songs, able to alternate “strong” improvised sequences and lower dynamics. One participant stated that those sequences, very intense and characterized by a great rhythmic conjunction, made her experience a very positive, engaging sensation, and made her think of the “network work” between operators that could (and should) be created around the women victims of violence: by allying, speaking the same language and following the same rhythm, it is possible to counter the phenomenon of violence.

In brief

During the musical-sound improvisations, there were very loud sounds. Sounds that initially frightened, recalled distressing states, “sound images” of violence, to be removed, with which one could not or did not wish to meddle. Then the pleasure of being able to go to the rhythm, all together, with these loud sounds - with this violence suddenly appeared. This could make one think of how important it may be to find ways to be in unison with something that scares us (loud sounds as a reflection of violence). This seems to be an innovative path to overcome the paralyzing effect of violent behaviour. To be able to tune into the rhythm of the violent man (although the thing intimidates us, not that we like it) could have a transformative effect - especially in a state of impasse: trying to listen to the music of “violent emotions” and playing at their own rhythm, at their own dynamics, may generate unexpected connections and allow us to do / think / feel something that we had not felt able to do, think or feel until a few moments ago.

We found a difference between the two groups: the second one (trainees, students and volunteers) was more oriented towards thinking about networking and support, compared to the first group in which each participant remained more focused on his/her own personal perception of Intimate Partner Violence. This is probably due to the fact that the second group knew that their work would continue as a group, as a network, participating in the operational training.

Session 3 – Active music therapy

Group climate and brainstorming

The third music therapy session took place two weeks later. The setting was the same as the second meeting, because another musical-sound improvisation was planned. Thus, within the circle of chairs there was a set of musical instruments which the participants were already familiar with.

At the beginning of the session the music therapist conductor recalls the previous one by letting participant listen to an extract of the free improvisation produced together last time. At the moment of listening, people were not informed that what they were listening to was their musical-sound improvisation.

Both groups took some minutes to recognize themselves playing. Then, the first group commented on s the first extract of improvisation listened to together: a series of expressive moments with a great rhythmic and emotional consonance. Nevertheless, the members of the group thought there was no harmony in their playing, but loneliness in each sound. Someone shared their sense of inhibition experienced in the first meeting, because of the fear of being inadequate. Thus, the group reflected upon the idea that in front of something unknown you have two choices: to “get away” and remain in doubt or try and see what happens. The second extract is very chaotic, with high dynamics and few sounds, not connected to one another. Some associations with the theme of violence appear on the group scene: someone talked about a distressing video seen time ago, another one recalled the image of a man who punches (like a boxer).

Most of the second group (made up of trainees, students and volunteers), while listening to the extracts, referred to a great anguish, quite different from the pleasant emotions felt at the moment of playing, when all the members were producing sounds. The music therapist conductor suggested thinking about the difference between the passivity of listening to the extracts and the activity of producing them. What emerged was that being subjected to those sounds, without anyone having been warned, without anyone asking, can cause a high level of anxiety, also linked to the unexpected and to the feeling of non-control, similarly to what happens in cases of Intimate Partner Violence, especially from the point of view of a child who witnesses the scene. The feeling linked to the production of those sounds, on the other hand, was mainly that of anger, which had managed to find its own channel of expression. The group was accidentally introducing the theme of the day: the child that passively witnesses violence.

Photolangage activity

The music therapist conductor showed the group, as stimulus material, a photo representing a little girl with her eyes closed, covering her own ears; in the background, more undefined, there are two adults quarrelling. This time, the members of both groups reported a great difficulty in imagining the story behind the photo and to talk about the elicited emotions. One participant said that the father was going to punch the mother; for others the photo seemed fake, as if the participants felt the need to distance themselves from the scene and to deny the truth.

Musical-sound improvisation

In both groups, the free improvisation showed the same characteristics of the reactions to the photo: a situation of general immobility and slowness that communicates sadness and tiredness. In fits someone starts playing something, but each one on their own. We can't stay together, no loud sound, no cohesion, little energy, little strength. The members chose delicate instruments which produce sounds of rubbing, reproducing the sea, however slight sounds. Most participants look at the clock, as if hoping that the activity would soon end.

Group discussion

During the verbal phase, participants of the second group (made up of trainees, volunteers and students) shared the idea of having taken the place of the child victim of witnessed violence, who waits motionless for the violence to end, both during the phase of work on the photo and during the improvisation. The group reproduced his/her isolation, his/her impotence, through those confused sounds, through that voice that is struggling to get out.

We ended the session with the desire to not want to quit, to want to continue the workshop with other meetings. The image brought by the participants to describe the progress and the process of the group was that of an open ground, in which something has been sown, that although immature, will one day be able to bear its fruits. We ourselves also left with the feeling of having left a space, of having laid the foundations to continue a fruitful work together. In the first group, made up of more experienced operators, the free improvisation led to the group discussion. After a few minutes of silence, one participant began to talk about having often had difficulty playing due to the concern of "breaking balances that seemed fragile, precarious" - especially after a short rhythmic sequence shared between two other participants. She also added that she identified

herself with the child in the photo who witnesses the Intimate Partner Violence. Thinking back to the improvisation in the light of what has just been said, the music therapy conductor suggested that maybe the group had played little (and for short moments) not so much to “enact” something but to push away the content that he did not intend to listen to - the anguish of the child? What was the child forced to listen to?

One participant said that she had felt powerless when facing the scene in the picture, experiencing a strong desire to do something (an “identification with her own adult part”) but without absolutely knowing what to do. The same participant then reported that, following that intense experience, she was overcome by the sensation of wanting to fall asleep, as if to escape from that circumstance.

The music therapist conductor intervened, saying: “on the one hand, the feeling that not playing the instrument was an act of delicacy re-emerged the consequence of the concern that doing something could have worsened the situation; on the other hand, it comes back to the question about the way we listen and, above all, about the how/what to do if we can do nothing but listen”. He therefore asked if the group had remained motionless, in the grip of a sense of powerlessness, to “give voice “to the child in the image, or rather he tried to “become” a good parent who, unlike the father and mother in the photo, acts cautiously worrying about what his daughter might hear.

A participant added that in some moments, during the free improvisation, there were sounds that expressed tenderness (the sound of the glockenspiel) - a sensation that however had immediately clashed with the image of the child’s abuse, to such an extent that the sound soon became disturbing. At that moment, listening to tenderness made the violence even more ruthless and it became too difficult to bear (though there was a desire to protect it, preserve it).

Someone else reported that during the free improvisation her feeling of anxiety had become so unbearable that she wished the sound experience would end. The music therapy conductor then asked them what they had heard since, nevertheless, they had to stay in the room, or: “what would you have lost if you had the power to end the improvisation when you wanted to?” The music therapist went on to suggest that this is was a question that we could equally ask ourselves in the context of a counselling, related to the issues about listening to the person who requested our help. This brings ourselves once again in front of an apparently obvious choice: either listening to “something else” as if against what is happening (because we don’t like it, it disturbs us) or trying to ‘hear’ in order to stay there despite something unpleasant happening.

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A one participant reported of a moment when one of them has dealt a sudden and very strong blow on the cymbal; this evoked in her the image of a little girl who screams anxiously: “stop it!” Another one claimed that the time of the free improvisation seemed too long to her. Someone else added that she had scarcely played the instruments because she wanted to give form to the child in the photo who isolated herself, sought help and, nevertheless, remained misunderstood, unheard. “Have we all been complicit in what was going on?”, she finally asks.

The strong feeling of anguish again determined in some participants the desire or sensation of falling asleep. Some perceived it both during free improvisation and group discussion, when moments of profound silence occurred. A participant stated that pure reflections determined an introspective movement about why it is so difficult for her to deal with children in her job (she works with parents and families every day in psycho-socio-cultural distress).

At the end of the group discussion, some participants expressed their considerations about the short path of experiential training through music therapy:

“It gave me a different perspective through which to approach the issue of child who witnesses Intimate Partner Violence... I begin to think that perhaps music can really help in moments of anxiety, when we can no longer hear.”

“This experience made me reflect a lot on the listening dimension, specifically on my personal listening skills ... and I also felt I would like to continue learning about music therapy.”

“I found this experience very stimulating ...I also feel a greater desire to explore the field of music therapy, as well as the different dimensions of listening. I have also been able to see more clearly that music therapy has its own depth, its dignity and it must be carried out by trained, competent people.”

“I gained greater awareness (and perhaps even greater confidence) about the possibility of receiving and expressing something from and to others... I had the feeling that I could make my voice heard” (it should be pointed out that this participant was very shy and discreet during the training; she played little, with low volume, using small instruments and she always spoke in a very soft voice.)

“What I liked the most is that from no one judged us on the contents of the statements of others. Everyone thought they could speak freely and everyone felt they were being heard.”

“It opened up new perspectives to reflect on my job... I work with children who have witnessed Intimate Partner Violence. I think this kind of experience could be very suitable for them too, because sounds seem to me to be a more accessible, less dangerous channel than words.”

In brief

The last session appears as having been the most distressing for the participants, showing how the experience of a child who witnesses Intimate Partner Violence is the most difficult to accept and to face for the operators. At the same

time, it seems that this is also the session during which a process of identification with the main character “of the day” had been the strongest and most spontaneous. Moreover, as a final session, it also revealed the general opinion of the participants about the ViDaCS approach: the experienced operators reported their positive opinion of the methods used, while the other group claimed the idea of continuing to work together.

Reflections: Strengths and Weaknesses

By conducting the Music Therapy Sessions with the professionals, we discovered a very powerful tool to give them the opportunity to elaborate hidden feelings, to express them and eventually to talk about, in a safe environment.

Indeed, combining *photolangage* and music therapy, we defined an expressive tool to address such delicate issues, difficult to be verbally expressed, thus requiring non-verbal means of communication having a great emotional value. Music and photos were both useful as mediator objects that helped the participant to project, recognize and share their representations about violence.

Moreover, the group itself facilitated the emotional and cognitive experience of the participants, supported by peer-to-peer interactions. The role of the key experts was of facilitators of the verbalizing process.

As a strength, the combination of different kinds of music therapy techniques (receptive and active) helped the participants in transiting from a listening attitude to a more active one, which reflects what happens in their professional work: they firstly listen to the patient’s needs and then act to find helping and intervening strategies. Moreover, the use of photos and music activated different sensorial channels: the visual one and the aural one, helping the participants to imagine the experience of violence at a sensorial level.

As a point of weakness, given the structure of ViDaCS project, we could only conduct three sessions for each group of participants. This limited a deeper exploration of the emerging themes due to the restricted time available. In the same view, levels of aggression, fear and anger elicited by the theme of the violence would require a more prolonged space and time to be properly elaborated. However, this was not a primary objective of the activity, which only aimed at providing a starting point for reflections on the theme. For further implementation, this might be a point to consider.

Suggestions for the ViDaCS serious game and for its implementation

The ViDaCS music therapy sessions produced in the experts some useful suggestions for the final definition of the scenarios of the serious game and for its implementation, with specific reference to:

- the scenes when violence appears: e.g. “normal” daily interactions that transform their nature into unexpected moments with the perception of a state of alarm, of something suddenly changing;
- the typical reactions of children to violent interactions: e.g. to isolate themselves, to talk with a feeble voice, difficulty in being heard among the violent noises;
- the emotions felt in these cases: e.g. confusion, anger, loneliness, fear of breakdown, tendency to denial and to avoid the issue;
- images, sounds and visual effects to be adopted in the construction of the game: e.g. one or more extracts from the free sound-musical improvisations realized by the operators, images of paralysis of the victim (e.g. a hand weakly moving on the floor) and visual effects as the perception of cannot watching the perpetrator in the eyes;
- the importance, during the implementation, of offering a group space to share and re- elaborate the emotions elicited by the theme.

All suggestions and contents will be properly discussed during the following meeting with all the Partners of the Consortium.

Operational training

The operational training was divided in three important activities:

- a) Self-experience of ViDaCS serious game;
- b) Experience as observer during the ViDaCS serious game session; and
- c) Brainstorming and sharing of reflections, thought, emotions related to the experience with the Serious Game.

These different activities took place in two different rooms, one room dedicated to the group discussion where participants talked about methodology and reactions, and another for the self-experience of ViDaCS serious game, because it is very important to isolate the user to keep out noise and other interferences to experiment the serious game.

Self-experience of ViDaCS serious game activity

Before starting the self-experience, the Protom tutor gave some important general technical advice for a correct use of the game.

The emotional support of trainees was important, aimed both at exploring the familiarity and the difficulty in using VR, and at recognizing the emotions and reactions aroused by having to experiment for the first time a Serious Game related to IPV in domestic context. After the experience with the Serious game, an individual moment proved to be indispensable in order to metabolize the experience of immersion in VR - in perpetrator and children shoes - with the possibility to share and talk about more immediate and strong emotions.

Activity of observation of ViDaCS serious game

The observation experience proved to be significant in order to increase the level of familiarity with VR and with the storyboard of the ViDaCS serious game.

Activity of Brainstorming

Following the principles of the “defusing” technique, used in situations of psychological and physical impact, attention was given to the collective sharing of the experience of immersive reality. A group context was set up to facilitate the free expression of memories, emotions and most evocative scenes by each participant. This methodological choice aims to:

- mitigate the potential risks of re-activation of traumatic experiences;
- recognize similarities and differences between the participants’ experiences;
- develop empathy and the ability to “put oneself in the other person’s shoes”.

Findings

The objectives set for operational training have been achieved. The training made it possible to identify, train and accompany a group of 15 motivated operators to work together for the project implementation phase.

The group, through direct experience and observation, familiarized themselves with VR and with the Serious game storyboard and also learned the main elements to be able to effectively manage the different phases (pre-game, game and post -game).

Everyone participated with interest in the experimentation of the Serious game and some highlighted the curiosity about other choices of the storyboard

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that he/she did not choose. Only one user did not complete the experience, while two operators wanted to take off their helmet but preferred to finish the experience.

In the group experience, the emotional climate was very dense. The discussion started from the “technical choices of the game” to reach the strongest emotional experiences. The main feeling was powerlessness, someone felt imprisoned inside the game, as in the choices, which did not include escape routes, glimmers of possibilities. The common feeling was that the game somehow traps you, perhaps just as violence traps you. For these reasons, group sharing proved to be a very important resource in order to take care of participant’s emotions.

The group experience also allowed to continue reflection on oneself, starting from the virtual meeting with the perpetrator and his family, every participant reflected on the expectations and emotions aroused by a real meeting with the perpetrator

The participants in the operational training expressed that they are able to give their emotional support to the perpetrators who will experience the serious game during the implementation of ViDaCS project, thanks to the familiarity acquired with the game but above all to work on themselves and their epistemological premises.

Reflections: Strengths and weakness

The training proved to be a useful and adequate experience to achieve the expected results for operational training.

The main strengths were:

- a) the importance of work on operators’ epistemological premises on the issue of gender-based violence;
- b) the opportunity to share their emotional experiences in group;
- c) the possibility of experiencing him/herself in the shoes of the perpetrator, to try to understand what ViDaCS serious game could elicit in the perpetrator; and
- d) the possibility of “playing the game” as an observer and share in group the similarities and differences with the previous individual experience.

10. Using ViDaCS videogame: A challenging innovative experience in an action-research strategy

Stefania Carnevale, Immacolata Di Napoli

Preamble: Virtual reality to take the perspective of children

The ViDaCS serious game is a virtual reality experience that allows the user to enter a family scene of high conflict between two parents, just before the violence.

The scene is experienced first as a father, then relived as a child who witnesses the interaction between parents. In the final part, the user returns to the role of the father who is entrusted with a range of actions that can be done when the son / daughter runs away.

The immersion is allowed thanks to a helmet-shaped device that allows the view of the scene and a controller that allows the user to point and select the choices to be made to move forward in the scene.

ViDaCS serious game offers the opportunity to think in those moments before the violence and helps to understand what it feels like and what can happen a “moment before”.

It allows the user to explore the different ways of relating from the point of view of individual men, whether as the perpetrator of violence or not.

In fact, this virtual reality serious game is designed for all men who want and can understand that violence is not the only way out and can help themselves and other men to activate their thinking about violent action.

Living as the victim for men can mean experiencing his/her emotions, thinking about them and starting to rethink his own actions.

ViDaCS serious game aims to develop and test an innovative tool that allows the man who is the perpetrator of violence or is tendentially aggressive in relationships to carry out a self-assessment of the impact that his own violent behavior has on his children, witnesses of domestic violence. It is an emotional experience, built through the use of an immersive game (serious game), through which the violent father (perpetrator) will be able to experience the feelings experienced by the child in a situation of domestic violence.

Therefore, ViDaCS has the purpose of intercepting a significant number of “silent authors” and directing them to treatment paths with suitably trained operators.

In order to achieve the purposes of ViDaCS project, action research was carried out using qualitative and quantitative tools.

Indeed, 50 sessions of the Serious game ViDaCS have been held, with an average time of an hour and a half, during which participants were able to experience a daily scene of verbal violence between parents, both as the adult and the child. They were given the opportunity to choose, at the beginning, the gender and the age of the child in whose shoes to live the scene, then the possibility to decide which actions to do, by choosing from a range of options given by the game, which leads to multiple choices that the user can make through a controller during the whole time.

Each session of the ViDaCS serious game was guided by a protocol designed by the ViDaCS team, following a procedure that involved the use of various data collection tools: observation, questionnaires and interviews.

All the sessions were carried out in two different rooms: one used for the welcoming and the experience of virtual reality, the other for data collection. Both provided a peaceful and welcoming environment.

Each session was articulated in various steps: welcoming and presentation of the project to the participants, the virtual reality experience and the final phase for the exploration of the experiences:

- Firstly, the user was welcomed, made to sit comfortably and thanked for his availability. A *Presentation sheet* was offered to him, before joining the game, which contained information regarding the whole project, its objectives and the serious game. This first contact lasted 10 minutes.
- Then, after verifying his understanding, informed consent was collected, and the participant was invited to sit comfortably on a chair in front of the PC monitor, the helmet put on him and, with his consent, the scene was started and he could live the experience. The whole playing session last around 5 minutes, depending on the time that the player needs for decisions. During the playing session, the choices made by the user were recorded on an *observation sheet* by a trained operator, who also noted the user's behavior, posture and movement during the game (memo). At the end of the experience, the participant was freed of the helmet and was asked to remain seated for a few minutes, to alleviate any ailments due to the virtual reality. This moment lasted 10 minutes.
- Lastly, he was led to another room where the last phase of the session proceeded. The participant's emotions, choices, thoughts and representations of the were explored through a self-report *questionnaire* and a *structured Interview*.

This last phase lasted an average of 50 minutes.

Therefore, the protocol was characterized by the use of several schedules built ad hoc by the team for data collection.

This battery was composed by:

- 1) An *Observation schedule* for the detection of the choices made by the user;
- 2) A *Self-report questionnaire* to get a first feedback on the serious game and on the experience in each role. It lasted an average of 15 minutes;
- 3) A *structured Interview* to explore the user's emotional experience and explore his thoughts and representations about it. It lasted an average of 35 minutes.

Following the interview, the participant was greeted, asking for his willingness to participate in focus groups with other participants to share together a collective thought on violence against women and witnessed violence. The phone contacts of the OLV ("Oltre la Violenza" project) headquarters were given, for any contact.

The sessions were conducted by a clinical psychologist and a non-participating observer psychologist; the clinical psychologist had the task of welcoming the user and managing the questionnaire and interview, while the non-participating observer psychologist detected the user's choices on the observation sheet and he managed the game.

Psychologists and observers were trained with specific ViDaCS Theoretical and Operational training courses (see chapters 8,9,10).

The open answers in the questionnaire and the interviews were analyzed through the Thematic Analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006).

The figure 1 shows the *Presentation sheet*; the other texts will be presented in the next paragraph.

Three evaluation and exploration forms have been used, to be completed by the observer or by the users:

1. *Observation schedule*. This form showed all the choices that the participant could make during the game. They were detected and marked in the form by the observer psychologist. During the scene, the choices are interspersed with semi-automatic actions (ring the bell, pick up the cell phone, open the door).

The observation sheet was aimed at detecting the man's behavior in a highly conflictual family situation, both in the role of a father and in the role of a son/daughter and the memo of the observer about his reactions.

The choices reported on the sheet are:

IN THE SHOES OF THE MAN



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SCHEDA DI PRESENTAZIONE

La violenza nei rapporti tra uomini e donne resta purtroppo ancora oggi un fenomeno molto diffuso e presente.

Nella maggior parte dei casi, come ci suggeriscono le statistiche, sono le donne a subire violenza.

VIDACS è un progetto finanziato dalla Commissione Europea nell'ambito del programma Rights, Equality and Citizenship per chi vuole imparare a dire basta un attimo prima che sia troppo tardi!

È un progetto rivolto a chi vuole imparare a gestire le proprie emozioni all'interno del proprio nucleo familiare, tramite un'innovativa tecnica di realtà aumentata.

Noi siamo un gruppo di diversi professionisti, uomini e donne, docenti e ricercatori e ricercatrici universitari, psicologi e psicologhe di servizi, musicoterapisti/e e abbiamo deciso di occuparci di questo fenomeno.

Ci rivolgiamo agli uomini che qualche volta, spesso o sempre scelgono la violenza per gestire i conflitti con le proprie fidanzate, mogli o partner.

Abbiamo costruito un serious game che, grazie alla realtà virtuale, ti farà entrare per pochi minuti in una casa in cui vivrai uno scambio conflittuale tra marito e moglie e ti ritroverai in quegli istanti prima della violenza.

La stessa scena la rivivrai nei panni di un bambino/a di cui potrai scegliere il sesso e l'età.

Ti invitiamo a sperimentare questa realtà virtuale affinché tu possa avere la possibilità di pensare in quegli istanti precedenti la violenza e, se ti va, aiutarci a comprendere di più sull'”attimo prima”.

Non importa se non hai mai agito violenza; il tuo punto di vista può essere molto importante per esplorare le diverse modalità di relazione.

Questa realtà virtuale è infatti per tutti gli uomini che vogliono e possano comprendere che la violenza non è la via d'uscita e aiutare altri uomini ad attivare un pensiero sull'agire violento.

ViDaCS team

Fig. 1 The Presentation sheet

- Gender and age of the child he wants to be during the experience.

Options: M or F (gender) and 3-6 or 7-13 (range of age).

- Direction to take after entering the door.

Options: Kitchen or Living room.

- Actions related to the previous choice

Option for the Kitchen: open the fridge, open the cupboard, greet the woman.

Option for the living room: watch TV, read a magazine, make a phone call.

- Action in response to the woman's reaction.

Options: Respond or ignore.

IN THE SHOES OF THE CHILD

- Action in response to the bell.

Options: Go and open the door or let the mother go.

- Action in response to the ringing phone.

Option: answer the phone or not answer.

- Action when the father enters the house.

Options: Go say hello, fix the room, stay in the room doing the homework.

- Action related to the previous choice:

Option for the greeting: go back to the room or listen in secret.

Option for the option fix the room, stay in the room doing homework: stay and listen in secret or get distracted.

The activities in the case of the choice of distraction are related to the age indicated at the beginning.

Options: drawing or hiding (3-6) or turning up the TV volume or playing on the phone (7-13).

- Action in response to the parents' quarrel.

Options: running to the bathroom or getting attention. Then: run away or ask for help.

LAST TRANSFER FROM CHILD TO FATHER

Options: replay the game, continue the quarrel, run to the child.

At the end on the final video page the following sentence is transmitted:

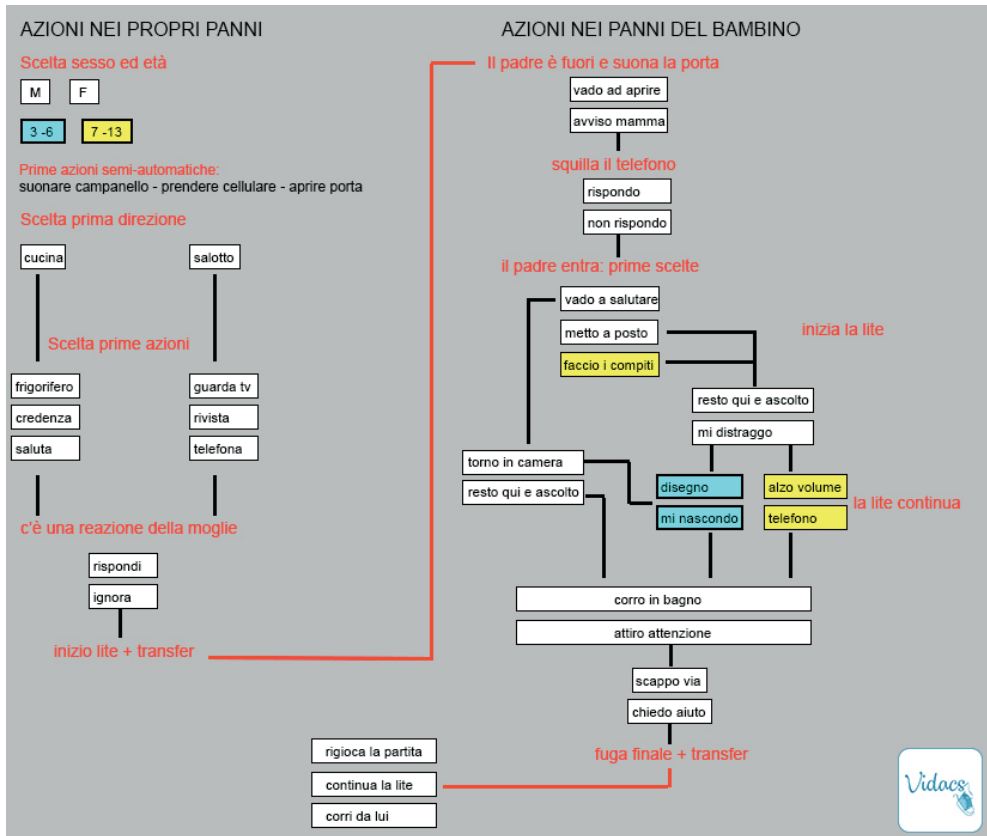
Your every choice is important and has value for you and for those around you.

Violence is just one of your many choices. Violence is just one of your many choices.

which would happen if you decide to stop a moment earlier?

E se scegliessi di fermarti un attimo prima?" The figure 2 shows the Observation sheet used by the observer

Violent dad in child shoes. A moment before



Memo:

.....

.....


.....

Fig. 2 Observation sheet


2. *Self-report Questionnaire.* This is composed of some closed questions to be answered on a Likert scale and some open questions regarding the scene just experienced and the emotion correlated.

It was aimed at collecting the user's opinions and suggestions about the game, his emotions felt during the scene (in the shoes of the father and then of the son/daughter), his experience with respect to the father-son transfer and his thoughts about the whole experience.

The figure 3 shows the content of the questionnaire.



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QUESTIONARIO POST SESSIONE N°

Indichi il suo grado di accordo alle affermazioni mettendo una croce negli appositi spazi.

1. Le informazioni ricevute prima del gioco sono state sufficienti.

| | | | | |
|-----------------|-----------|----------------------|----------------|----------------------|
| Molto d'accordo | D'accordo | Abbastanza d'accordo | Poco d'accordo | Per niente d'accordo |
|-----------------|-----------|----------------------|----------------|----------------------|

2. Le informazioni ricevute prima del gioco sono state chiare.

| | | | | |
|-----------------|-----------|----------------------|----------------|----------------------|
| Molto d'accordo | D'accordo | Abbastanza d'accordo | Poco d'accordo | Per niente d'accordo |
|-----------------|-----------|----------------------|----------------|----------------------|

3. L'interfaccia e l'interattività (menù e oggetti) sono chiari ed immediati fin da subito.

| | | | | |
|-----------------|-----------|----------------------|----------------|----------------------|
| Molto d'accordo | D'accordo | Abbastanza d'accordo | Poco d'accordo | Per niente d'accordo |
|-----------------|-----------|----------------------|----------------|----------------------|

4. Il gioco è facilmente giocabile.

| | | | | |
|-----------------|-----------|----------------------|----------------|----------------------|
| Molto d'accordo | D'accordo | Abbastanza d'accordo | Poco d'accordo | Per niente d'accordo |
|-----------------|-----------|----------------------|----------------|----------------------|

5. Lo storyboard è facilmente comprensibile.

| | | | | |
|-----------------|-----------|----------------------|----------------|----------------------|
| Molto d'accordo | D'accordo | Abbastanza d'accordo | Poco d'accordo | Per niente d'accordo |
|-----------------|-----------|----------------------|----------------|----------------------|

6. Dialoghi, testi e suono sono chiari ed esaustivi.

| | | | | |
|-----------------|-----------|----------------------|----------------|----------------------|
| Molto d'accordo | D'accordo | Abbastanza d'accordo | Poco d'accordo | Per niente d'accordo |
|-----------------|-----------|----------------------|----------------|----------------------|

7. La durata del gioco è giusta.

| | | | | |
|-----------------|-----------|----------------------|----------------|----------------------|
| Molto d'accordo | D'accordo | Abbastanza d'accordo | Poco d'accordo | Per niente d'accordo |
|-----------------|-----------|----------------------|----------------|----------------------|

Fig. 3 The Self-report questionnaire



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8. Dall'esperienza che ha fatto con questo serious game ritiene che è uno strumento efficace per entrare nella "scena" della coppia un attimo prima di un momento in cui le emozioni negative prendono il sopravvento?

| | | | | |
|-----------------|-----------|----------------------|----------------|----------------------|
| Molto d'accordo | D'accordo | Abbastanza d'accordo | Poco d'accordo | Per niente d'accordo |
|-----------------|-----------|----------------------|----------------|----------------------|

9. Dall'esperienza che ha fatto con il serious game Vidacs ritiene che ha le potenzialità di promuovere comportamenti che possono fermare le emozioni negative "un attimo prima" della loro azione?

| | | | | |
|-----------------|-----------|----------------------|----------------|----------------------|
| Molto d'accordo | D'accordo | Abbastanza d'accordo | Poco d'accordo | Per niente d'accordo |
|-----------------|-----------|----------------------|----------------|----------------------|

10. Come ha vissuto il passaggio dal punto di vista del padre a quello del/della Bambino/a? Quali emozioni, sensazioni, pensieri hanno accompagnato questo momento del gioco?


11. Che tipo di difficoltà ha riscontrato?

12. Che sensazioni fisiche ha provato?


13. Aggiunga se vuole opinioni, riflessioni e note personali su qualche aspetto non esplicitamente citato nei quesiti precedenti.


In order to allow the team to use the data collected during the testing phase, the user has read and signed the informed consent containing the recent legislation on privacy and data processing (Legislative Decree 101, 10 August 2018, “Provisions for the adaptation of national legislation to the provisions of Regulation - EU - 2016/679 of the European Parliament and of the Council, 27 April 2016”).

The following figure shows the content of the form.



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Violent Dad in Child Shoes (ViDaCS)

*Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme
Project number 810449*

Stiamo realizzando un progetto di sperimentazione di ViDaCS serious game, finanziato con i fondi dell'Unione Europea.
Lo scopo del serious game è aumentare la consapevolezza delle conseguenze delle scelte di azioni violente in particolare sui bambini/e che assistono ai conflitti tra i propri genitori.
Finalità ultima del serious game è aiutare a riflettere e a pensare “un attimo prima” ad altre scelte che non sia più la scelta di un'azione violenta.

Ai sensi del D.Lgs. 30 giugno 2003 n. 196, modificato dal Decreto Legislativo 101 del 10 agosto 2018, recante “Disposizioni per l'adeguamento della normativa nazionale alle disposizioni del regolamento (UE) 2016/679 del Parlamento europeo e del Consiglio, del 27 aprile 2016, relativo alla protezione delle persone fisiche con riguardo al trattamento dei dati personali, nonché alla libera circolazione di tali dati”, desideriamo informarLa che, ai fini della ricerca che stiamo conducendo, sarà necessario operare il trattamento dei dati personali e dei dati sensibili che saranno raccolti. I dati saranno trattati nel rispetto dei principi della correttezza, liceità e trasparenza dettati dal suddetto Decreto ed analizzati in forma aggregata.

Il titolare del trattamento è la Project Manager Prof.ssa Caterina Arcidiacono.

Accetto _____
(firma)

Età _____

Titolo di studio: _____

Professione: _____

Numero di figli _____ specificarne sesso e età _____

Status: Single [] Fidanzato [] Convivente con figlio/i [] Convivente senza figlio/i []

Altro _____

Se in relazione, da quanto dura: _____

Inviante: _____

*This questionnaire was funded by the European Union's Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme
(2014-2020)*

Fig. 4 The informed consent form

3. *Structured interview*. Some open questions were asked by the psychologist with a triple purpose:

- to collect information about the emotional experiences / emotional regulation of man with respect to highly conflictual situations during personal couple / family relationships;
- to collect feedback on the serious game;
- to contain emotions and reactions aroused by the experience just lived, which can help us to understand what happens “a moment before”.

The questions were:

- a) Do you want to add something to this experience?
- b) What did this experience make you think of / remember? What made it come alive?
- c) Who would you like to / experience it?
- d) Under the same circumstance, would you make different choices than those given as options from the game? If yes, which one?
- e) In the light of what you have just experienced, how would the scene reform you? Or How would you wish things were going?

Results

From the analysis of the *observation sheets*, what emerged was that:

- At the beginning the choice of the child's gender and age is biographical: almost all the participants' choices were based on the characteristics of their children, often their youngest.

From the analysis of the *Self-report questionnaires*, about the structure of the serious game, emerged that:

- The GAME is considered easily playable and with a very understandable storyboard. Information received before playing was also reported as sufficient and clear.
- The SCENE is reported as very truthful, dialogues, texts and sounds were considered to be clear and comprehensive by users.
- About the TIME (duration of the scene), the users stated that it was quite right.
- Observational protocols and interviews gave a reach and fruitful understanding of the men's feelings, thoughts and some suggestions about the potential further use of the videogame,

10. Using VIDACS videogame: A challenging innovative experience in an action-research strategy

- Concerning the possibility of using ViDaCS serious game as an effective tool for treatment for perpetrators and for combating gender-based violence, from the testimonies of the participants, what emerged was that:
- The transformative power of the ViDaCS serious game was declared; participants affirmed that the experience could be very useful in activating awareness in men and a motivation to change. Indeed, most of the participants stated that the game could also be a valid therapeutic tool in the treatment of abusive fathers, because taking the child's perspective leads to experiencing a very strong and deep identification with the victim and only with pathological cases it could fail to lead to transformative thinking. Only a few participants said they were skeptical, but not about the validity of the game, but about the perpetrator's ability to access a real change.
- Thinking about using the ViDaCS serious game, users have often stated that the game should also be tried by women, in particular their partners, who were often reported as "provocative" or, otherwise, actively participating in quarrels. The game was found to be useful for all parents and / or adults in relationship.
- As they said, the ViDaCS serious game had also a training value, because it can help operators dealing with violence management to enter into the emotional world of the violence context.

11. The ViDaCS Serious Game in the context of Villa delle Ginestre

Raffaella Foggia, Annamaria Schena, Annarita Falanga

The Villa delle Ginestre Rehabilitation Centre was born with the aim of giving a concrete answer for all patients and their families who have difficulty in finding qualified facilities to deal with physical, mental and sensory pathologies, in a particular social context such as that of the Neapolitan province. It is a cutting-edge multifunctional facility, where top-notch professionals always work to achieve excellent levels of care and best respond to the needs of the community in which it is located. With the ambition of having an innovative and captivating therapeutic proposal, the Centre has started investing in the field of research and development (R&D). In particular, starting from 2017, Villa delle Ginestre has been proposing alternative methods of cognitive and motor rehabilitation, through the use of new digital technology, including *serious games* and *gamification*.

The project named “BRAVO - Beyond the treatment of attention deficit hyperactivity disorder” inaugurated this trend. The BRAVO system aims to provide support to the treatment of children with difficulties related to Attention Deficit and Hyperactivity Disorder through an advanced play environment.

The system analyses electroencephalographic traces, electrodermal activity and heart rate to assess the emotional state of the patient and on the basis of these data it processes a series of intentions and cognitive-behavioural challenges to be carried out. During play sessions, bio-feedback and game performance are recorded and processed so that healthcare professionals can detect how players are making progress in learning and in managing their emotions.

As a further element of motivation and stimulus to sociality, the BRAVO system allows the young patient to interact with 3D avatars found within the therapeutic structure, which welcome and accompany him along the therapeutic path. Villa delle Ginestre was awarded the SMAU Innovation Award at SMAU Milan 2018 for the BRAVO project. In 2018 Villa delle Ginestre activated a new line of R&D for the development of the AVATEA system, a semi-robotized and sensorised system, in combination with immersive reality techniques, for the rehabilitation of children suffering from motor pathologies. For Villa delle Ginestre, new digital technologies are a solid ally for making rehabilitation more

captivating and keeping the motivation level of young patients high, with significant implications not only on their therapy, but also on the experience of the family and therapists.

Serious games, in particular, allow the patients to immerse themselves in the “flow” and remain fully concentrated for the duration of the activity, achieving better results in a shorter time, and at the same time experiencing a high level of satisfaction and fulfilment, as well as genuine feelings of pleasure. In this way, the rehabilitation proposal based on the use of *serious games* lends itself to balancing the high costs of therapy and the logistical complexity of the treatments.

Confidence in new technology and in its ability to generate value in the clinical-rehabilitation field led Villa delle Ginestre to accept the challenge of the ViDaCS Project.

Participation in the ViDaCS project, which aimed at involving the fathers of the young patients at the Centre, indirectly aims at allowing those men who feel their potentially violent behaviour but struggle to recognize their responsibility, often because of the social context to which they belong, to change their attitudes and behaviours.

The socio-cultural context of the Neapolitan suburbs, within which our experience is inserted, is characterized by a lack of adequate spaces for aggregation and socialization, aggravated by the lack of adequate connections with the city centre, which makes the population feel marginalized and neglected by institutions. In such a social fabric, it is easy to imagine how organized crime has become a radically present part of the territory: citizens must deal with this reality, even if they do not take part in the “rules of the Camorra” that permeates their daily lives on several levels.

Despite this, it is possible to argue that there are fathers who are able to question themselves with the intention of changing their attitude and possibly stopping for a moment before losing control of their emotions and behaviour.

The rehabilitation environment is particular from a psychological point of view: parents and fathers in particular find themselves dealing with the narcissistic wound to which the birth of a child with disabilities – or the discovery of his pathology at a later time – leads. Fathers often scarcely participate in the diagnostic and rehabilitation process of their child and also delegate this aspect to maternal care.

The possibility of accessing a space of thought that allows them to elaborate their own experiences of anger and helplessness represents, for some of them, the

only moment in which they can confront the profound sense of bewilderment deriving from not having a precise role within the family unit.

They find themselves looking for a meaning to their role as a father, with a child who is not what they expected and wanted. They tend to implement pragmatic behaviours, above all seeking the solution to the practical and concrete problems connected with raising a child with difficulty, delegating the containment of the emotional experiences of anxieties and feelings of guilt to mothers, which not only can hinder the formation of the boundaries necessary for the growth of the child but can also lead, above all, to an avoidance of contact with the child and to a displacement of aggression that will pour out, for example, on the couple, risking even more damage to those balances already put to test by the experience. Fathers who experience this are more pessimistic about their child's health conditions and seem to perceive the family as a place where it is difficult to express oneself or feel listened to, where it is difficult to feel close from an emotional point of view, and to experience the chance to realize oneself and to be autonomous.

In this particular context, therefore, we suggested the *serious game* to a group of men, who share not only the fact that they have children in rehabilitation for various reasons, but also share the desire to question themselves as parents and as individuals.

Although none of the participants in the group was reported for episodes of domestic violence, they all reported difficulties in self-control, especially in stressful situations, and each of them agreed to experience the feelings that the child felt in a situation of domestic violence, through the use of virtual reality in order to activate reflections on the choices made and the reactions they trigger.

We will present three clinical vignettes that highlight the desire to reflect on their own conduct in order to improve the relationship with their children.

F.(Floris), age 45, degree, engineer, divorced, 1 child age 10

F. is the father of a child at our Centre with a diagnosis of Learning Disorder and oppositional defiant behaviour. The parents are divorced and live in a conflictual situation that also influences the parental dynamics. The relationship between the parents is permeated by a state of perennial vindictive / destructive tension, and because of this F. feels deprived of control and autonomous management of the relationship with his son.

F. immediately showed interest in participating in the experimentation precisely because of the peculiar situation he faces: when he was asked to undergo the *serious game*, he commented that the idea of putting himself in his son's shoes was something he didn't want to do, nor had he ever thought it might be useful.

His experience was extremely intense and he was able to comment "It was the first time I was able to see me and my wife through the eyes of my son". The intensity of the situation was also expressed when he got to reflect that he felt he had no way out - in his words "It was overwhelming" - as the plot was forced to reach a quarrel state in which gravity could not be modulated. Through F.'s experience it was possible to notice how often parents find themselves experiencing conflictual situations by scotomising the presence of a child and how the game allowed him to focus his attention on the gaze of the child, spectator and victim of the situation.

P. (Paul), age 40, middle school graduation, blacksmith, married, 2 children age 13 and 18

P. is the father of a teenager at our Centre with a diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Syndrome. The family situation is characterized by couple difficulties linked to economic problems that has placed P. in a condition of inferiority compared to his wife. Apparently, the couple does not present an openly conflictual situation, but the precariousness of P.'s job is used both as a weapon and as an alibi, in moments of conflict.

P. also reports an experience of witnessed violence in his family of origin, in which the father figure was almost totally absent and - when present - engaged in violent behaviours as a way of "teaching a lesson" to his children, but also his wife.

Observing P. during the game allowed us to notice how, despite the expressed desire to question himself, the non-verbal attitude expressed a tendency towards closure and defence. In opposition to the other example, P. reported physical sensations of nausea and confusion, and had difficulties in exploring his feelings and emotions. His comments focused on the faults of the female figure who instigated the protagonist, in a sort of justification of the male reaction.

With P., it was thus possible to notice a peculiar aspect of the consequences of the game: the tendency of some to deny their share of responsibility in the situation of a quarrel and - in so doing - to carry out their indirectly or openly violent behaviours.

R. (Richard), age 38, elementary school, worker, married, 2 children, twins, age 5

R. is the father of twins at our Centre with a diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Syndrome for one, and Psychomotor Delay for the other.

When R. was asked to participate in the experimentation, at first, he pulled back for fear of not being able to be up to the task; when he was then shown what it was about, he calmed down, as his fears concerned the cultural gap, he feels, he has with other people.

He immediately showed himself able to access his emotions, and expressed his anguish in the moment in which he identified himself with the child of the game, which resulted in a physical discomfort of dizziness which - immediately after the end of experience - led him to ask for a few minutes to recover.

R.'s experience highlighted how the *serious game* - for some subjects - was a vehicle for living the emotional experience at a primitive level, with the body and the expression of anxiety through physical symptoms, such as if the experience was too intense to be elaborated on a mental level.

Reflections

The context in which the *serious game* was proposed at Villa delle Ginestre allowed us to observe a peculiar type of approach to parenting by the participants. As previously mentioned, these men are confronted with the narcissistic wound deriving from the presence of a child with disabilities, in a socio-cultural context of discomfort and without any other access to spaces for elaboration and thought than those offered in relation to the rehabilitation of the child. Despite these difficulties, we were able to observe how the game influenced not only their reflections after the game, but also their therapeutic path, as it represented a starting point for discussion with their wives during subsequent sessions, a vehicle for processing some past episodes, and a means of recognizing and dealing with their aggressive attitudes in a different way.

Part 2

12. Project plan and activity organization: golden words for EU projecting

Patrizia Cozzolino

The project management

The success of the ViDaCS project, beyond its scientific results, has also been determined by effective administrative and financial management.

At the end of this book, it was therefore considered appropriate to share all the significant best practices, steps and skills necessary for the implementation of a good project.

These are processes adopted and strongly recommended by the European Commission, so as to make the scientific results obtained measurable and demonstrable.

The success of a project is above all defined by the possible quantification of the results obtained.

The definition of indicators and the constant monitoring of activities therefore play a fundamental role in order to ensure compliance with objectives, quality, timing and budget.

This involves the application of a working methodology, known as the project cycle management (PCM).

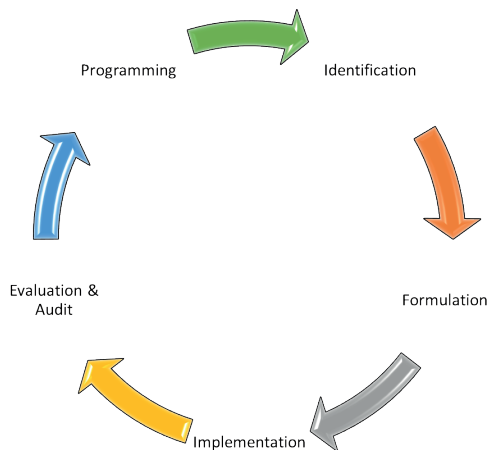


Figure 1 - The PCM

The term project cycle management indicates the management activities and decision-making procedures used during the life cycle of a project, including the set of all resources (human/ financial/ instrumental) and activities aimed at achieving the goals and objectives of a project.

The EC's Guidelines on PCM gives more importance to the concept of quality, measured in terms of relevance, feasibility and effectiveness.

During the programming phase, the project's objective is developed into a specific and workable plan ready to be executed. The Project Work Plan specifies the project's scope and appropriate approach, decides on a schedule for the tasks involved, estimates the necessary resources and develops the detail of the project plans.

It is important that the project manager is involved from this stage, bringing the added value of his skills and expertise; the project plan will be defined using all the tools of the PCM.

A Project Manager needs to understand the project management methodology used in their organisation and have the technical skills required to effectively manage the initiation, planning, execution, control and closing of a project.

On top of this, the role requires skills to work effectively with people and within the broader organisational context.

Additionally, subject-specific knowledge is often relevant and useful to a Project Manager's (PM) role.

In the specific case of ViDaCS project, years spent working in university departments and the in-depth study of European planning applied to the SSH disciplines (2018), represented a large added value¹.

During the implementation phase, Project management has the important and difficult task of establishing sufficient controls over the project to ensure that it stays on track towards the achievement of its objectives.

A project is a time-bound effort (with a starting and a completion date) to create specific products and/or services and/or results that bring benefits or added value.

Successful Project Management allows the closing of the project:

- Within the Times
- Within the Costs

¹ Cfr. Cozzolino P., *Horizon Europe Programme. Objectives and opportunities for SSH*, Graduation thesis in History of European political institutions.

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- At the desired performance level
- Using resources effectively and efficiently
- Accepted by the Commission

The factors on which all projects are based are:

- Resources - Time - Costs

The control of these elements determines the success of the project.

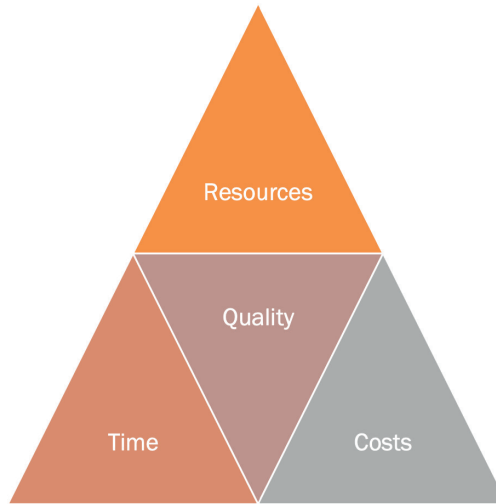


Figure 2 - The Quality Triangle

The Project Management during the implementation usually involves the following major tasks:

- 1) Preparing the tender documents for service, works and supply contracts.
- 2) Monitoring of implementation, suggesting corrective measures if required to support assurance of the quality of the outcome of the project
- 3) Supporting timeliness of means, where relevant, and facilitating communication and information flow between and feedback to the parties involved
- 4) Manage evaluations and audits, if required
- 5) Ensuring a successful decision-making process concerning whether or not to pursue the objectives of the project in a further phase (and to launch further preparatory action) or to abandon the objectives of the project.

Project monitoring is an integral part of day-to-day management. Its purpose is to provide the information by which management can identify and solve implementation problems and assess progress in relation to what was originally planned.

All projects consist of 4 main phases:

- 1) Concept (design idea)
- 2) Definition (drafting of the project)
- 3) Implementation (management and reporting)
- 4) Closure (monitoring and control)

During the implementation of the project, a good project manager is responsible for undertaking three main sets of tasks:

- 1) **Monitoring and regular review.** Project management must keep track of how the project is progressing in terms of expenditure, resource use, implementation of activities, delivery of results and the management of risks. This is achieved through 'monitoring', which is the systematic and continuous collection, analysis and use of management information to support effective decision-making.
- 2) **Planning and re-planning.** Plans are best estimates of what will happen in the future but must be modified on an ongoing basis to take into account what actually happens during implementation.
- 3) **Reporting.** Project management must provide reports on physical and financial progress to stakeholders, particularly those providing financial resources to support implementation.

In particular, during the Management and reporting phase, a recognition of the actual costs and revenues is necessary and in the Closure phase, a monitoring of the results of the project, through cost and time analysis and the analysis of deviations and their causes; this enables replanning, that is the implementation of corrections and new estimates.

Summarizing the aims of project management, allow us to:

- Have a realistic view of the project throughout its life cycle
- Highlight critical situations and propose valid alternatives in a timely manner (immediately, not at the end of the project)
- Ensure consistency between the partial objectives allocated (WP) and the general project objectives
- Determination of a common *modus operandi* for all actors involved.

The activity of project management is articulated on three levels: Strategic, Operational and Administrative.

The Strategic level is a specific function of the Project Management Board (PMB). It's in charge of management of changes and exceptions, conflicts, consent, vote. The terms of this management are set out in the Partnership Agreement.

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The Operational level concerns the Project manager, who is responsible for the execution of the project (“engine”), takes initiative on routine and corrective actions, manages the actions setting, monitors progress, reports the activities and resources, liaise with the Commission, monitors the Quality Plan and resolves conflicts.

The third level is assigned to an administrative manager, who controls costs and refunds, manages the financial plan and the cost statements.

There are several tools that can be used for effective project management:

Quality criteria and standards

The Logical framework matrix (LFM), which provides a framework of objectives, indicators (and targets) and sources of information which should be used to further develop and implement the monitoring, review and reporting system; a list of key assumptions which must be monitored as part of the project’s risk management arrangements and a clear and consistent reference point and structure for completing progress reports.

The activity/work programme schedules, such as:

- the **Work Breakdown Structure (WBS)**, a foundational building block for initiating, planning, executing, monitoring and controlling processes that are used to manage projects.
- The **Organizational Breakdown Structure (OBS)**, used to define the responsibilities for project management, cost reporting, billing, budgeting and project control. The OBS provides an organizational rather than a task-based perspective of the project.
- The **Responsibility Assignment Matrix (RAM)**, used by project managers for the assignment of responsibilities, or to identify the role of the various members of a project team in completing tasks or deliverables for a project.
- **The Gantt Diagram**, a visual view of tasks scheduled over time. Gantt charts are used for planning projects of all sizes and they are a useful way of showing what work is scheduled to be done on a specific day. They also help you view the start and end dates of a project in one simple view.

They provide a structure for preparing operational work plans against which implementation progress can then be periodically assessed (key tasks, timing, duration and responsibilities); an easily understood visual presentation of key tasks that can be used to promote participatory planning and review of physical progress; an opportunity to highlight monitoring, review and reporting tasks within the work programme.

The resource and budget schedules, which provide a clear format for preparing operational budgets which are explicitly linked to planned activities and results; a clear reference point for resource and financial monitoring, allowing comparisons to be made between planned and actual resource utilisation and expenditure; a framework for explicitly identifying the resources and costs required to implement the monitoring, review and reporting system.

The Risk management matrix, useful for identifying whether or not the assumptions that have already been made are likely to hold true, what new risks may be emerging, and for taking action to manage or mitigate these risks where possible.

Checklists, conducting interviews and managing regular review meetings.

Guidance on promoting participation and using facilitation skills.

Several documents, such as the working papers of the project team, the progress report format, the change management procedure, the quality plan, the risks plan, the communication plan, the supplying plan, the project management plan².

The Project Management Plan

A fundamental document is the Project Management Plan, defining the structures for management and distribution of responsibilities; the decision-making process; the organization of project meetings; procedures and formats for documents and project deliverables; the deadlines; tools and standards for communication between partners; administrative, financial and management rules.

It usually represents the first deliverable of a project.

It can also contain the Quality Plan, a document establishing the rules to set and control the quality of the processes, and products to be realized for the project.

It shall contain indicators for measuring data relevant for project management as well as for monitoring and evaluating the efficiency of the activities carried out.

² To learn more about the topic of Project Management cfr. European Commission, Centre of Excellence in Project Management (CoEPM²), *PM² Project Management Methodology Guide 3.0*, Brussels | Luxembourg, 2018 (<https://op.europa.eu/it/publication-detail/-/publication/ac3e118a-cb6e-11e8-9424-01aa75ed71a1>).

The Indicators

The indicators should be in direct relation to the main objectives of the project and provide an appropriate framework of what the project aims to achieve.

The difficulty in selecting indicators is to find measurable amounts/elements that can reflect the most significant effects, combining what is substantially relevant, as a reflection of expected results, with what is realistic in terms of data collection and management.

The partnership must immediately agree on the type of unit-based indicators to be used in the evaluation of the project, establish a starting point from which to start working, to introduce targets to be reached and define specific mechanisms and times of data collection in order to measure progress.

Some of the key issues related to the monitoring and evaluation processes can be eliminated from the outset by defining a broad set of appropriate indicators that clearly measure the aim of the project activities and objectives.

Objectively verifiable indicators (OVI) describe the project's objectives in operationally measurable terms (Quantity, Quality, Time – or QQT). Specifying OVIs helps to check the feasibility of objectives and helps forming the basis of the project's monitoring and evaluation system.

A good OVI should also be **SMART**:

- **S**pecific to the objective it is supposed to measure
- **M**easurable (either quantitatively or qualitatively)
- **A**vailable at an acceptable cost
- **R**elevant to the information needs of managers
- **T**ime-bound – so we know when we can expect the objective/target to be achieved

Indicators are usually divided into three broad categories:

- 1) Output indicators: measure what project activities produce;
- 2) Result indicators: measure immediate effects on selected beneficiaries;
- 3) Impact indicators: measure long-term contributions to the overall objective.

It is necessary to create logical connections between these three categories of indicators.

Monitoring and evaluation

Monitoring, review and reporting are core management responsibilities which involve the collection, analysis, communication and use of information on the physical and financial progress of the project and the achievement of results.

Monitoring means examining in a comprehensive, critical and objective way the appropriateness of the objectives and the quality of the actions carried out in relation to the results obtained, the effects caused and the needs that we aim to satisfy.

Monitoring is equivalent to developing a process whose phases have to be planned throughout the life of the project, in relation to the different areas of interest.

It involves the collection, analysis, communication and use of information about the project's progress. Monitoring systems and procedures should provide the mechanism by which relevant information is provided to the right people at the right time to help them make informed decisions. Monitoring should highlight strengths and weaknesses in project implementation and enable responsible personnel to deal with problems, improve performance, build on successes and adapt to changing circumstances.

It's important to distinguish monitoring and evaluation, by scope, timing, people involved and users of the results.

The main function of monitoring is the structured and systematic collection of information. It's an activity aimed at the direct support of the management. It tends to cover all the measurable aspects of the project. It is made with regular detection, like a flow and measures deviation from a standard or predefined target.

The prevailing function of evaluation is linked to the expression of a value judgment. It is an activity carried out for an internal or external client. It concerns a selection of aspects of the project. It can be done at different times or in one. It measures relevance, consistency, effectiveness, efficiency of a project activity.

Evaluation takes place less frequently than monitoring, usually in three steps.

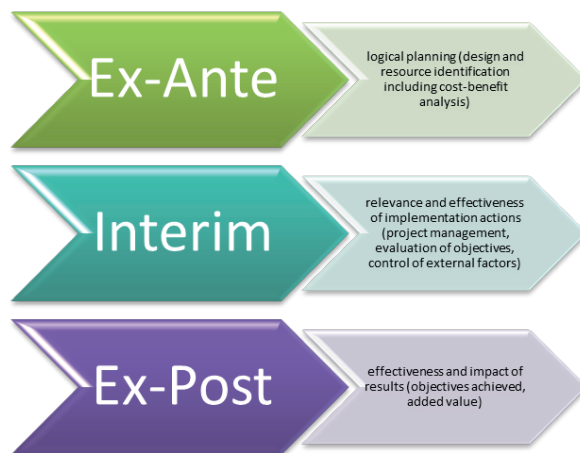


Figure 3 - The monitoring steps

The importance of sharing and communication: project meetings

The Kick-off meeting

Starting a project well is the first step to have a good management.

Until the contract is signed with the European Commission, in the case of project financing, the partners have normally never met physically.

In the design phase, communication is only done remotely via telephone, e-mail, skype and, if possible, videoconference.

These modes of communication and interaction remain valid for the duration of the project, but, in case of financing of the proposal, during the implementation of the activities, it is expected that the partners meet at least twice a year at ad hoc meetings.

From an operational point of view, a European project normally starts with a Kick-off meeting (KOM), that is, a first meeting in which all partners meet for the first time. Until then, in fact, it is very likely that the reports have been carried out on the telephone and online.

The meeting is usually held in the leading city of the project.

During the meeting the project activities are discussed and planned, the roles and workloads are defined, the Project Management Plan and the Partnership Agreement are presented.

The KOM aims to establish a common vision of the project among all partners, but also, on a practical level, to create cohesion in the staff.

The coordinator must indicate, starting from the application form, how he intends to manage the international partnership involved in the project.

In particular, it shall indicate:

- the Methods of communication and interaction between the partners;
- the Roles, responsibilities and duties of the partners;
- the Structure of the decision-making process;
- Arrangements to resolve any conflicts.

The Kick-off meeting is also the first occasion on which the Steering Committee (SM) meets, that is the meeting of representatives of all the partner bodies.

The Steering Committee is the directing body of the project, the place where all important decisions are taken, any problem is solved, etc.

During the Kick-off meeting usually:

- the overall architecture of the project is discussed;

- the various activities/phases of the project are set;
- the division of tasks and responsibilities between the partners is confirmed;
- any risk factors for the project shall be analysed;
- the timetable of the project activities, the subsequent deadlines and the future international meetings are confirmed;
- the administrative and financial aspects are discussed.

The project meetings

During the life of the project, the partners meet regularly.

The international meetings have already been planned in the programme design, with coverage of expenses.

Regular meetings are usually expected every three/four/six months, but the number depends on the overall duration and nature of the project.

An advanced planning of the agenda allows each partner to participate in the meetings with a real and concrete contribution.

The decision-making process

In the project plan, the tasks of each organization participating in the project are already precisely described.

Each partner has a well-defined and clear role from the design stage.

In some projects, even if the principle of the overall responsibility of the leader on the general course of the activities and on the achievement of the objectives remains valid, some partners can assume the task of Work Package Leaders (WPL), which are responsible for coordinating certain project phases.

The set of actions that make up the project, as well as all aspects related to the budget, the roles and responsibilities of each individual partner, are all elements that the leader and partners establish at the design stage.

During the life of the project, on the other hand, the consortium of partners may have to take new decisions when:

- it is necessary to detail aspects of the project which, at the design stage, were only generally defined;
- unforeseen situations occur.

As a rule, decisions during the project are taken within the framework of the Steering Committee in a democratic manner.

12. Project plan and activity organization: golden words for EU projecting

It is the duty of the leader to try to maintain a serene and collaborative atmosphere within the partnership.

In the event of a conflict, efforts should be made to find friendly solutions.

On the case of a partner not performing its duties, not performing the activities envisaged, or not delivering the required materials, the leader must try to talk to that partner and encourage them with determination to comply with the contract.

In the event of serious deficiencies, the lead partner will inform the European Commission of the problems caused by the partner in question. And it is possible that they will decide to expel the partner from the consortium.

Conclusion. Tips for excellent research management

Dedicate sufficient time to the management of the project, to internal communication in the consortium, to meeting project milestones and quality control of deliverables.

Let's Partners help the Project Coordinator conduct all these tasks.

Focus on people first, instead of formal tools or structures. Research management is a people business and should ideally not rely on formal tools or hierarchical management styles. It is advisable to use an all-inclusive and consensus-based management style. Also, use simple, straightforward management structures with clearly defined roles and responsibilities throughout the project.

These roles and responsibilities should be given based on proven competencies for the role, not because of status or hierarchical reasons.

As many consortium partners may be new to each other at the start of the project, it is essential to invest in building and maintaining trust throughout the project. To this end, frequent communication within the consortium is crucial.

Establish a good working relationship with the EU project officer. Communicate pro-actively with him/her about the relevant aspects of the project, such as expected deviations in project results or consortium composition. Invest in a good working relationship and inform the project officer well in advance and in an informal manner instead of waiting for formal reporting periods. This allows for a more flexible and tailored approach with less administrative burden for both the consortium and the project officer.

Include sufficient expertise in financial management.

Be mindful of cultural differences. International consortia bring skills from multiple research and cultural traditions to projects. This leads to diverse and valuable insights. To this end, it is worth recognising cultural differences and understanding how they can complement each other to move the project forward instead of becoming a barrier.

13. ViDaCS coordination: quality plan and monitoring

Immacolata Di Napoli

The role of the management and the responsibilities of the project manager for a successful project was widely discussed in the previous chapter, whereas this chapter details the monitoring process of the activities. As described by Cozzolino (Chapter 12) the monitoring process has the purpose of verifying whether all the objectives established in the implementation plan are achieved within the foreseen times and to implement, when necessary, the mitigation measures in order to resolve and overcome any impediments to the realization of the project.

Monitoring is mainly carried out by the central project office (CPO) which is responsible for monitoring progress at each stage, ensuring consistency with the original aims; it also ensures that research activities are properly carried out, being responsible for day-to-day administration and internal evaluation.

The central project office is a body that mediates the communication during the development of the daily activities between the partners and the scientific coordinator of the project, trying to solve the procedural and organizational difficulties encountered in carrying out activities already agreed upon and shared in the project meetings by the strategic committee.

Furthermore, the CPO plays a significant role in communicating and interfacing with the representatives of the European Commission, with respect to the whole confrontation procedure to overcome any difficulties encountered during the implementation of the project.

Monitoring activity in ViDaCS project

In carrying out the project activities, no particular difficulties were encountered for the activities envisioned in Work Packages 2 and 3.

In fact, the Central Project Office did not detect any delays in achieving the pre-established objectives; first of all, thanks to the implementation of decisive mitigation measures in the process, we strengthened the collaboration and exchange with networks of services networks. In fact, they were crucial in the area

for the recruitment of service professionals dealing with violence in intimate relationships and we involved them in the theoretical-experiential training provided by the project structure.

In the initial stages of project implementation, the activity was constantly monitored. In fact, the project, as is well described in the opening pages of this volume, had as its goals, both to reach a greater awareness of men perpetrating violence in intimate relationships about their aggressive emotions, and greater dissemination of the management of perpetrators in a territory in which centers that deal with these cases have only recently become recognized.

In order to pursue the objectives of the project, the CPO, in agreement with the leading dissemination partner, constantly monitored the effectiveness and efficiency of the communication.

A delicate moment for the realization of the project was dealing with the Covid emergency situation. The spread of the infection in Italy and the following measures taken by the Prime Minister interrupted the experimentation phase of the serious game, the central activity of our project.

In this emergency phase, the experimental activities were necessarily suspended due to the mobility difficulties of citizens and also due to the interruption of activities at the partners' premises: University, ASL shelter and Villa delle Ginestre center.

In the face of this difficulty, the project, in agreement with the European Commission, was suspended from 11 April 2020 to 11 September 2020, for a total of five months.

The consortium in agreement with the representatives of the European Commission chose to suspend the project.

The suspension could have led to a decrease in interest for the proposed purposes at the central moment of the project, when the attention to the proposed activities had reached great interest and other implementation promotion initiatives for the testing of ViDaCs serious game were already planned.

To avoid this negative impact on the project, new mitigation measures, which had not initially been envisaged for the management of the project were introduced; they enhanced online dissemination of initiatives pursuing the main aims of the project. Therefore, in this delicate phase of the project, the monitoring activity was fundamental because it always kept the attention on the implications of the new actions undertaken to address the risk of a decline in local and even national interest in the innovative initiatives promoted by ViDaCS, as the activity directed towards the fathers (see the figure 1 and figure 2). Both the webinars

13. ViDaCS coordination: quality plan and monitoring

organized by Olv and the blog activity on the ViDaCs Facebook page are worth mentioning here.

Therefore, despite the official suspension of the project activities, the monitoring system remained constantly active with respect to the support activities coordinated by the various partners. In this phase monitoring was a tool of great importance for the success of the project until it had the opportunity to resume its activities. It is in this delicate phase of the project that monitoring, even more than at other times, made it possible to keep the aims and mission of the project present in all partners.



Figure 1 – Online ViDaCS activity: The week of #dadstake!
Source: ViDaCS Facebook page.



Figure 2– Online ViDaCS activity: Dad at Coronavirus time
Source: ViDaCS Facebook page.

Tools

A quality plan and a monitoring tool were adopted within the ViDaCS project to share procedures, control and principles systems to assure and verify the quality of the project during its implementation.

The quality plan and monitoring tool were considered and continuously used by each Partner and its members. The plan described, also, the qualitative and quantitative indicators to evaluate the quality at the beginning and at the end of each action. A Quality Plan is to define the internal quality assurance scheme and procedures to effectively manage the implementation of the project and to meet the highest standard. The process of quality consists of two interdependent processes: ensuring and verifying the quality of the project.

Moreover, a system of indicators and procedures of monitoring and traceability for each task of the WPs were used.

During the project meetings the stages of the development of each WP and its tasks were assessed; moreover, the deliverables were checked and achieved in due time according to the planned milestones.

Internal quality management was based on monitoring activities and milestones. Moreover, in order to guarantee the quality of the project, attention was paid to the management of the data collected in the various activities envisaged by the project.

The preliminary data Management Plan was provided and used as a guide for the management of the data, during the life of the ViDaCS project. The plan described how the data would be produced; the type of format (paper or electronic); where and for how long time the data would be saved and stored; access to the data; and who would be responsible for the management of the data.

In the ViDaCS project the data management plan included data obtained from the research planned in the literature review; in field research; in the implementation of the ViDaCS serious game; the data collected by the satisfaction questionnaire and discussion group for monitoring and evaluating the activities. Table 1 shows how the data of each activity was managed.

Table 1. *Data management plan*

| | Data management |
|---|---|
| Literature review | <p>The data, collected from a literature review, will be: articles, papers, references and map of specific website for the perpetrators. The data will be saved in pdf format in the folder literature review of the WP2 and in the literature repository of ViDaCS website. CPO will be responsible of the storage in the Google Drive platform, while CTS will be responsible for the data in ViDaCS website.</p> <p>The data will be available to all the ViDaCS website users.</p> <p>In the ViDaCS platform, the data will be stored for the whole life of the project and for one year after its conclusion; while the data will be open as long as the website is active.</p> |
| Interviews of stakeholder, professionals and actor involved in domestic violence | <p>The interviews with experts and stakeholders will be collected by DSU and stored in the “in field research” folder, inside the WP2 folder in ViDaCS Google Drive platform. Access to the sensitive data will be guaranteed only to the consortium.</p> <p>Only the interviews, which will be authorized by informed consent (Italian law D. L. 196/2003) given by the interviewees, will be used and stored. A scanned copy of the informed consent form will also be saved.</p> <p>The audio files of the interview and the text of the transcription of the interviews, in doc format, will be named with the same label, for example interview 001: interview_audio 001 and interview_001. Doc.</p> <p>The DSU team will be responsible for the data in association with the CPO. Audio files and text files will be used for the analysis as planned in the project. The data will be reused for further analysis only by partner members, subject to consortium approval.</p> <p>The data will be stored for the whole life of the project and for one year after its conclusion.</p> |
| Satisfaction level Qualitative data collected during the training session | <p>During training sessions, specifically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - intensive mutual learning - serious game learning - theoretical-experiential training and operational training <p>The evaluation manager will gather data regarding the level of satisfaction of the participants by anonymous questionnaire and group discussion</p> <p>The qualitative data collected will be saved following defined procedures that facilitate the analysis by qualitative software, such as T-lab or Atlas.it. This qualitative software will be used by the DSU team, expert in qualitative analysis.</p> <p>The qualitative data related to the satisfaction level of its own activities will be stored in each WP folder in ViDaCS.</p> <p>The data will be stored for the whole life of the project and for one year after its conclusion.</p> |

| | |
|---|--|
| <p>A workshop activity will be organized with children between the ages of 6 and 13</p> | <p>During the workshop, the DSU and RIA will collect all the children's materials such as drawings and other materials obtained from the workshop. The data, which will be collected, will be specified in more detail in the data management plan when the workshop activities are better planned (at Months 2 and 3 of the project).</p> <p>Furthermore, the discussion group among operators and reports will be about data collected from the task 3.1.</p> <p>These materials will be stored in the "game construction" folder inside the WP3 in ViDaCS Google Drive platform.</p> <p>The data will be available only to the consortium and will be stored for the whole life of the project and for one year after its conclusion.</p> |
| <p>20 Qualitative Interviews will be collected among professionals dealing with WDV children</p> | <p>The interviews with professionals will be collected by DSU and stored in the "game construction" folder, inside the WP3 folder in ViDaCS Google Drive platform. Access to sensitive data will be guaranteed only to the consortium.</p> <p>Only the interviews, which will be authorized by informed consent (Italian law D. L. 196/2003) given by the interviewee, will be used and stored. A scanned copy of the informed consent form will also be saved.</p> <p>The audio files of the interview and the transcription of the interviews, in doc format, will be named with the same label, for example interview 001: interview_audio 001 and interview_001. Doc.</p> <p>The DSU team will be responsible for the data, in association with the CPO.</p> <p>Audio files and text files will be used for the analysis as planned in the project. The data will be reused for further analysis only by partner members, only after the approval of the consortium.</p> <p>The data will be stored for the whole life of the project and for one year after its conclusion.</p> |
| <p>Serious Game</p> | <p>During the construction of the serious game at Month 13, Protom will provide more specific updates on the construction of the serious game, which better define the experimentation of the ViDaCS serious game and its data.</p> <p>The serious game will allow operators to collect data such as physiological reactions and data obtained from the report of each participant related to his own subjective experience.</p> |

The quality of coordination and monitoring

During the ViDaCS project, the CPO was committed to ensuring a collaborative and respectful work climate, based on the following principles to the following aspects: Clarity and importance of the project's objectives for each partner; Level of sharing; Trust; Clarity of responsibilities and tasks; Promotion of higher quality results within working groups; Shorten distances; Assurance of the work plan planning and control; Promotion of empowerment and communication; Monitoring of partnership performance; and Reengineering the working process.

The project partners worked transparently at any given point of time. They made sure that the working process was always comprehensive; they reported on the working status at the predetermined delivery dates and openly discussed all kinds of problems with the Coordinator and – when necessary – with all the other partners. Transparency was guaranteed by using internal progress reports. To guarantee the quality of the ViDaCS project, the project partners filled in the project progress templates conscientiously, correctly, completely, and according to the defined quality standards. Thus, they know and consider all the tools of the quality plan. The partners kept the determined delivery dates of the individual tasks and the different reports in mind.

14. Evaluation and final considerations

Fortuna Procentese

The evaluation process is a project activity that aims to exemplify the decision-making processes of the different phases and activities envisaged in the intervention phases. The purpose of the evaluation is to detect the complexity of the intervention process and to identify the direct and indirect aspects and effects of the action, including those not attributable to objective aspects. Evaluation is a phase of fundamental importance in the planning of an intervention, as a moment of reflection and an opportunity to propose actions in keeping with the objectives envisaged and located for the actors involved.

In our project the evaluation consisted in measuring the effects of the project. Its goal is to learn from the evaluated project, in order to better understand and improve it.

The evaluation for the objective criteria and some process indicators must be collected through quantitative and qualitative evaluation. The latter is characterized by a priority descriptive focus and an inductive approach. The application of this type of evaluation requires the direct involvement of the participants in the work of the collection of useful data and information for the description and interpretation of the project and its effects. In qualitative assessments, the verification of the project results is generally carried out during and immediately after the observation of the project.

In order to follow the project in the different phases, different steps are considered. The first step evaluates the needs to which an answer should be given. There are various steps (Rossi, Lipsey, Freeman, 2004) in the evaluation that support the evaluation activities in the different phases of the work, starting from the evaluation of the phenomenon studied and the identification of the needs to be answered through the project activity.

The second step identifies the objectives to be pursued and a third identifies the different actions useful for achieving the objectives. Choices of actions are also made considering alternatives in order to consider the best application for the context and objectives considered.

An important phase is the implementation of the project which brings it back to the application in the contexts considered and which calls for the concreteness

of the action with all the organizational practices necessary for the implementation of the actions. The implementation of the actions concerns a sixth phase in which the application returns not only the elements observed or defined as indicators but also whether the actions carried out have been adequately planned.

The seventh step concerns the analysis of the project results, and the assessment of whether the objectives have been achieved. And finally, six expected results have been achieved on time and within the expected costs. In the European project we considered the following aspects:

- Describing the flow of the project and its activities;
- Identifying the progress achieved and the results obtained through the implementation of the project, by collecting appropriate data and submitting it to a comprehensive and systematic analysis;
- Making a value judgment on the results identified and comparing them with established objectives and in accordance with predetermined criteria; and
- Using the process to gain a better understanding of the project or of its completed activities, and drawing lessons that could potentially change ongoing activities in order to better align them with the project's goals.

The evaluation allows all partners to become aware of their perceptions of the goals and objectives of the project, its activities, its flow and the use of resources to bring it to fruition and also of the overall results achieved as well as of its impact.

The project activities are organized in Working Packages (WP). Each WP contained a series of measures and indicators in order to check the implementation of the project and its evaluation. The indicators were defined in order to be verifiable and measurable by the Consortium. Following, the WPs are described regarding their general objective and their quantitative and qualitative indicators, as identified in the quality plan.

WP1 – Management and Coordination of the project

General objective

The WP1 ensures the effective coordination of the project activities needed to manage the project and run it efficiently. To promote the sound financial management and ensure that the best results/products are delivered at reasonable cost, an activities and financial monitoring tool was prepared (For the monitoring and evaluation of these aspects, see: chapters 12 and 13).

WP2 – Preliminary research and activities underpinning ViDaCS self-assessment package

General objective

This WP aimed at defining a common theoretical and operational intervention to improve the self-assessment of men who assume violent behaviour in the domestic environment; shared within the Partnership, used in the designing of a virtual game for the implementation of the assessment and awareness of perpetrators and then experimented as pilot violent behaviour self-assessment treatment. The repository of the literature review made in the WP2 Task 2.2 Systematization of literature and programs research was compiled within the due time as foreseen in the project and it answers in full to the criteria of selection of the articles: a) number of articles; b) source – official research database; c) period – articles must cover a period of at least 15 years.

123 articles were selected from official research database (Scopus, ISI-Web of Knowledge, Google Scholar) and specialized scientific journals from the fields of psychology, law, health sciences and social work. The selected articles cover the time window of 23 years.

The literature review repository is accurate since it examines national and international literature detected on the theme. The repository offers 114 international and 9 national articles. It examines the following aspects: Domestic Violence, Gender-based Violence against women, Perpetrators, Women victims of violence and Witnessed Domestic Violence highlighting aggression and violent behaviour, psychopathology, the aspects of violence and roles, violence and perceptions, Psychology, crime and law in cases of domestic violence, motivations behind violence, predictors, assessment and risk assessment, mechanism of change, intervention programs and treatment, therapy, fatherhood as motivation to change, motherhood in cases of domestic violence, partner homicide (femicide), suicide, the consequences of violence as trauma, childhood and violence, child abuse and neglect, health and welfare services, attachment and reflexive function in cases of violence against women. See part III of the volume and references.

Intensive mutual learning and workshop discussions: ViDaCS self-assessment definition

For the evaluation of this activity, quantitative criteria (number of participants in intensive mutual learning) and the level of satisfaction, as qualitative indicator were considered.

Evaluation Comment

The activity of intensive mutual learning was carried out within the due time as foreseen in the project respecting the quantitative indicator in terms of number of participants.

Moreover, the value added of the activity is the presence of volunteer operators in the training activity for the interest aroused by the project. The presence of professionals in the sector who voluntarily participated allowed the exchange on the proposed themes, contributing to the enrichment of a common thought which then gave rise to the definition of the theoretical-operational ViDaCS model.

The data obtained by the self-report questionnaire highlighted an overall high satisfaction in relation to the experience conducted; in fact, the average level of satisfaction of all the workshop experience is 4.5 points out of 5. In particular, in relation to the knowledge and skills acquired, 100% of the participants involved reported that they were very satisfied with their participation in the activities of mutual learning and the discussion. The participants expressed a high level of satisfaction regarding the content proposed and they reported the perception of having enriched their professional skills in domestic violence. In particular, the participants reported the importance of implementing reflection spaces, such as those proposed in the workshop, to increase among personnel awareness about their own prejudices towards the perpetrators. The participants also rated the participation in the equality group as very satisfactory. Furthermore, the organization and management of the activities was evaluated as positive and functional

WP3 – Design and construction of the Serious Game

General objective

The general aim of this WP was to develop an interactive serious game to help perpetrators to feel how their violence impacts their children, empathizing with the emotions, thoughts and physical sensations of children exposed to domestic violence and to change their aggressive behaviours.

Game Design

For this activity, workshop activities were carried out and 20 interviews were conducted with professionals dealing with WDV children.

14. Evaluation and final considerations

For the evaluation of this activity the following were considered: Number of children involved in the workshop; Protocol by operators on the activities; and Number of interviews collected among the professionals.

Workshop Activity at School

Evaluation tools considered: the report by operators on the workshop activities and material produced (photos, videos, music).

All the activities carried out followed the child protection guidelines adopted by all the partners actively involved in the implementation of the project.

40 primary school students and 40 lower middle school students were involved, thus satisfying the quantitative indicators of the number of pupils to be involved.

From the observation protocols, as well as from the photographic and audio material found and stored in the manner described in the Data Management Plan, there is an active participation of the pupils involved (see chapters 3 and 6).

Qualitative Interviews

The game design was realized within the due time as foreseen in the project and it fulfilled the defined criteria: Number of participants (20) and type of participants, health and welfare professionals dealing with the taking charge of families characterized by violent dynamics and children witnesses domestic violence. The research and its report were carried out in accordance with COREQ guidelines (see: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/319573537_COREQ_Consolidated_Criteria_for_Reporting_Qualitative_Studies) and CASP checklists (see :casp-uk.net > [casp-tools-checklists](http://casp-uk.net)).

Specifically, the interviewees met the defined selection criteria, all of them have an appreciable experience in the field of violence against women and in particular towards witness violence.

The recruitment procedure respected all the ethics requirements of the research (the research was approved by Ethic Committee of the Department of Humanities and all documents required were produced such as informed consent forms and information notes on data processing. All data obtained from the research were appropriately stored according to the data management plan).

The research report is clear and usable and clearly defines the emerging needs in the context of application of the project.

The research work carried out was also published in open access in an international journal (Carnevale et al 2020).

Game Learning

For the evaluation of this activity, the following indicators were considered as indicators: clarity and adequacy of the self-questionnaire to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the serious game, prepared by Protom, and level of satisfaction of the course.

Evaluation comment

The questionnaire, constructed ad hoc by Protom to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the serious game, responds to the criteria of clarity, unambiguity of the questions, as well as being easy to understand. It is also suitably short (see: chapter 4).

All the participants in the course expressed their degree of satisfaction with the information received regarding the construction of the serious game. They also positively assessed the emotional impact of the serious game (see: chapters 8-9-10).

WP4 - Cascade Training and Implementation

General objective

This is the core WP of the project, during which the ViDaCS programme was implemented in order to evaluate its effectiveness in providing skills to professionals and increase knowledge on treatment of perpetrators.

Theoretical-experiential training for professional

For this task the following indicators were considered: Number of participants to theoretical-experiential training and operational training (QNT); Learning assessment questionnaires / interviews for trained professionals, certifying the level of expertise gained (QLT)

Evaluation comments

a) **Theoretical-experiential training for professional**

Evaluation tools for training and implementation

b) **Operational training**

Specialized training for professionals (operational training) in the WP 4 was provided within the due time as foreseen in the project and it fulfilled the de-

14. Evaluation and final considerations

defined criteria: Number of participants (15) and type of participants: operators selected (3 from DSU and 12 from Partners).

The research and its report were carried out in accordance with COREQ guidelines:

- COREQ (https://www.researchgate.net/publication/319573537_COREQ_Consolidated_Criteria_for_Reporting_Qualitative_Studies) and
- CASP Checklists - Critical Appraisal Skills Programme (see: casp-uk.net/casp-tools-checklists)

The training was structured in three operational seminars. Each seminar lasted 8 hours, for a total of 24 hours for the whole training. Each seminar was organized at Villa delle Ginestre and divided into three different sessions.

- 1) The first session was a “self-experience session”: each operator experimented the ViDaCS serious game, with the support of a Consortium member to better approach the hardware and therefore the wearable device.
- 2) In the second session an “observative session” was experienced: the trainees observed the other trainees during the game playing or other operators, in order to learn to manage ViDaCS serious game protocols.
- 3) The third session was a “group session”: a brainstorming and a discussion group on emotional feeling was experienced. A focus group technique (Corrao, 2000) was used with the aim of sharing reflections, thoughts and emotions related to the Serious Game experience. The group discussion was managed by a conductor and a moderator, selected from members of the Consortium.

The training made it possible to identify, train and accompany a group of 15 motivated operators to work together for the project implementation phase, familiarizing themselves with VR and with the Serious game storyboard and also learning the main elements in order to be able to effectively manage the different phases (pre-game, game and post -game).

The training proved to be a useful and adequate experience to achieve the expected results for operational training (see: chapters 8,9,10).

The main strengths were:

- a) The importance of work on operators’ epistemological premises on the issue of gender-based violence, sharing them and creating a common premise;
- b) The opportunity to share their emotional experiences in group;
- c) The chance to experience him/herself in the shoes of the perpetrator, to try to understand what the ViDaCS serious game could elicit in the perpetrator; and

- d) The chance to “play the game” as an observer and share the similarities and differences with the previous individual experience with the group.

A training evaluation questionnaire was administered. Its analysis highlighted:

- 1) Level of satisfaction with training: 90% (between very satisfied and satisfied)
- 2) Level of satisfaction with the use of the group as methodological tool: 95% (very satisfied)
- 3) Level of satisfaction with location: 95% (very satisfied)
- 4) Agreement with the epistemological premises: 80% (satisfied)
- 5) Satisfaction with the management and organization of training: 95% (very satisfied).

Emotional immersion and resilience behaviour implementation

For the evaluation of this task we considered the following indicators: Number of training and implementation agreements (QNT); Number of end beneficiaries of implementation (QNT); Implementation protocols by operators supervised by DSU (QLT) and Group discussions in the implementation workshops (QLT).

Evaluation Comments

a) **Number of training and implementation agreements (QNT)**

157 emails were sent to all services to establish a collaboration for both the training activity and the implementation activity, from July 2019 until November 2020.

b) **Implementation protocols by operators supervised by DSU and Group discussions in the implementation workshops**

Sixty Implementation protocols were written by operators supervised by DSU, one for each game session, then shared and discussed during the Group discussions in the implementation workshops.

These were very useful tools both for sharing the contents that emerged during the game experiences, and for organizing and managing times, spaces, vocabulary and interactions for the game implementation.

As far as time was concerned, the first reports allowed the team to reshape the time dedicated to the three phases of the game’s experiences, paying more attention to the final interview; this became the freer and more narrative explora-

tory phase in which it was possible to examine the contents of the questionnaires, experiences and emotions not previously described more in detail.

The spaces were designed both before the start of the game experiences and during them.

Neutral spaces were chosen and structured, and the same position of the two facilitators present at the experiences were revised in progress, based on the reactions and non-verbal behaviour of users. The group shared the idea of an “empty space” to create the image of the void that seemed to describe what they imagined in the mind of the author of violence: A void as absence of thought, as an inability to put into words what can inhabit his /her mind. In this sense, the group referred to the absence, to what it is not, rather than to what it is.

A shared reflection was constantly activated on the lexicon used during the implementation of the serious game, but also for the whole communicative dimensions:

First of all, the word experimentation was brought to the centre of discussions: what to keep and what not to keep of this concept? The group expressed, in fact, the desire to keep the meaning of the word experimentation as a “challenge” “a stake” and not as a “laboratory experience”. A stake of people, dimensions, emotions and experiences between the *hic et nunc* and the stories told.

Thinking about the words used “informed” the operators about their position in relation to the experience and users they would meet. This made it possible to transform the words and what was being acted during the interactions.

Finally, the reports also activated a meta-reflective thought on the relational dynamics shared during the game sessions, allowing the creation of a “generative” context and a “thought on”, as well as an exploration of the representations and experiences of the man put into the child’s shoes.

Therefore, reading and sharing of the protocols highlighted the dynamics activated during the interactions and allowed a comparison with the professionals not present in the experiences; they became a “third eye” capable of activating a precious meta-reflection on all the dynamics acted and shared during virtual reality experiences.

The Emotional Immersion and resilience behaviour implementation, (WP 4 task 4.8) was realized within the due time as foreseen in the project; indeed, it fulfilled the required criteria: Number of participants (60) and type of participants: men (fathers) involved in family conflicts and OLV users.

Participants were aged between 25 and 61 (Mean: 40.7; SD: 10.2); 44.8% married, 20.6 % cohabiting with children and 17.3 legally separated. They had

an average of 2 children each and the following educational qualification: Secondary school License (32%), High school Diploma (30%), University Degree (38%).

The recruitment procedure respected all the ethics requirements of the research (the research was approved by Ethic Committee of the Department of Humanities and all documents required were produced such as informed consent forms and information notes on data processing. All data obtained by the immersive reality experiences were appropriately stored according to the data management plan).

The research report is clear and usable and clearly defines the emerging needs in the context of application of the project.

Participants were recruited through a non-probabilistic *snowball sampling*.

The recruitment channels used were: the partners, the health services, family centers, services involved in taking charge of cases of domestic violence and / or witnessed violence.

From the evaluation questionnaires administered it emerged that, according to the users:

- The GAME is easily playable and with a very understandable storyboard. Information received before playing was also sufficient and clear.
- The SCENE is reported as very truthful; dialogues, texts and sounds were considered by users to be clear and comprehensive.

However, many participants suggested a more gradual transition to the highly conflictual phase. This aspect was linked by the ViDaCS team to the strong denial that almost all men showed with respect to the recognition of their own violent side.

- Regarding the TIME (duration of the scene), the users affirmed that it was quite right, neither too short nor too long.
- During the TRANSFERENCE FROM FATHER TO CHILD the most commonly emotions reported by the users were: deep anguish and a strong sense of impotence. Seeing the world from the child's point of view (from below) made them feel small and helpless.
- Concerning the possibility of using ViDaCS serious game as an EFFECTIVE TOOL FOR PERPETRATOR'S TREATMENT from the testimonies of the participants, what emerged was that:
 - The transformative power of the ViDaCS serious game was declared; participants affirmed that the experience could be a good tool to activate awareness in men and a motivation to change. Only a few participants

said they were sceptical, but not about the validity of the game, but about the perpetrator's ability to access a real change.

- They also said that the ViDaCS serious game also had training value, because it can help operators dealing with violence management to enter into the emotional world of the violence context.

During the game the users were not particularly anxious, but many agitated movements were noted in the memos by the observers (see: chapters 10, 11).

WP5 – Dissemination and Communication

General objective

The WP includes all the activities that guaranteed visibility to the project (e.g. an effective

Namely we presented our activities and scientific results through:

- a) **The regular activities during the whole project length of the ViDaCS website at <https://www.ViDaCS.eu/index.php/it/> and on the Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/ViDaCSEU/>**
- b) **Number of presentations at international congresses, and conferences (8), dissemination videos (2) and open access courses (3) as following:**
 - 1) Di Napoli I., Carnevale S., Arcidiacono C. (2020), *The Crystal Fortress: the world of children witnessing domestic violence in the words of health and welfare professionals* at the 8th International Conference on Community Psychology, Comenius University, Bratislava.
 - 2) Di Napoli I. (2020). Violent dad in child shoes, 8th ICCP Victoria University Melbourne.11-13 November 2020, Online platform
 - 3) Arcidiacono C. Carnevale S., Esposito C. (2020). Community psychology fighting gender violence, 8th ICCP Victoria University Melbourne.11-13 November 2020, Online platform
 - 4) Arcidiacono C., Keynote speaker for the Naples town administration webinar. March 2020 March 2020
 - 5) Arcidiacono C, Keynote Speaker for the Webinar: Contrasting gender violence: a community psychology perspective. ECPA 26 november 2020 <http://www.ecpa-online.com/webinar-gender-violence-community-psychology/>

- 6) Arcidiacono C. (in collaboration with Cinzia Albanesi and Nicholas Carr) 2020, statement for UN day fighting gender-based violence. Ecpa/efpa at <http://www.ecpa-online.com/>;
 - 7) Carnevale S., Di Napoli I., Procentese, F., Autiero M., *Social representation of perpetrators in Italian social workers* ECP 2019 MOSCOW, 2-5 July p.1526 Abstract book
 - 8) Arcidiacono C., Antonella Bozzaotra, Gabriella Ferrari Bravo, Elvira Reale, Ester Ricciardelli, Maria Vargaz Moniz (2019). *25th of November Psychologists of Europe join UN in fighting against gender violence. A best EFPA practice in an ecological perspective*. XVI European Congress of Psychology, 2-5 July Moscow Russia.
 - 9) Di Napoli I, Procentese F., PhD course on Mind Gender Languages, 15 December 2020 Interactive Workshop on ViDaCS Acknowledgments
 - 10) National Association of Psychologist- Equal opportunity Committee 25th of November Fighting against gender violence - Keynote intervention on ViDaCS Acknowledgments, CNOP Webinar 24th of November
 - 11) University Federico II, Lesson on gender violence reporting ViDaCS acquirements and approaches to gender violence at the Online teaching course on Gender Issues “Eguaglianza di genere e contrasto alle discriminazioni nelle università” by Antonella Liccardo <https://lms.federica.eu/course/view.php?id=293>
 - 12) Di Napoli I., (2020). Violence against women among migrant women: The ViDaCS Project: Lesson at the Project Yalla, Ministry of Interiors, University Federico II, November
 - 13) YOU tube video presenting ViDaCS project in English and Italian available at: https://www.dropbox.com/s/itrnotzskryrtu4/16.11.20_VI-DACS_Def_youtube_eng.mp4?dl=0
- c) **Scientific articles in international peer-reviewed journals (5):**
- Di Napoli, I.; Procentese, F.; Carnevale, S.; Esposito, C.; Arcidiacono, C. Ending intimate partner violence (IPV) and locating men at stake. An ecological approach. *Int. J. Environ. Res. Public Health* 2019, 16, 1652.
 - Autiero, M.; Procentese, F.; Carnevale, S.; Arcidiacono, C.; Di Napoli, I. Combatting Intimate Partner Violence: Representations of Social and Healthcare Personnel Working with Gender-Based Violence Interventions. *Int. J. Environ. Res. Public Health* 2020, 17, 5543.

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- Procentese, F.; Fasanelli, R.; Carnevale, S.; Esposito, C.; Pisapia, N.; Arcidiacono, C.; Di Napoli, I. Downside: The perpetrator of Violence in the Representations of Social and Health Professionals. *Int. J. Environ. Res. Public Health* 2020, 17, 7061.
- Di Napoli, I.; Carnevale, S.; Esposito, C.; Block, R.; Arcidiacono, C.; Procentese, F. “Kept in Check”: Representations and Feelings of Social and Health Professionals Facing Intimate Partner Violence (IPV). *Int. J. Environ. Res. Public Health* 2020, 17(21), 7910.
- Carnevale, S., Di Napoli, I., Esposito, C., Arcidiacono C. and Procentese, F., (2020). Children Witnessing Domestic Violence in the Voice of Health and Social Professionals Dealing with Contrasting Gender Violence *Int. J. Environ. Res. Public Health* 2020, 17, 4463; doi:10.3390/ijerph17124463 www.mdpi.com/journal/ijerph

d) **Number of dissemination articles by the consortium:** 5

e) **Number of participants to the presentation conference:** 150;

f) **Number of participants to the final conference:** 200

Participants in the presentation conference and in the final one expressed their appreciation by answering a small questionnaire distributed to those who asked for an attendance certificate.

Using a Cantrill scale measure (from 0 to 10) their appreciation was around 7,9 for all items concerning innovation, quality of the presentations, and organization. The maximum score was respectively 8.8 concerning the innovation of the videogame as a preventative tool and 8.2 concerning its potential application in contrasting gender-based violence.

g) **Dissemination kit**

The dissemination Kit are under distribution using the online support and the addresses of all associations and services interacting with the ViDaCS activities.

h) **Social media data**

1) *Number visits on website/YouTube channel*

4 subscribers to the YouTube channel

Video views:

- “ViDaCS serious game trailer”: 801 views (0 comments)

Violent dad in child shoes. A moment before

- “ViDaCS serious game”: 118 views (2 comments: “very nice”, “no, it sucks”)
- “Trailer serious game”: 74 views (0 comments)

2) *Number members/likes on Facebook group/page (QNT)*

- 1239 “like” to this page
- 1335 people follow this page

3) *Online comments on FB/website (QLT)*

Facebook chat (12 message requests)

The messages concern:

- requests for information from professionals for possible working collaborations;
- requests for small interviews to explain and disseminate the project by journalists or radio speakers;
- requests for information about the web and live events we have proposed;
- requests for information on the serious game and on the methods of experimentation (female users only);
- comments on the web initiatives we have proposed, in particular the one on “dad at stake” in which we asked fathers how they were experiencing the relationship with their children in times of pandemic.

Comments on the Facebook page

The comments concern:

- compliments for all the design work done;
- controversy by men because the game can only be experienced on fathers;
- invitations to events proposed by the Facebook page;
- information about the events proposed by the Facebook page;
- forced coexistence due to the pandemic and the strategies used in couples to live better in the family (following the OLV initiative “two hearts and a quarantine” which invited couples to share their ways of living together)
- appreciation of the ViDaCS initiative for Mother’s Day (May 8);
- the sharing by many fathers of their moods in response to the campaign proposed by ViDaCS on “dads at stake” (from March 19 onwards) (anxiety, fear, joy, satisfaction, lots of responsibility);
- online discussion on gender-based violence on Women’s Day (8 March 2020). (There were a lot of comments but I couldn’t quantify them because Facebook doesn’t give me the exact number)

Media dissemination

One of the steps of the online communication of the ViDaCS project was accomplished through the partnership with FanPage.it. This newspaper has been entrusted with the task of producing two branded articles and a branded social video-story. Those aimed to tell the story, life and goals of the project as directly as possible to the widest audience possible.

The first branded article, published on May 6, 2020 and entitled “A virtual game against domestic violence” reached 278,458 users, with 12,882 views and 5,307 social interactions (see table 1).



Table 1.

Violent dad in child shoes. A moment before

The second branded article, published on October 28, 2020 and entitled “From virtual reality, help to curb domestic violence” was distributed, according to a multi-channel strategy, on the various social and web platforms of Fanpage. In this way it was possible to reach 328,584 users, with a number of views equal to 4,539 and 5,537 interactions. This product was also distributed according to the multichannel logic mentioned above (see table 2).



The image shows a screenshot of a branded article report. At the top left is a red speech bubble icon. At the top right, it says 'Branded Article N. 2', 'Università degli studi Federico II - ViDaCS', and 'Report totale attività'. The article title is 'Dalla realtà virtuale un aiuto per arginare la violenza domestica'. Below the title, it shows the publication date '2 novembre 2020'. There are two columns: 'Distribuzione social' and 'Contenuto'. Under 'Distribuzione social', there are two items: 'Pagina Facebook Fanpage.it' with a link and 'Pagina Facebook Napoli Fanpage' with a link. Under 'Contenuto', there is one item: 'Fanpage.it' with a link. At the bottom left is another red speech bubble icon. At the bottom right, it says 'Branded Article N. 2', 'Università degli studi Federico II - ViDaCS', 'Report totale attività', and 'Facebook'. Below this is a table with four columns: 'SOCIAL INTERACTION', 'SOCIAL REACH', 'VIEWS', and 'AVERAGE READING TIME'. The values are 5,537, 328,584, 4,539, and 03:58 respectively.

| SOCIAL INTERACTION | SOCIAL REACH | VIEWS | AVERAGE READING TIME |
|--------------------|--------------|-------|----------------------|
| 5,537 | 328,584 | 4,539 | 03:58 |

Table 2.

14. Evaluation and final considerations

Finally, the branded social video-story published on October 29, 2020 and entitled “The fear of a child” reached 2,848,418 users, counting 1,379,591 total views and 48,620 social interactions (see table 3). Again, a multi-channel distribution was chosen, but even more in-depth than the branded articles. Thanks to the greater usability and shareability of the video product, it was possible to use not only social channels (FB and Instagram), but also YouTube and Youmedia, promoting a greater impact of the product for a longer duration.

These numbers, even if they will require a more in-depth analysis of conversion rates, once again demonstrate the great importance of social media in today’s projects. Thanks to these interactive platforms and to the web in general, it is possible to reach a number of users that was unthinkable before and to focus on a very large population regarding the theme of gender violence and not only.

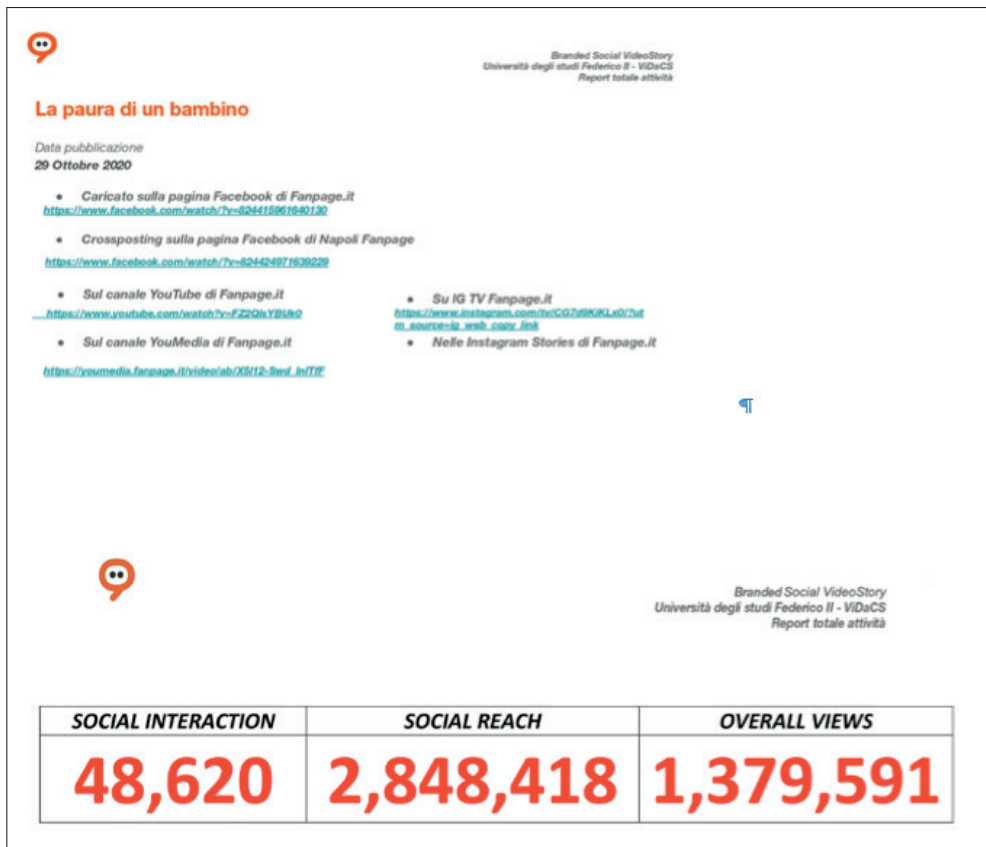


Table 3.

In conclusion, we reported such a detailed description of the activities to describe the multi-dimension activities undertaken during the project. Our evaluation took under consideration the activities, their results and the indication for further dissemination of the project and its sustainability.

The final consideration is that to overcome the gender- based violence there is still very much to do. In fact, to detect perpetrators as well as intimate partner violence we need a new cultural lens, devoid of male-dominated prejudices. In this vein ViDaCS project has undertaken a path to create cultural awareness about the need of emotional regulation in relationships.

I am pleased to conclude this volume reporting that the whole project was realized according to the aims and the procedure defined. Even if the Covid 19 lockdown has delayed some activities, at the final evaluation we can affirm that the activities are totally responding to the objective and goals of the project. The serious game in the voice of those who experimented it, results as a a very useful tool. Its therapeutic and preventative application are very reach and the collected data are giving evidence to the strengths of the project. The dissemination activities, especially using social media interactions as well as the final international conference created contacts at national and international level with scholars and professionals activating promising collaborations in improving the contrast of gender-based violence. The consortium will remain active for the next year and the experimentation of the ViDaCS serious game is still on for the next months. This book is the detailed description of an intensive participatory action research of professionals and scholars of different domains, as well as single individuals, all involved in fighting gender-based violence. We are confident that it will enrich the reflectivity and the experience of the readers.

Part 3

| CODE | YEAR | AUTHORS | TITLE | JOURNAL OR PUBLISHER | TOPIC | ABSTRACT | LINK |
|------|------|--|---|--|--|---|---|
| B_01 | 2018 | Brent Meehan, J. Fienrindbe Adamn Rees, Emmauel Johanna and Sherry Ryan C. | Antisocial Traits, Distress Tolerance, and Alcohol Problems as Predictors of Intimate Partner Violence in Men Averaged for Domestic Violence | Psychology of Violence © 2017 American Psychological Association 2018, Vol. 8, No. 1, 32-1-39 | Domestic Violence; Predictors | Objective: Men with antisocial personality disorder (ASPD) traits are at an increased risk for consuming alcohol and perpetrating intimate partner violence (IPV). However, previous research has neglected measurable mechanisms potentially responsible for the link between ASPD traits, alcohol problems, and IPV. The present study examined the mediating role of alcohol problems and distress tolerance in the relationship between ASPD traits and IPV. The present study is the first to examine the relationship between ASPD traits and IPV. Method: Using a cross-sectional sample of 331 men arrested for domestic violence and court-referred to BPRs, the present study used structural equation modeling to examine pathways from men's ASPD traits to IPV perpetration directly and indirectly through distress tolerance and alcohol problems. Result: Results supported a 2-chain partial mediational model. ASPD traits were related to psychological aggression perpetration directly and indirectly via distress tolerance and alcohol problems. A 2nd pathway emerged by which ASPD traits related to higher levels of alcohol problems, which related to psychological aggression perpetration. Controlling for psychological aggression perpetration, neither distress tolerance nor alcohol problems explained the relation between ASPD traits and physical assault perpetration. Conclusion: These results support and extend existing conceptual models of IPV perpetration. Implications: These results suggest intervention efforts for IPV should target both distress tolerance and alcohol problems. | https://doi.org/10.1037/psv0000098 |
| B_02 | 2018 | Da Vincenzo Marco, Trois Gina | Jusqu'à ce que la mort nous sépare. Silence et alienation dans les violences conjugales | Topique @L'Esprit du Temps, 2018/2 (n° 143), p. 111-124 | Domestic Violence | In this article, we will try to think about the phenomenon of the silence of women who have suffered domestic violence, thanks to a reading that takes into account the entanglement of the political and unconscious aspects that underpin the social bond. From a clinical illustration, we will explore the role of feelings of guilt, shame and terror that paralyze the psychic activity of women who have experienced violence. The concept of alienation will enable us to understand the files of thought and subject in situations of violence. | https://www.researchgate.net/publication/326272953_Jusqu'à_à_que_la_mort_nous_sépare_Silence_et_alienation_dans_les_violences_conjugales_Dans_Topique_2018_2_n_143 |
| B_03 | 2018 | Fellingstad Diane R, Wright Shannon, Lloyd Shirley, and Sebastian Vert A. | Sex Differences in Motivations and Effects in Dating Violence | Family Relations, Vol. 40, No. 1 (Jan., 1991), pp. 51-57 Published by: National Council on Family Relations | Domestic Violence; Motivation | Sex differences in motivations for and effects of dating violence are investigated using perceptions of both victims and perpetrators. A total of 485 college students (207 males and 288 females) completed a measure assessing motivation for and effects of dating violence, along with a social desirability measure, a status-escalation inventory, a justification of relationship violence measure, and the Conflict Tactics Scale. Sex differences were found in perceived motivations for and effects of dating violence. The present study suggests that the effects of dating violence may be more serious for women than for men. Implications for the specific findings are discussed. | https://about.elsevier.com/terms |
| B_04 | 2018 | Gerbrandt] Jacomina, Rosenfeld Barry, Nildam- Jones Alicia and Galeeta Michelle | Evaluating Risk Assessment Instruments for Intimate Partner Stalking and Intimate Partner Violence | Journal of Threat Assessment and Management, Vol. 5, No.2, pp. 102-118 | Domestic Violence; Risk Assessment | Research indicates that most stalking victims are harassed by a prior intimate partner and that this group of victims is at a higher risk for violence than other stalking victims. Furthermore, many researchers found a relationship between prior intimate partner stalking (IPSt) and intimate partner violence (IPV). The present study focused on identification of overlapping and unique risk factors among IPSt and IPV offenders. This was done by examining the accuracy and utility of abridged versions of the Brief Spousal Assault Form for the Evaluation of Risk (B-SAFER) and the Guidelines for Stalking Assessment and Management (SAM) in a sample of 158 low-risk offenders charged with crimes (arrested or continued) relating to IPV. Follow-up research from one to 8.5 years, outcome variables were reviewed for continued) stalking and violent reoffending. Receiver operating characteristic (ROC) curves indicated that both instruments had weak, nonsignificant predictive validity for both violent or stalking reoffending when considered in isolation. However, each instrument added significantly to the logistic regression model when predicting stalking reoffense when entered after the PCL:SV and relevant correlates, but not when entered after the PCL:SV and relevant correlates. The present study suggests that the B-SAFER instrument added to logistic regression models predicting violent reoffending. Analysis of individual items revealed that items measuring distress and violations of supervision (SAM) and violations of court orders (B-SAFER) were the most consistent predictors of renewed stalking but not violence. The findings of this study question the utility of these tools for predicting violent reoffending but provide qualified support for the prediction of stalking. | https://doi.org/10.1037/tham0000101 |

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| B_05 | 2016 | Kishanumar Ambha, Conroy Nicole and Nwarine Ludmirne | Correlates of Sex-Specific Violence among College Student Dating Violence Tendopics: A Latent Class Analysis Approach | Psychology of Violence © 2017 American Psychological Association 2018, Vol. 8, No. 2, 151-162 | Gender Violence | Objective: To use latent class analysis (LCA) techniques to identify the sex-specific structure of college student dating violence typologies and to examine the shared and sex-specific background-situational correlates of college student dating violence typologies. Method: Sample consisted of 3,344 North American college students (2,323 females and 1,021 males) between 18 and 25 years in heterosexual dating relationships. Data were drawn from the International Dating Violence Study. Results: Five college student dating violence typologies defined by both perpetration and victimization behaviors were indicated for both sexes: no dating violence, physical assault-psychological aggression-sexual coercion, physical assault-psychological aggression, psychological aggression, and psychological aggression. Psychological aggression perpetration and victimization behaviors were characteristic of all dating violence typologies (except the no dating violence typology). Antisocial personality symptoms, violence approval, criminal history, and length of relationship were generally characteristic of males and females in different college student dating violence typologies. Gender hostility to men and women and stressful conditions were characteristic of females in different college student dating violence typologies. Child hood violent socialization and sexual abuse history were not characteristic of males and females in different college student dating violence typologies. Conclusions: Results point to the complexity of college student dating violence behavior presentations with shared and sex-specific background situational correlates. Findings could inform the development of intervention programs designed to help young adult males and females in different dating violence typologies. | http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/vio0000116 |
| B_06 | 2018 | Missou Dave, Schweizer Robert D. and Dimaggio Giancarlo | Metacognition: A Potential Mechanism of Change in the Psychotherapy of Perpetrators of Domestic Violence | Journal of Psychiatry and Psychology online publication. | Domestic Violence, Mechanism of Change | The perpetration of domestic violence against individuals is responsible for untold pain, suffering, and premature mortality. Research into outcome effectiveness of perpetrator interventions show inconsistent and inconclusive results. Tailored treatments based on perpetrator typology has the potential to improve outcomes. Metacognition, referring to understanding self and others' mental states, points to an important dimension of perpetrator typology. Diminished metacognitive capacity is also related to high arousal levels and poor decision-making. This article presents a metacognitive approach to domestic violence treatment approaches and explores metacognition as a psychological factor necessitating greater attention when considering perpetration of domestic violence. The proposed theory is supported through the use of a case presentation based upon the theory proposed. Future research is recommended to include the impact of social roles and relationships in enhancing metacognitive capacity. | http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/a00000114 |
| B_07 | 2018 | Montalvo Javier Fernandez, Antegaga Alfonso and Gohl Jose J. Lopez | Treatment Effectiveness of Intensive Partner Violence Preparation Among Patients in a Drug Addiction Program | Psychology of Violence © 2017 American Psychological Association. Advance online publication. | Domestic Violence, Treatment | Objective: This article evaluates the treatment effectiveness of an integrated intervention compared with addiction treatment as usual in reducing intimate partner violence perpetration (IPV-P) among patients in a drug addiction intervention program. Method: A parallel, randomized, controlled trial was carried out with repeated measures of assessment (pretreatment, posttreatment, and 6-month follow-up). A sample of 227 consecutive patients was assessed, and 70 patients with IPV-P were selected to participate in the study. An integrated treatment group received 24 sessions of integrated treatment, and the control group received the treatment as usual without intervention for IPV-P. Treatment success was defined as the complete absence of IPV-P episodes, both physical and psychological. Results: At the follow-up, the 2 patients in the treatment group showed an IPV-P success rate (60.7%) that was significantly higher (2.385, p .05) than that of the patients in the control group (31.6%). Moreover, both groups achieved statistically significant improvements in associated variables. Conclusions: The presence of IPV-P should be assessed in drug addiction treatment programs. The combined treatment for addiction and IPV-P seems to be effective. | http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/vio0000184 |
| B_08 | 2017 (Volume) | Babini Valeria (a casa di) | Lasciatevi vivere. Voci sulla violenza contro le donne | Publisher: Pendragon | Domestic Violence | Description This volume is born with the intent to gather many points of view and many questions to try to understand and fight one of the most serious and painful wounds of our time: violence against women. It is a question and answer collection that must be looked at and that in these pages, far from simplifications and specializations, is analyzed by authoritative voices of the humanistic and scientific culture. Men and women whose interventions constitute, on the whole, a multidisciplinary reflection that aims to involve all of us in understanding this dramatic social problem and to encourage us to think. | https://www.bis.it/assets/le-voci-voce-sulla-violenza-140ca2af6e97288955989206 |
| B_09 | 2017 | Bazzoli Alessandra, Merelli Marta, Pizzonia Stefania, Roggerini Maria Grazia | I centri per uomini che agiscono violenza contro le donne in Italia | Lekove - studi e ricerche sociali | Domestic Violence, Intervention, Treatment | It is the second update on the Centers that in Italy are addressed to the men who mistreated the one presented in these pages, but in substance is the third mapping that we do starting in 2011. In fact follows two years later the first that, in October 2014, had in turn made the point about what was new after the publication of the initial survey carried out in 2011-2012, on the problem in the collective volume The dark side of men edited by Lekove- studies and social research. | http://www.ondem.it/le-voci-voce-sulla-violenza-140ca2af6e97288955989206 |

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| B_14 | 2017 | Frey Lisa L, Beeley Denise, Abbott Dea and Kendrick Elizabeth | Vicarious Resilience in Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence Advocates | Psychological Trauma: Theory, Research, Practice, and Policy 2016 American Psychological Association 2017, Vol. 9, No. 1, 44-51 | Domestic Violence | <p>Objective: There is little research related to sexual assault and domestic violence advocates' experiences with the bulk of the literature focused on stressors and systemic barriers that negatively impact efforts to assist survivors. However, advocates participating in these studies have also emphasized the positive impact they experience consequent to their work. This study explores the positive impact. Method: Vicarious resilience, personal trauma experiences, peer relational quality, and perceived organizational support in advocates (n=222) are examined. Also, overlap among the conceptual components of vicarious resilience is explored. Results: The first set of multiple regressions showed that personal trauma experiences and peer relational health predicted compassion satisfaction and vicarious posttraumatic growth, with organizational support predicting only compassion satisfaction. The second set of multiple regressions showed that (a) there was significant shared variance between vicarious posttraumatic growth and compassion satisfaction, (b) after accounting for vicarious posttraumatic growth, organizational support accounted for significant variance in compassion satisfaction, and (c) after accounting for compassion satisfaction, peer relational health accounted for significant variance in vicarious posttraumatic growth. Practice Implications: Resilience-based interventions for advocates in conceptualized advocates' personal growth related to their work through the lens of a multidimensional construct such as vicarious resilience. Organizational strategies promoting vicarious resilience (e.g., shared organizational power, training components) are offered, and the value to trauma-informed care of fostering advocates' vicarious resilience is discussed.</p> | <p>https://doi.org/10.1037/a0040159</p> |
| B_15 | 2017 | McConnell Nicola, Barnard Matt and Taylor Julie | Caring Dads Safer Children: Families' Perspectives on an Intervention for Maltreating Fathers | Psychology of Violence © 2017 American Psychological Association 2017, Vol. 7, No. 3, 406-416 | Domestic Violence, Fatherhood, Intervention | <p>Objective: The objective of the study was to evaluate whether Caring Dads Safer Children (CDSO), a program for domestically abusive fathers based on the Canadian Caring Dads model and derived by a United Kingdom based children's charity, improved outcomes for the fathers' families and reduced the risk of further exposure to domestic abuse. Method: The evaluation of CDSO used a mixed method design that included parents and children's reports on well-being and their parenting attitudes and behaviors. The sample included 100 fathers, 100 mothers, 100 children (aged 7-12), and 80 children. Children provided pre- and post-program reports about the behavior of fathers attending at 5 centers in the United Kingdom. Results: Potential risks to children appeared to reduce postprogram, as fathers and partners reported fewer incidents of domestic abuse; fathers also reported that their interactions with their children improved and their experience of parenting stress, an indicator for potential abuse, reduced. Improvement in some fathers' behavior appeared to contribute to increased feelings of safety and wellbeing within some families. Children and partners described positive changes in the fathers' behavior; however, some fathers continued to pose a risk. Case notes indicated that the program influenced fathers' decision making about children, either by providing evidence of the fathers' learning or highlighting continuing concerns. Conclusions: CDSO demonstrates promising evidence that the program can contribute to reducing risks to children and families.</p> | <p>https://doi.org/10.1037/1093-7799.0000105</p> |
| B_16 | 2017 | Meyer Silke | Motivating perpetrators of domestic and family violence to engage in behaviour change: The role of fatherhood | Child & Family Social Work, © 2017 John Wiley & Sons Ltd, Volume 22, Issue 1, February 2018, pp. 97-104 | Domestic Violence, Fatherhood, Motivation to change | <p>Policies and practices around domestic and family violence (DFV) increasingly focus on perpetra for accountability. With growing evidence that punitive responses alone have a limited deterrent effect on perpetrators, behaviour change programs play a significant role in creating accountability and improving safety for victims and children. Motivating perpetrators to engage in such programs has, however, not been a high research priority. This article explores the role of fatherhood in this regard, by investigating how experiencing a sense of responsibility for their children's well-being may be used to motivate them to undertake a change program. Relationships with their children on the other hand seem to hold more value. This article explores the role of fatherhood as a motivating factor for male perpetrators to engage in relevant behaviour change programs. Based on face-to-face interviews with 18 fathers in a court-mandated intervention program, findings alert to the need for education of abusive fathers in 3 key areas: the impact of DFV on children's well-being, the impact of DFV on the parent-child relationship, and the impact of DFV-related repercussions on the parent-child relationship.</p> <p>Fathers' desire to have a relationship with their children suggests fatherhood offers a viable angle to motivate their engagement in interventions that address gendered forms of DFV and subse- quently improve victims and children's safety.</p> | <p>DOI: 10.1111/cfs.12388</p> |
| B_17 | 2017 | Mazen Richard | A tale told by an idiot: the banality of violence? | La Camera Blu, N° 16 (2017) | Domestic Violence | <p>Generally we mean violence as a behavioural fact, the consequences of which psychological ones are incidental. Hence the idea that violence has to do with impulse is that is unreasonable. Here, against intuition, I want to consider the idea that psychological experience is at the heart of violence and that action and behavior do I am the corollary. From this summit, it is possible to consider the manifestations of violence not as an absence of thought, but rather as estrangement and radical cancellation of an emotional experience that threatens to overwhelm. With good reason the clinicians have a bias in keeping the violence out of the consultation cabinet. However, in considering violence a kind of bad failure, which hides and reveals, it becomes possible to understand its manifestations in the consultation room and consider how it is alive in the therapeutic relationship, moment after moment, in the transference and countertransference relationship, in opposition to take place "out of there". Which clinician writes to understand the clinical reasons, in opposition to a theological or philosophical vision, to consider the banality of violence from a clinical point of view, and in particular the elements of its specific clinical banality, in the normal and pathological. In paraphrasing the "banality of evil" by Hannah Arendt, me I would talk about the banality of violence.</p> | |

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| B_18 | 2017 | Park Shinun, Kim Sin-Hyang | Who Are the Victims and Perpetrators in Dating Violence? Sharing the Role of Victim and Perpetrator | Trauma, Violence and Abuse | Violence and roles | <p>Background: Dating violence (DV) is a serious problem with devastating consequences. Often, research on DV has focused on two distinct groups: victims and perpetrators. However, there is growing evidence for a victim-perpetrator overlap model, which posits that those involved in DV are more likely to take on both roles, rather than either role on its own. Purpose: We investigated the patterns of involvement in DV among those who identified themselves as victim 371 perpetrators in previous studies. Method: This was a cross-sectional study. A total of 371 individuals with experience of DV victimization or perpetration (202 variables related to victimization and 169 related to perpetration) were identified in 25 studies, which were found by systematically searching three databases: PubMed, Web of Science, and SCOPUS. Results: The majority of previous studies categorized study participants as either DV victims or perpetrators; however, those who identified themselves as either DV victims or DV perpetrators were more likely to assume the opposite role as well. Specifically, current DV perpetrators had a strong association with previous or concurrent victimization experiences, and current DV victims were similarly likely to have assumed the roles of both victim and perpetrator in their histories. Conclusion: Further efforts should be put into avoiding categorization of those involved in violence; rather, they should be regarded as a single group. Additionally, evidence-based interventions should be developed for this population to help break the cycle of violence.</p> | <p>https://doi.org/10.1177/15248390177290648</p> |
| B_19 | 2017 | Eulardo Vasquez | Domestic violence offending behaviors: A review of the literature examining childhood exposure, implicit theories, trait aggression and anger dimensions as predictors factors | ScienceDirect, Aggression and Violent Behavior 34 (2017) 154–165 | Domestic Violence, Motivation, Aggression and Violent Behavior | <p>The prevalence of domestic violence (DV) is an increasing public health concern globally. This paper outlines the current literature on what is known about DV proclivity, with particular attention to predictors for DV perpetration from childhood. We begin by reviewing key methodological issues that are inherent within DV literature and hinder the development of interventions and treatments for DV offenders. The main body of this article provides an overview of four main predictive components for DV perpetration: (1) developmental risk factors for DV offending (e.g. childhood exposure to DV), (2) specific implicit theories related to sexual, violent and DV offenders, (3) the role of anger/nurturance as a psychological process of the offender, and (4) the role of anger in increasing DV proclivity. Finally, the article concludes with the need for the development of a psychosocial/assessment to encompass these four key predictors of DV proclivity and future offending.</p> | <p>https://doi.org/10.1016/j.avb.2017.01.016</p> |
| B_20 | 2017 | Semelin, Joshua N., Torres Serrano, Lashae Adam D., Portnoy Galina A. and Murphy Christopher M. | Trauma Exposure, PTSD Symptoms, and Presenting Clinical Problems Among Male Perpetrators of Intimate Partner Violence | Psychology of Violence © 2016 American Psychological Association 2017, Vol. 7, No. 1, 91–100 | Domestic Violence, Trauma Assessment, Trauma | <p>Objective: This study explores trauma exposure, posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) symptoms and diagnosis, and PTSD symptom associations with key presenting problems in male intimate partner violence (IPV) perpetrators. The goal is to elucidate the implications of trauma and PTSD for understanding the presenting clinical problems of partner violent men. Method: Male IPV perpetrators (n = 220) at a community-agency correctional system completed a battery of self-report measures related to PTSD symptoms, anger, social problem-solving, mental health problems, and perpetration of physical assault, psychological aggression, utility, sexual coercion, and general (nonrelationship) violence. Results: Seventy-seven percent of participants reported past trauma exposure, 62% reported multiple trauma exposures, and 11% screened positive for a probable diagnosis of PTSD. PTSD symptom levels were significantly correlated with depression, alcohol and drug use, general violence, and all indicators of relationship maladjustment and abuse. In multivariate analyses, PTSD symptoms uniquely predicted relationship dysfunction and relationship abuse over and above the influence of alcohol problems, drug use, and depression, and all 3 PTSD symptom clusters had some unique associations with relationship abuse scales. Conclusion: Trauma exposure and PTSD symptoms should be routinely assessed in IPV perpetrator treatment. More research is needed to determine whether PTSD symptoms influence treatment response and to investigate trauma-informed interventions for this population.</p> | <p>https://doi.org/10.1037/psv0000041</p> |
| B_21 | 2017 | Vannar Schveig, Karin Bar and Frieselid Christine | Intimate Partner Homicide in Norway 1990–2012: Identifying Risk Factors Through Structured Risk Assessment Court Proceedings, and Interviews With Bereaved | Psychology of Violence © 2017 American Psychological Association 2017, Vol. 7, No. 3, 395–405 | Domestic Violence, Intimate Partner Homicide | <p>Objective: To explore possible risk factors for intimate partner homicide by combining structured risk assessment based on information available in court documents and individual risk assessment provided through interviews with the bereaved. Method: The aim of this study was to scrutinize intimate partner homicide (IPH) cases in Norway. The study included 10 IPH cases that received a final legal judgment from 1990 to 2012 (N = 177) were included. Quantitative data was extracted through structured investigation of the court documents. Risk factors were identified from three validated risk assessment instruments. Qualitative data were retrieved from interviews with a sample of bereaved (n = 12). Results: The IPH distribution was biased toward low socioeconomic status. Previous intimate partner violence (IPV) was identified in 7 out of 10 IPH incidents. Observed risk by the bereaved was infrequently communicated to health care, police, or support services. Individuals who did communicate risk found that professionals underestimated the reported risk and did not act on their warnings. Conclusions: The majority of IPHs did not occur without warning signs. To prevent IPH, structured risk assessments and knowledge of family and friends' perceptions of risk is essential.</p> | <p>https://doi.org/10.1037/psv0000100</p> |

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| B_22 | 2017 | Williams Kirk R and Stanfield Richard | Disentangling the Risk Assessment and Treatment of Offenders: Partner Violence and Moderating Effects | Law and Human Behavior © 2017 American Psychological Association 2017, Vol. 41, No. 4, 344-353 | Domestic Violence; Risk Assessment | <p>To manage intimate partner violence (IPV), the criminal justice system has turned to risk assessment instruments to predict if a perpetrator will reoffend. Empirically determining whether offenders assessed as high risk are those who recidivate is critical for establishing the predictive validity of IPV risk assessment instruments and for guiding the supervision of perpetrators. But by focusing solely on the relation between calculated risk scores and subsequent IPV/recidivism, previous studies of the predictive validity of risk assessment instruments omitted mediating factors intended to mitigate the risk of this behavioral recidivism. The purpose of this study was to examine the mediating effects of such factors and understand the effects of risk assessment on the relation between IPV/recidivism and risk assessment. Using the Violence Risk Assessment Research Instrument (DV/SIRI), 1,520 IPV/abused women (N = 2,520) perpetrators of IPV. Results revealed that time sentenced to jail and time sentenced to probation each significantly mediated the relation between DV/SIRI risk level and frequency of reoffending. The results also revealed that assessed risk moderated the relation between these mediating factors and IPV/recidivism, with reduced recidivism (negative estimated effects) for high-risk perpetrators but increased recidivism (positive estimate effects) for low-risk perpetrators. The implication is to assign interventions to the level of risk so that no harm is done.</p> | <p>https://doi.org/10.1037/lnh0000249</p> |
| B_23 | 2017 | Wolke, Chelenger, Collin, Fabus, Jennifer, Emyr, Iwan, Zigor, Heather, Brasfield Hope and Stuart Gregory L | Prevalence and Correlates of Court-Referenced Male Perpetrators of Intimate Partner Violence | Psychological Services © 2017 American Psychological Association 2015, Vol. 12, No. 1, 9-15 | Domestic Violence, Suicide | <p>Despite the documented association between intimate partner violence perpetration and suicidal ideation, few studies have examined the prevalence and correlates of suicidal ideation in men attending batterer intervention programs. This cross-sectional study examined the prevalence and correlates of suicidal ideation in 124 men seeking treatment for domestic violence in a batterer intervention program. Multiple linear regression indicated that depression and borderline personality disorder symptoms, but not intimate partner violence perpetration, victimization, or antisocial personality disorder symptoms, accounted for significant variance in suicidal ideation. These results suggest that symptoms of depression and borderline personality disorder observed in males attending batterer intervention programs should warrant thorough suicide risk assessment. Implications of the findings and limitations of the study are discussed.</p> | <p>http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/a0037338</p> |
| B_24 | 2017 | Zaring Amy, Barron Sarah and Berta Meg | Evaluation of Acceptance and Commitment Therapy for Domestic Violence Offenders | Psychology of Violence, © 2017 American Psychological Association Advance online publication | Domestic Violence; Therapy | <p>Objective: There are currently few empirically supported batterer intervention programs (BIPs) for perpetrators of domestic violence. In practice, a combination of psychoeducation on power and control dynamics (i.e., Duluth Model) and cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) techniques are widely used in BIPs but produce limited effects on violent recidivism. Thus, the purpose of this study was to examine the impact of an Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT)-based program (Achieving Change Through Values-Based Behavior [ACTV]; Lawrence, Langer Zaring, & O'Leary-Agleyo, 2014) on reducing new criminal charges 1 year postintervention compared with the traditional treatment (a combination of the Duluth Model and CBT). Method: Administrative data were collected from a sample of 100 men who had completed ACTV or Duluth/CBT from 2011 to 2013. Incidence and frequency of new criminal charges were examined during the intervention time period as well as 12 months postintervention time period, and analyses were completed for the entire intent-to-treat sample as well as treatment completers only. Results: Compared with Duluth/CBT participants, significantly fewer ACTV participants acquired any new charges, domestic assault charges, or violent charges. ACTV participants also acquired significantly fewer charges on average in the 1 year after treatment than Duluth/CBT participants. This pattern of results emerged for both treatment completers and noncompleters. ACTV had a significantly higher dropout rate. Conclusions: This investigation provides preliminary evidence for the feasibility and effectiveness of an ACT-based group for men who have been arrested for domestic assault.</p> | <p>http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/a0000097</p> |
| B_25 | 2016 | Aaron Sharon M., Baadhaauer Richard L | The Need for New Emphases on Batterers' Intervention Programs | Trauma, Violence and Abuse © 2018 by SAGE Publications, Vol. 18, Issue 4, 2017 | Intervention Programs | <p>Although Batterers' Intervention Programs (BIPs) remain a crucial part of victim safety and coordinated community responses, they have received less support and less attention by scholars than other parts of the domestic violence system. Research on BIPs also suggests that they have not been particularly effective at preventing recidivism, are prone to attrition, and increasingly lack the support and confidence of the courts. Nevertheless, BIPs remain one of the few viable alternatives to arrest and perpetrator treatment, and they are the only services that address the historical empirical needs for the batterer's side of domestic violence (BIP). Next steps for the field of batterer intervention. This begins with incorporating existing findings, consistency in implementation of best practice models, better diagnosis of personality characteristics of perpetrators and of types of violence that characterizes their relationships as well as better funding and support for research. In addition, differentiated treatment approaches tailored to the abuser and their particular types of violence may hold promise—and require increased support by the research and practice communities.</p> | <p>https://doi.org/10.1177/1524838015622440</p> |

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| B_26 | 2016 | Attkisson Kerstin, Stromwall Leif A., Sara Lundström | Blame Attributions in Multiple Perpetrator Rape Cases: The Impact of Symptom Consent, Force, and Beliefs | Journal of Interpersonal Violence, ©2016 by Sage Publications, July 2017, OnlineFirst | Violence/Treatment | <p>Victims of multiple perpetrator rape (MPR) have been found to be an especially vulnerable group. This study examined effects of MPR and perpetrators' use of force on attributions of victim and perpetrator blame. In two large experiments (total N = 2,928), Swedish community members read scenarios depicting an MPR and subsequently made several ratings of blame, rape myth acceptance (RMA), just world beliefs, sympathy for the victim, perception of consent, and trust in the legal system. Data were analyzed with a multinomial approach using both analyses of variance as well as exploratory analyses. In Experiment 1, more blame was attributed to a victim of MPR than a victim of a lone perpetrator rape (LPR). In Experiment 2, no effect of used force on levels of attributed blame, identified through experiments, hierarchical multiple regression analysis indicated that four components, identified through prior research, were associated with victim blame: (1) severity of victim harm, (2) victim consent, (3) perception of consent, and (4) RMA. The study stresses the importance of studying participants' beliefs and attitudes about rape and that victim blaming research needs both theory development and greater methodological awareness. Implications for victim support services are also discussed.</p> | <p>https://doi.org/10.1177/0886260517721172</p> |
| B_27 | 2016 | Babcock, Julia, Arment Nicholas, Cannon Claire, LaLue-Moon Kellee, Bartell Fred, Ferrara Regardt, Carletto, Larriann Peter, Calabrese, Larriann Peter, Gelles, Larriann Peter, Christopher, O'Leary, K, Daniel, Bannon Sarah, Sals Kellee Lee, Solano Ingrid | Domestic Violence Perpetrator Programs: A Proposal for Evidence-Based Standards in the United States | Partner Abuse, Partner Abuse, ©2018 American Psychological Association, Vol. 7, Issue 4, pp. 355-460. | Domestic Violence, Intervention, Treatment | <p>In the United States, the judicial system (response to violence between intimate partners, or intimate partner violence (IPV)), typically mandates that adjudicated perpetrators complete a batterer intervention program (BIP). The social science data has found that these programs, on the whole, are only minimally effective in reducing rates of IPV. The authors examined the social science literature on the characteristics of BIPs and BIPs' effects. The authors reviewed the literature on BIPs and BIPs' effects, including the effects of BIP clients across the United States and Canada. Results of this review indicate that the limitations of BIPs are due, in large part, to the limitations of current state standards regulating these programs and, furthermore, that these standards are not grounded in the body of empirical research evidence on best practices. The authors, all of whom have considerable expertise in the area of domestic violence perpetrator treatment, conducted an exhaustive investigation of the following key intervention areas: overall effectiveness of BIPs; length of treatment/length of group sessions; number of group participants and number of facilitators; group format and curriculum; assessment protocol and instruments; victim contact; modality of treatment; differential treatment, working with female perpetrators; working with perpetrators in racial and ethnic minority groups; working with lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) perpetrators; perpetrator treatment and practitioner-client relationships; and required practitioner education and training. Recommendations for evidence-based national BIP standards were made based on findings from this review.</p> | <p>DOI: 10.1037/1946-6950.7.4.355</p> |
| B_28 | 2016 | Choi Young Eun, Hyun Jin Hye | A Predictive Model of Domestic Violence in Multicultural Families Focusing on Perpetrator | Science Direct, Volume 10, Issue 3, September 2016, pp. 219-220 | Predictive Model of Domestic Violence, Asian Nursing Research | <p>Purpose: This study was conducted to assess predictor variables of husbands in multicultural families and examine the relationship among variables after setting up a hypothetical model including influencing factors, so as to provide a framework necessary for developing nursing interventions of domestic violence. Methods: The participants were 280 husbands in multicultural families in four cities in Korea. Data were analyzed using SPSS 22.0 and AMOS 20.0. Results: Self-control, social support, family of origin violence experience and stress on cultural adaptation directly affected to dysfunctional communication, and the explanatory power of the variables was 64.7%. Family of origin violence experience in domestic stress on cultural adaptation, and dysfunctional communication were directly related to domestic violence in multicultural families. The explanatory power of the variables was 62.2%. Mediation model showed that dysfunctional communication in other words, self-control and social support had complete mediation effects, and family of origin violence experience in domestic violence and stress on cultural adaptation had partial mediation effects. Conclusions: The variables explained in this study should be considered as predictive factors of domestic violence in multicultural families, and used to provide preventive nursing intervention. Our results can be taken into account for developing and implementing programs on alleviating dysfunctional communication in multicultural families in Korea.</p> | <p>http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.asnr.2016.04.004</p> |

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| | | | | <p>Domestic violence is a serious, widespread public, social and health problem that affects the lives of many women, children and men. There is also evidence to suggest it has one of the highest rates of recidivism of any crime. This volume provides a comprehensive overview of the current research on the perpetrators of domestic violence and what works, and what doesn't, in promoting positive change. Collecting together the most up-to-date evidence from the international literature and bringing psychological, sociological, gendered and socio-political theoretical perspectives to bear on the issue, the authors explore:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • what domestic violence is, why it happens and how it can be measured; • who the perpetrators of domestic violence are, including discussion of non-, stereotypical patterns such as male victims, female perpetrators, couples where the abuse is mutual, and couples with abusive relationships who want the abuse to end but the relationship to be sustained; • evidence-informed interventions, programmes and policies for working with perpetrators; • where robust evidence is lacking and more research needs to be undertaken. <p>Domestic violence is a significant problem for those involved and for those whose lives are affected by it, and wider society which must bear the costs and its devastating effects. This volume is an important reference for all those researching and working with the victims, survivors and perpetrators of domestic violence, including academics and students from fields such as social work, sociology, criminology, psychology, psychiatry and social policy.</p> | <p>https://www.routledge.com/Domestic-Violence-Perpetrators-Evidence-Informed-Interventions-Dealing-With-Abuse/book/9781138016282</p> | |
| <p>B_29 2016 (Volume)</p> | <p>Devereay, John and Lazenby, Anne</p> | <p>Domestic Violence Perpetrators</p> | <p>Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group</p> | <p>Domestic Violence</p> | <p>The present study investigated the predictive utility of self-reported domestic violence perpetrators' exposure to violence in their family of origin and patterns related to this exposure through the use of longitudinal analyses on a sample of 228 men on probation in Lake County, Illinois. Differences in hypoglycemia, reidivism frequency, and violent behavior survival patterns in men with a history of domestic violence perpetration and with varying levels of family of origin violence exposure were examined. Findings suggest that those who witnessed interparental violence (either alone, or in combination with experiencing violence) were most likely to be classified as Generally Violent Offenders (e.g., perpetrators who direct violence toward their family and others), compared to those who did not report experiencing or witnessing violence. In addition, results also indicate that men who experienced both witnessing interparental violence and receiving physical abuse in childhood were more likely to reconvict more frequently compared to those who did not report either form of exposure. Implications for (psycho) and recidivism were noted. Clinical and policy/practice implications are discussed.</p> | <p>http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.am.2016.04.004</p> |
| <p>B_30 2016</p> | <p>Fowler Drew R, Cantos Arthur L, b, Millen Steven A</p> | <p>Exposure to violence, hypoglycemia, and recidivism in a sample of domestic violence perpetrators</p> | <p>ScienceDirect, Child Abuse & Neglect 59 (2016) 66–77</p> | <p>Domestic Violence, Motivation, Child Abuse & Neglect</p> | <p>Quantitative and qualitative data were gathered from in-depth interviews with 17 Australian fathers who were participating in a men's behaviour change program. The study found that men's fathering varied and posed significant, yet different, risks to women, children, and young people. Variations were particularly evident when analysing narratives of masculinity with perceptions of control over the use of domestic violence. Other respondents had a history of child abuse, and were distressed with the substance issue of men's domestic violence, and its impact on all aspects of family life, rather than current practices which frequently focus on women and their mothering practices.</p> | <p>http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.chab.2015.10.077</p> |
| <p>B_31 2016</p> | <p>Howard-Belle Susan</p> | <p>The Diverse Fathering Practices of Men Who Perpetrate Domestic Violence</p> | <p>Australian Social Work, 2016, Vol. 59, No. 3, 323-337</p> | <p>Domestic Violence and Fatherhood</p> | <p>This chapter commences with a brief overview of the development of behavioural change programmes for perpetrators of domestic violence and abuse (DVA) in the UK. Sarah Hilder and Caroline Freeman highlight a number of academic discourses, which have been utilised to examine the commission of DVA, with more sophisticated understandings developing over time of the diverse characteristics of DVA. The authors then discuss the implications of this research for practice, which includes the need to remain problematised, although the research (Kilby, L., & Westmarland, N. (2015) Domestic Violence Perpetrator Programmes: Steps towards change: Project Marazal final report, London and Durham, NC: London Metropolitan University and Durham University) study provided opportunity for broadening ideas on the victim-centred metrics that may be applied. The authors conclude by drawing upon desistance frameworks to argue the potential of combining programme interventions with a more holistic understanding of what may lead to an individual cessation from DVA.</p> | <p>http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/03124707.2015.1057748</p> |
| <p>B_32 2016</p> | <p>Hilder, Sarah and Freeman Caroline</p> | <p>Working with Perpetrators of Domestic Violence and Abuse: The Potential for Change</p> | <p>© The Editors (If the Author(s) of the Article(s) is/are S. Hilder, V. Bealman (eds.), Domestic Violence</p> | <p>Domestic Violence, Motivation for change</p> | <p>DOI 10.1057/978-1-137-52452-2_13</p> | |

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| B_33 | 2016 | Gray, Rebecca, Broady, Timothy, Geoffrey, Irene, Terence, Lewis, Jackson, Tyson, O'Neill Brian | [I'm Working Towards Getting Back Together': Client Accounts of Motivation Related to Relationship Status in Men's Behaviour Change Programmes in New South Wales, Australia | Child Abuse Review Vol. 23, pp. 17–182 (2016) | Domestic Violence, Programs, Motivation | <p>Research in Australia has examined factors associated with fidelity in order to more accurately investigate points of intervention. Factors include parental separation/divorce, depression in the perpetrator and domestic violence. Therefore, services that facilitate men's behaviour change programmes provide one such point of intervention. Relationships Australia NSW offers 'Taking Responsibility', an 18-week programme that addresses men's use of violence and abuse in their intimate relationships, through group work and individual support. Fundamental to this programme is the whole family's safety, which is managed through initial screening, ongoing contact and access to additional therapeutic services. Programme evaluation has revealed that men's change factors are affected by varying levels of motivation. This study examines how men's motivation affects their motivation, which in turn has the potential to affect their treatment in the programme. This relates to both increased and diminished motivation. Partners and former partners, however, expressed ambivalence towards their continuing relationships. Given the risk factors for fidelity associated with domestic violence and separation, these interviews contribute to what is known about men's motivation to change violent and abusive behaviours, and in turn the clinical objectives for professionals working on these programmes</p> | DOI: 10.1002/car.2318 |
| B_34 | 2016 | Kane F, Allon A, & Bornstein Robert F. | Beyond passivity: Dependency as a risk factor for intimate partner violence. | Personality and Mental Health, 10, pp. 12–21. | Domestic Violence and Psychopathology | <p>Intrapersonal dependency in male perpetrators of intimate partner violence (IPV) is an understudied phenomenon but one that has noteworthy clinical implications. The present investigation used meta-analytic techniques to quantify the dependency-IPV link in all extant studies examining this relationship (n of studies = 17). Studies were gathered via an extensive literature search using relevant dependency/IPV search terms in the PsycInfo, Medline and Google Scholar databases. Results revealed a small but statistically significant relationship between dependency and perpetration of IPV in men ($r = 0.150$, Combined $Z = 4.25$, $p < 0.0001$), with the magnitude of the dependency-IPV link becoming stronger ($r = 0.265$, Combined $Z = 6.00$, $p < 0.0001$) when studies using measures of dependent personality disorder symptoms were omitted. Other moderators of the dependency-IPV effect size included IPV measures, type of sample and perpetrator age. These findings have important implications for the development of interventions that target the underlying dependency of men responsible for IPV, and how to identify and treat male perpetrators of domestic violence. Copyright © 2015 John Wiley & Sons, Ltd.</p> | <p>https://doi.org/10.1002/perm.1322</p> |
| B_35 | 2016 | Kaakinen Catherine, Powers Rachael A, & Meyer-Slike | Estimating Canadian childhood exposure to violence and other risky parental behaviors | Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry, 57, Issue 2, 3 | Domestic Violence, Childhood | <p>Using victimization data, this study provides national estimates of childhood exposure to intimate partner violence (IPV) and other risky parental behaviors. According to respondent reports, 13% of these families are characterized by emotional abuse and 5% by physical violence. This equates to over 765,000 Canadian children potentially exposed to domestic abuse that includes emotional abuse and over 294,000 children exposed to physical violence. Our research further identifies that children residing in family households with IPV are more likely to be exposed to IPV than children in other household types. We also found that 10% of these children have a parent using medications for sleep, pain down, for depression, or having a parent that engages in binge drinking. These findings point to the importance of interventions addressing a multitude of risk factors present in families affected by IPV to minimize the adverse impacts on children.</p> | <p>https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1469-7610.2015.024581</p> |
| B_36 | 2016 | Kelly, Liz, Westminster Nicole | Naming and defining domestic violence: lessons from research with violent men | Feminist Review, 112 (115–127) © 2016, Feminist Review, 0141-7789/16 www.feminist-review.com | Domestic Violence | <p>In this paper we draw on data from in-depth interviews with men who have used violence and abuse within intimate partner relationships to provide a new lens through which to view the conceptual debates on naming, defining and understanding domestic violence, as well as the policy and practice implications that flow from them. The article takes an ethical, embodied and embodied approach to the research and analysis, and the ways that the use of specific words and phrases in research and practice can have implications for the ways that we understand and respond to domestic violence perpetrators. We revisit Hearn's 1998 work 'The Violence of Men, connecting it to Stark's later concept of coercive control, in order to develop and extend understandings of violence through analysis of the words of those who use it. We conclude by exploring the implications of these findings for recent legal reform in England and Wales and for policies on how we deal with perpetrators.</p> | <p>https://doi.org/10.1057/11272015.52</p> |
| B_37 | 2016 | Labaree Michel, Bourassa Charial, Holden George W., Turonec Piere & Lefourneau Nicole | Intervening with fathers in the context of intimate partner violence: An analysis of ten programs and suggestions for a research agenda | Journal of Child Custody, Volume 13, 2016- Issue 1, pp. 1-29 | Domestic Violence, Fatherhood | <p>Clinical and scientific initiatives focused on fathers who exhibit violent and abusive behavior in the context of domestic violence have proliferated since 2000. The objective of this article is to review current intervention practices designed for violent fathers, to provide a critical analysis of objectives of programs intended for these fathers: (1) increasing accountability and empathy while decreasing violence; and (2) fostering positive fathering and father-child relationship. Ten programs targeting violent fathers using different intervention approaches (e.g. group intervention, family therapy) are identified and described. Finally, we discuss challenges related to research (i.e., program evaluation) and practice (i.e., co-parenting) that researchers, facilitators, and service providers need to address in order to preserve the safety and well-being of children, mothers, and fathers.</p> | <p>https://doi.org/10.1080/15379418.2016.1127293</p> |

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| <p>B_38 2016</p> | <p>Uiley-Walker Sarah-Jane, Hester Marlene, Turner William</p> | <p>Evaluation of European Domestic Violence Perpetrator Programmes: Designing Models for Designing and Reporting Evaluations Related to Perpetrator Treatment Interventions</p> | <p>International Journal of Offender Therapy and Criminology. © 2018 by SAGE Publications. Vol 62, Issue 4, 2018</p> | <p>Treatment in Domestic Violence</p> | <p>This article is based on a review of 60 evaluations (published and unpublished) relating to European domestic violence perpetrator programmes, involving 7,212 programme participants across 12 countries. The purpose of the review, part of the 'IMPACT' Evaluation of European Perpetrator Programmes' project funded by the European Commission (Daphne III Programme), was to provide detailed knowledge about the range of European evaluation studies with particular emphasis on the design, methods, input, output, and outcome measures used in order to identify the possibilities and challenges of a multicountry, Europe-wide evaluation methodology that could be used to assess perpetrator programmes in the future. We provide a model to standardise the reporting of evaluation studies and to ensure attention is paid to what information is being collected at different time points so as to understand what and why the behaviour and attitudes of perpetrators might change throughout the course of the programme.</p> | <p>https://doi.org/10.1177/0886264118873853</p> |
| <p>B_39 2016</p> | <p>Lysona Alexandra</p> | <p>Victims but Also Perpetrators: Women's Experiences of Partner Violence</p> | <p>Women and Children as Victims and Offenders: Background, Renewation June 2016, pp. 505-537. © 2016 Springer Nature Switzerland</p> | <p>Domestic Violence</p> | <p>Both the United Nations and the World Health Organisation have made serious efforts to address violence against women as a public health and a human rights issue worldwide. Drawing on international scholarship primarily from Western industrialized countries, this chapter critically discusses perspectives on women's experiences of partner violence (PV) as both victims and perpetrators. It emphasizes that partner violence is a dynamic, complex, and multidirectional phenomenon. Researching it needs the examination of its interactional and situational aspects. Integrating attention to the violent dynamics of partner violence with elements of the 'violence against women' framework would allow global women researchers to recognize and give voice to diverse experiences of partner violence, help reveal its intrinsic, interactional nature, and, as a result, promote a transformational change for crime prevention at the interactional and domestic level.</p> | <p>https://link.springer.com/book/10.1007/978-3-319-03898-8</p> |
| <p>B_40 2016</p> | <p>McCormell Nicola & Taylor Julie</p> | <p>Evaluating Programmes for Violent Fathers: Challenges and Ethical Review</p> | <p>Child Abuse Review, Volume 25, Issue 3</p> | <p>Domestic Violence, Fatherhood, Programs</p> | <p>A range of challenges exist when evaluating programmes for violent men about domestic abuse. Delivered in five UK sites, the Caring Dads Safer Children programme is designed to enhance the parenting behaviour of violent men. At the end of the first delivery programme in each site, a review was undertaken at the request of the ethics committee to ensure that the evaluation was not raising further ethical issues, to check on the validity of the data and to assess the feasibility of a second evaluation. In-depth interviews were undertaken with practitioners delivering the service and analysed inductively. While some practitioners expressed concerns about the burden on service delivery and challenges to their relationship with families due to the use of standardised assessment and service delivery, demonstrated how robust evaluation procedures enhanced assessment and service delivery. Organisations need to be confident that the cumulative effects of any disadvantages posed by the use of standardised measures do not outweigh the benefits and plan for potential barriers and resistance to their implementation. Copyright © 2014 John Wiley & Sons, Ltd.</p> | <p>https://doi.org/10.1002/car.2342</p> |
| <p>B_41 2016</p> | <p>Pastorick Devon L., Yeshburg Julia A., Bell Rebecca K., Casey Alanah R. & Dickson Sophie R.</p> | <p>Intensive psychological treatment of high-risk violent offenders: Outcomes and pre- release mechanisms</p> | <p>Psychology, Crime & Justice, Volume 20, Number 3, 2018 © 2018 Springer Nature Switzerland. © 2018 Springer Nature Switzerland Vol 22, Issue 4, pp. 344-365</p> | <p>Domestic Violence, Treatment</p> | <p>Research on correlates of intervention programmes that reduce expected recidivism rates ('what works' literature, Risk-Need-Responsivity model) has been highly influential in criminal justice systems throughout much of the western world. But while this psychological research has been acquiring widespread recognition, a deeper understanding of how programmes work and of mechanisms for disturbance more generally, has been less well developed. This paper reports on a series of prison units that provide intensive psychological treatment to high-risk, persistently violent prisoners. Four outcomes were examined over the first 12 months following release on parole: parole violations, new convictions, new convictions for violent, and imprisonment sentences resulting from new convictions. Across these results, we conducted preliminary analyses of two potential pre-release mechanisms for surviving the first 12 months on parole without conviction: lower dynamic risk for violence, and greater release readiness. We found that dynamic violence risk fully accounted for differences between treatment completers and comparison prisoners in proportions reconvicted for violence. However, in all other cases, the proposed mechanisms did not significantly explain treatment-related differences. We close by considering possible explanations for these unexpected results, and (re)evaluating the importance to our field of more sophisticated treatment outcome research.</p> | <p>https://doi.org/10.1080/1098316X.2015.1109098</p> |

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| B_42 | 2016 | Russell Brenda, Keaus Shame W., Chapleau Kristine M., Oswald Debra | Perpetrators of Blame in Intimate Partner Violence: The Role of the Perpetrator's Ability to Arouse Fear of Injury in the Victim | Journal of Interpersonal Violence, May 2016, OnlineFirst | Violence and Perpetrators | <p>Men are more likely to be blamed more for intimate partner violence (IPV) than are women who commit the same offense. However, because men are typically stronger and perceived as more physically aggressive than women are, perpetrator sex is confounded with masculinity and the ability to arouse fear in victims. In a laboratory experiment, 100 men and 100 women (N = 630) read a scenario in which the perpetrator's sex (male/female) and gender identity (masculine/feminine) and the victim's sex (male/female) were manipulated and rated how much they blamed the perpetrator and the perpetrator's ability to arouse fear of injury in the victim. Results showed that male perpetrators and the perpetrator's ability to arouse fear of injury in the victim (regardless of gender identity) who assaulted a female victim were attributed the most blame and were perceived as having the greatest ability to arouse victim fear. In contrast, feminine female perpetrators were attributed the least blame and perceived as arousing the least victim fear regardless of the victim's gender. Furthermore, controlling for the perpetrator's ability to arouse fear in the victim resulted in the elimination of the interaction effects for blame. This finding suggests that perpetrators' ability to arouse fear is an underlying factor in bystanders' attributions of blame.</p> | <p>https://doi.org/10.1177/0886260516654899</p> |
| B_43 | 2016 | Saini Rajni C., Charanick Nick, Lloyd Caleb D. | Dynamic risk and protective factors | Psychology, Crime & Law, Volume 22, Issue 1-2, 2016, pp. 151-170. | Psychology, Crime and Law | <p>This paper reviews the literature regarding the identification and measurement of risk factors considered imminent precipitants of subsequent criminal conduct (i.e. dynamic risk factors). This paper also examines these risk factors against the so-called protective factors that are presumed to mitigate risk. Commonly among recent dynamic risk and protective measures reflects general agreement regarding viable candidate variables. Empirical studies suggest such factors yield incremental predictive validity and should inform case-formulation understanding of criminal conduct and pathways to desistance, although this is not common practice. As well, definitional and measurement considerations are not well advanced and speak to the need for further conceptual clarity.</p> | <p>https://doi.org/10.1080/1068316X.2015.1112013</p> |
| B_44 | 2016 | Teverina Judy and Poynon Suzanne | Does a prison sentence affect future domestic violence reoffending? | Contemporary Issues in Crime and Justice Number 190 | Domestic Violence, Crime and Justice | <p>Aim: To examine whether short prison sentences (up to 12 months) exert a deterrent effect for domestic-related offending. Method: Propensity score matching was used to compare time to reoffence among 1,612 matched pairs of offenders, in which one of each pair received a prison sentence of 12 months or less and the other received a suspended sentence. Results: After the more than two year follow-up period, reoffending was not significantly different for people with suspended sentences and prison sentences. After 1 year, 20.3% of people given a suspended sentence and 20.3% of people given prison sentence had at least one new DV-related offence, and after 3 years the proportions were 54.2% and 32.3% respectively. These were not significantly different (HR 0.96, p=0.6). Conclusion: Short prison sentences (up to 12 months) are no more effective in deterring DV-related reoffending than suspended sentences</p> | <p>https://www.docswar.nsw.gov.au/Documents/CyB/Refero-12-2016-Domestic-prison-sentences-affect-blame-domestic-violence-reoffending-190.pdf</p> |
| B_45 | 2015 | Angie Elin E., Keady Brandy, Heez Maria | Blame Attributions of Victims and Perpetrators: Effects of Victim Gender, Perpetrator Gender, and Relationship | Journal of Interpersonal Violence, Vol. 33, Issue 1, pp. 94-116 | Violence and roles | <p>Although research has been conducted on rape myth acceptance (RMA) and other factors associated with attribution formation, researchers have not yet determined how the combination of such factors simultaneously affects levels of victim blame and perpetrator blame. The current investigation recruited 221 students from an all-women's college to examine differences in blame attributions across RMA, victim gender, and perpetrator gender, and the relationship between the two parties (i.e., stranger vs. acquaintance). Results suggested that RMA, victim gender, and perpetrator gender account for a significant amount of variance in blame attributions for both victims and perpetrators. RMA consistently, across levels of RMA, had increased substantially for male perpetrators as individuals endorsed higher levels of RMA. Perpetrator blame, however, was highest with male perpetrators when individuals endorsed low levels of RMA, and lowest for male perpetrators when individuals endorsed relatively higher levels of RMA. Findings demonstrate the continued influence of RMA on blame attributions for both victims and perpetrators, and the stigma faced by male victims. More research is needed on the differing attributions of male and female victims and perpetrators, as well as differing attributions based on type of relationship. Such research will lead to a better and more thorough understanding of sexual assault and rape.</p> | <p>https://doi.org/10.1177/08862605155599160</p> |

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| B_46 | 2015 | Chattano, Bennell, Lauren and Goodman Lisa A. | What Is Empowerment Anyway? A Model for Domestic Violence Prevention, Research, and Evaluation | Psychology of Violence © 2015 American Psychological Association 2015, Vol. 5, No. 1, 84-94 | Domestic Violence Assessment | <p>ALTHOUGH THE IDEA OF EMPowerMENT has at the heart of the anti-domestic violence movement, consensus on the defining characteristics of this construct have remained elusive. A clear and consistent definition of empowerment would promote the development of common metrics for research and evaluation, and guide the development of best practices. In this article, we describe specific challenges that have made it difficult to define and measure empowerment, and we propose a conceptual model of empowerment as a meaningful shift in the experience of power attained through interaction in the social world, and describes the process of building empowerment as an iterative one, in which a person takes action toward personally meaningful goals; draws on community supports, skill, knowledge, and self-efficacy to move toward those goals; and observes the extent to which those actions result in progress. By incorporating both process and outcome dimensions, bridging the psychological and contextual realms, and allowing for dynamic, variable, the model addresses challenges to the clear conceptualization and evaluation of</p> | <p>http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/a0038513Z</p> |
| B_47 | 2015 | Churruarri Alessandra, Ardolaceno Caterina, Susanna Helm | Treatment Programs for Perpetrators of Domestic Violence: European and International Approaches | New Male Studies: an International Journal, Vol. 4, Issue 3, 2015, pp. 572-2015 published by the INSTITUTE OF MALE HEALTH AND STUDIES | Treatment in Domestic Violence | <p>For far too long, domestic violence against women was regarded as only a female issue, and men were merely considered to be offenders to be blamed. The aim of this work, therefore, is to present a review of major treatment programs for perpetrators of domestic violence, with the purpose of understanding the perspective of these programs as well as some possible strategies for intervention. To identify the most effective programs, we conducted a search of the literature on this topic, focusing on personal, personal, target groups, first contact procedures, treatment methodologies and procedures, length of the program, program contents, special objectives, restrictions, evaluation, and follow-up. Finally, the achievements and strengths of the various programs were assessed.</p> | <p>http://newmalestudies.com/OL/index.php/mms/article/view/192</p> |
| B_48 | 2015 | Costa Beth M, Kestile Christine E, Ashlee Ariene Walker-Curtis Andrew Day Tounbourou John W, Miller Peter | Longitudinal predictors of domestic violence perpetration and victimization: A systematic review | Science Direct, Volume 24, September-October 2015, pp. 261-272 | Domestic Violence, Predictors, Aggression and Violent Behavior | <p>Domestic violence (DV) is a serious and complex social issue which is associated with significant costs to both those individuals who are directly affected and the wider community. Preventative approaches with vulnerable population groups represent an important component of any integrated response to DV and should be informed by an understanding of those factors that influence violence developmentally. This paper reports the findings of a systematic review of longitudinal studies that have prospectively investigated childhood and/or adolescent predictors of DV perpetration and/or victimization among adult men and women in intimate relationships. We identified 25 original studies that met the inclusion criteria, all of which investigated predictors of domestic physical abuse. Few studies prospectively examined psychological, sexual and verbal abuse. Child and adolescent predictors of DV included: peer risks, and abuse, family of origins risks, child and adolescent behavioral problems, adolescent peer risks, and parental DV. The findings of this review suggest that early predictors of DV are consistent predictors in the development of DV, perpetration and victimization and that prevention and early intervention approaches targeting these factors are likely to prove the most effective.</p> | <p>http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.jad.2015.06.001</p> |
| B_49 | 2015 | Curtin Olga Soares, Gonçalves Rui Advinhosa | Efficacy Assessment of an Intervention Program With Batterers | Psychosocial Intervention, Volume 4, Issue 4, pp. 455-482 | Assessment, Intervention, Domestic Violence | <p>This study examines the efficacy of an intervention program with male batterers. Twenty-six batterers who attended the intervention and 10 batterers who did not attend the intervention were compared using self-report measures. Batterers who attended the intervention showed significant reductions in abusive behaviors, in attitudes toward domestic violence, in risk of future violence, and in psychopathology, and an increase in self-esteem and problem solving. These changes were confirmed at the 6-month follow-up. The control group also revealed reductions in abusive behaviors, psychopathology, and risk of violence; however, the intervention group showed higher effect sizes. Comparing the groups at posttest, differences were found on abusive behaviors, attitudes, and risk of violence; at the follow-up, differences were found on abusive behaviors, attitudes, self-esteem, and problem solving; with intervention group showing more positive changes. These findings suggest that the intervention program has a therapeutic effect and reduces the risk of future violence.</p> | <p>https://doi.org/10.1177/1045488415582478</p> |

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| B.50 | 2015 | Deaveny Dr. John | Research Review: The Impact of Domestic Violence on Children | IRISH PROBATION JOURNAL, Volume 12, pp. 79-94. | Domestic Violence, Childhood | <p>Introduction</p> <p>Domestic violence is a significant problem for those whose life is affected by this issue, the social, health and criminal justice agencies that respond to it, and wider society that must bear the costs. Whilst domestic violence is not a new phenomenon, the past thirty years has seen increasing public awareness and a growing political consensus that something needs to be done, even if what should be done is less clear (Holt and Deaveny, 2015). Over time our understanding about the presentation, dynamics and impact of domestic violence has developed, resulting in the need to define what is that society needs to know about this phenomenon. This review defines the research evidence on the prevalence and impact of violence varying across research studies, regions and cultural settings (European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, 2014), in Northern Ireland domestic violence (also referred to as domestic abuse or intimate partner violence in the literature), has been defined as: Threatening, controlling, coercive behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, physical, verbal, sexual, financial or emotional) inflicted by a partner or former partner on anyone (Irish Probation Journal, 2015)</p> <p>1. John Deaveny, PhD, is a senior lecturer in social work in the School of Sociology, Social Policy and Social Work at Queen's University Belfast. Email: j.deaveny@qub.ac.uk; j.v.124 revised; j.v. 21/09/2015 15:10 Page 79 on anyone (irrespective of age, ethnicity, religion, gender or sexual orientation) by a current or former intimate partner or family member. (Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety and Department of Justice, 2013). In a British Crime Survey, it was reported that half of those who suffered domestic violence in the previous year were living with a child aged sixteen years or under. The prevalence of domestic violence is also high in children, with 10% of children having been exposed to domestic violence (UNICEF, 2006). Yet in spite of these stark statistics there has been, until recently, a systemic failure by public agencies to appreciate that the presence of domestic violence should be an indicator of the importance of assessing the needs of children to both support and protection when living in the same household as the victim. This article seeks to summarise the key messages from the research literature on the prevalence and impact of domestic violence on children, and to draw some conclusions about how professionals should respond to children's needs for safety and support.</p> | <p>https://orca.qub.ac.uk/volfiles/17289032/Research%20review%20of%20domestic%20violence%20on%20children.pdf</p> |
| B.51 | 2015 | Haggard Ulrika, Feil Ingrid, Danielsson Maria, Wernander Diana, Langstrom Niklas | Effectiveness of the IDAP Treatment Program for Male Perpetrators of Intimate Partner Violence: A Controlled Study of Criminal Recidivism | Journal of Interpersonal Violence, Vol. 32, Issue 7, pp. 1027-1043 | Treatment in Domestic Violence | <p>Despite substantial problems with intimate partner violence (IPV) worldwide, the empirical support remains weak for the effectiveness of recidivism-reducing interventions for IPV perpetrators. We conducted a controlled study of the effectiveness of the Integrated Domestic Abuse Program (IDAP), a manual-based group intervention for adult male IPV offenders. A consecutive series of 340 convicted male IPV offenders who began IDAP in the Swedish Prison and Probation Services 2004 to 2007 were compared with 452 contemporary, convicted male IPV offender controls. We obtained follow-up recidivism data from the National Crime Register and used Cox regression to model the effectiveness of IDAP versus regular treatment. Treated and control subjects were all followed until Dec 31, 2011, for an average of 41 months. The IDAP group had a 28% lower risk of recidivating in any violence versus 23% of controls ($n = 104$), corresponding figures for IPV specifically were 19% ($n = 65$) and 15% ($n = 84$), respectively. Intention-to-treat analyses adjusted for individual baseline risk and follow-up time suggested marginally and nonsignificantly lower recidivism rates in IDAP participants versus controls (hazard ratio [HR] = 0.92, 95% confidence interval [CI] = 0.69, 1.23) for any violence and HR = 0.92, 95% CI = [0.66, 1.28] for IPV, respectively). Hence, possible recidivism-reducing effects of IDAP in this cross-cultural validation were small and impossible to secure statistically. To remedy the frustrating lack of proven effective treatments for IPV offenders, better interventions should be developed and tested. Such efforts could benefit from improved knowledge about IPV-specific, causal risk factors and more powerful treatment combinations.</p> | <p>https://doi.org/10.1177/0886260515566537</p> |
| B.52 | 2015 | Hamberger L, Kevin, Larsen S, Soble E | Men's and Women's Experience of Intimate Partner Violence: A Review of Studies in Clinical Samples: Part 1 | Journal of Family Violence, Vol. 30, Issue 1, pp. 69-717, 2015 | Domestic Violence, Motivation | <p>The present paper reviews literature published between 2002 and 2013 regarding gender differences in the perpetration, motivation, and impact of intimate partner violence (IPV) in clinical samples in order to update and extend a previous review by Hamberger (2005). Results showed that although both women and men are active participants in acts of physical IPV, and emotional abuse, women's physical violence appears to be more in response to violence initiated against them. Although both men and women are active participants in acts of emotional abuse, men's violence against women appears to be more likely to use tactics that threaten life and inhibit partner autonomy. Analyses of patterns of violence and abuse suggests that women are more highly victimized, injured, and fearful than men in clinical samples. Research and clinical implications are discussed.</p> | <p>https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10896-015-2728-8</p> |

Violent dad in child shoes. A moment before

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| | <p>Hans Grant T. and Rice Marne E.</p> | <p>Progress in Violence Risk Assessment and Communication: Hypothesis versus Evidence</p> | <p>Behavioral Sciences & the Law, Vol. 33 Issue 1, pp.128-145, 2015</p> | <p>Domestic Violence Risk Assessment</p> | <p>We draw a distinction between hypothesis and evidence with respect to the assessment and communication of the risk of violent recidivism. We suggest that some authorities in the field have proposed quite valid and reasonable hypotheses with respect to several issues. Among these are the following: that accuracy will be improved by the adjustment or moderation of numerical scores based on clinical opinions about rare risk factors or other considerations pertaining to the applicability to the case at hand; that there is something fundamentally distinct about protective factors so that they are not merely the converse of risk factors, such that optimal accuracy cannot be achieved without consideration of such factors; that the use of risk factors and other clinical considerations in the assessment and communication of furtherance interventions aimed at such dynamic factors can be expected to cause reductions in violence risk. We suggest here that, while these are generally reasonable hypotheses, they have been inappropriately presented to practitioners as empirically supported facts, and that practitioners' assessment and communication about violence risk can beyond that supported by the available evidence as a result. We further suggest that this represents harm, especially in impeding scientific progress. Nothing here justifies stasis or simply surrendering to authoritarian custody with somatic treatment. Theoretically motivated and clearly articulated assessment and intervention should be provided for offenders, but in a man that moves the field more firmly from hypotheses to evidence.</p> | <p>DOI: 10.1002/bsl.2157</p> |
| <p>B_54 2015</p> | <p>Kelly Liz, Westmarland Nicole</p> | <p>Domestic Violence Perpetrator Programmes: Steps Towards Change, Project Miralab Final Report</p> | <p>Project Report, London Metropolitan University, London and Durham</p> | <p>Domestic Violence, Intervention</p> | <p>Introduction As we complete this study there is more conversation about what is to be done with perpetrators of domestic violence than for some time – a conversation which ricochets across police, social services, women's support services, multi-agency groups, policymakers, commissioners, media commentators and academics. At issue are two key questions: 1. Do domestic violence perpetrator programmes (DVPPs) actually work in reducing men's violence and abuse and increasing the freedom of women and children? 2. How do we hold more perpetrators to account, and ensure if DVPPs do work, their limited capacity means the inquiry of men do not access them and criminal justice interventions there are clearly not enough? This report will engage with the second. The starting point for Project Miralab was our contention that we had reached an impasse in both research and policy on perpetrator programmes. On the one hand are repeated calls for interventions that call perpetrators to account, whilst on the other a deep scepticism about both routes for so doing – perpetrator programmes and criminal justice sanctions. This scepticism results in such programmes being held to few more stringent levels of scrutiny and measures of success than criminal justice interventions, intensified in the era of outcomes and cost led public policy. This is the context in which this report is set</p> | <p>https://www.dur.ac.uk/resources/CrimePrevention/ahab/ahabreport.pdf</p> |
| <p>B_55 2015</p> | <p>McGinn Tony, Taylor Brian, Repentor McColligan Mary, Lagdon Susan</p> | <p>Survivor Perspectives on PV Perpetrator Interventions: A Systematic Narrative Review</p> | <p>Trauma, Violence and Abuse</p> | <p>Domestic Violence, Intervention, Treatment</p> | <p>More effective work with perpetrators of intimate partner violence (IPV) can be built upon a better understanding of how and why they change their behavior. This article presents a systematic narrative review of female IPV survivor perspectives on the changes brought about by IPV perpetrator programs. Fourteen databases and web search engines were searched and 16 articles reporting relevant qualitative findings were identified. Survivors often reported some level of positive change through their partner's participation in a program, but also expressed some level of dissatisfaction with the program and their partner's response. Feedback from the survivors' perspective, key barriers to perpetrator change include alcohol dependency, mental health challenges, relationship dysfunctions, and their family of origin. Mechanisms by which perpetrators are held to account, namely, survivor validation and judicial measures, were seen as central to the change process. Survivors perceived changes in perpetrator behavior (the use of conflict interruption techniques and new communication skills) and changes in perpetrators' belief systems (adopting new perspectives). Changes in belief systems were associated with more complete desistance from violence and would appear more difficult to effect. The review highlights the complexity in this field, which is discussed by the authors with reference to practice, policy, and research.</p> | <p>https://doi.org/10.1177/1524439815594338</p> |
| <p>B_56 2015</p> | <p>Vaughn, Michael G, Sales-Wright, Christopher P., DeLisi Matt & Larson Matthew</p> | <p>Deliberate self-harm and the nexus of violence, victimization and mental problems in the United States</p> | <p>ScienceDirect, Psychiatry Research</p> | <p>Domestic Violence and Psychopathology</p> | <p>Deliberate self-harm (DSH) is associated with diverse psychiatric diagnoses and broad psychopathology but less is known about its association with other forms of interpersonal violence and crime. Using the National Epidemiologic Survey on Alcohol and Related Conditions (NESARC), the current study examined linkages between not only DSH and mental health and substance abuse comorbidity, but also childhood abuse, lifetime victimization, and a variety of violent behaviors. We identified a prevalence of ranging substance abuse and severe psychiatric experiences. Contrary to other studies, we found that the link between violence and DSH was not as strong as previously reported. We found that DSH was associated with a variety of violent behaviors including robbery, intimate partner violence, forced sex, cruelty to animals, and use of a weapon was supported even after adjusting for an array of covariates. We extend previous research on DSH by examining its prevalence in one the largest community surveys ever conducted and show that DSH is associated with multiple forms of violent behavior toward others, including animals.</p> | <p>https://doi.org/10.1016/j.psychres.2014.11.041</p> |

Part 3

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| B_57 | 2015 | Wilson, Joshua M., Fauci Jerry, F. and Goodrum Lisa A. | Bringing Trauma-Informed Violence Programs A Qualitative Analysis of Current Approaches | American Journal of Orthopsychiatry © Orthopsychiatry Association 2015, Vol. 85, No. 6, 586-599 | Domestic Violence Programs | Three out of 10 women and 1 out of 10 men in the United States experience violence at the hands of an intimate partner, often with devastating results. In response, residential and community-based organizations have sprung up to support survivors. Over the last decade, many of these organizations have joined other human service systems in adopting trauma-informed care (TIC), an approach to working with survivors that responds directly to the effects of trauma. Although there have been various efforts to describe TIC in domestic violence (DV) programs, there is a need to further synthesize this discourse on trauma-informed approaches to better understand specific applications and practices for DV programs. This study aimed to address this gap. The authors of this study systematically identified key documents that describe trauma-informed approaches in DV services and then conducted a qualitative content analysis to identify core themes. Results yielded 6 principles: (Establishing emotional safety, Restoring choice and control, Facilitating connection, Supporting coping, Responding to identity and context, and Building strengths), each of which comprised a set of concrete practices. Despite the common themes articulated across descriptions of DV-specific trauma-informed practices (TIP), we also identified a number of unique practices commonly used across community and social contexts of violence and oppression, emphasizing the broader research and evaluation are discussed. | http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/ort0000038 |
| B_58 | 2015 | Committee of Minister | Chair Report 2015/5 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on the processing of personal data in the context of employment | Committee of Minister | Respect for human rights | Respect for human dignity, privacy and the protection of personal data should be safeguarded in the processing of personal data for employment purposes, notably to allow for the free development of the employee's personality as well as for possibilities of individual and social relationships in the workplace. | https://www.aeda.eu/system/files/cm-rep-2015-5-5-en.pdf |
| B_59 | 2015 | Wojnicka Katarzyna | Work with Perpetrators of Domestic Violence in Eastern European and Baltic countries | Gender review Ofiżyznisi, Wzskum, 45 2015, Issue 1, pp. 35- | Domestic Violence, Intervention, Treatment | This aim of the paper is to present and analyse the current state of perpetrator programmes in Eastern European and Baltic countries as this issue has barely been raised in the literature. It is connected to the fact that in described region such programmes are still relatively new phenomena and, compared to other European Union countries (mostly in Western and Northern Europe), the number of the programmes is still insufficient. Moreover, the number and character of the perpetrator programmes in Eastern European and Baltic countries is to a large extent determined by traditional gender relations, glorification of the traditional family and specific definitions of masculinities and femininities, as well as by the nature of the anti-violence legislation that exists in particular countries. The presented findings result from research on the specificity of work with perpetrators of domestic violence in the region. The analysis is based on the cases of Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Lithuania and Poland. It is to a large extent the results of research on the topic of the European Perpetrator Programmes (EPP) and the Dublin III project (IMPACT). Evaluation of European Perpetrator Programmes (2013-2014) and of analysts of national reports delivered by country experts for a project conducted by the Work with Perpetrators – European Network in 2013. | http://dx.doi.org/10.13106/12130028.2015.16.1.1665 |
| B_60 | 2014 | Day Andrew, Richardson Trevor, Bowen Erica, Bernard Jessica | Inmate partner violence in prisons: toward effective assessment and intervention | Science Direct, Vol. 19, Issue 10, September-October 2014, pp. 575-583 | Domestic Violence, Assessment | This paper reviews the significant challenges that are involved in the development of services for perpetrators of intimate partner violence who are in prison. It is suggested that difficulties in accurately identifying intimate partner violence, reliably assessing risk of re-offense, and in identifying offending behavior programs that meet the specific needs of prisoners have limited the development of services in this area. As a result it is argued that unique and complex victim related issues that arise during incarceration and post-release are not adequately recognized in current correctional assessment and case management systems. Four avenues for future research and service development in this area are identified, with a view to developing the role that correctional services have to play in preventing intimate partner violence. | http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2014.09.002 |
| B_61 | 2014 | European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights | FRA 2014 Violence against Women survey Main results | European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights | Violence | This FRA survey is the first of its kind on violence against women across the 28 Member States of the European Union (EU). It is based on interviews with 42,000 women across the EU, who were asked about their experiences of physical, sexual and psychological harassment, including incidents of intimate partner violence (domestic violence), violence against women on public transport, and the role played by new technologies in women's experiences of abuse. In addition, it asked about their experiences of violence in childhood. Based on the detailed findings, FRA suggests courses of action in different areas that are impacted by violence against women and go beyond the narrow confines of criminal law, ranging from employment and health to the medium of new technologies. | http://fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2014/violence-against-women-main-survey-main-results-report |
| B_62 | 2014 | Hester Marianne, Lily, Sarah-Jane | Domestic and Sexual Violence Perpetrator Programmes: A Review of the Istanbul Convention, A collection of Europe on the Council of Europe, Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence | Strasbourg, Council of Europe | Domestic Violence, Intervention, Treatment | Article 16 – Preventive intervention and treatment programmes Parties shall take the necessary legislative or other measures to set up or support programmes aimed at preventing further violence and changing violent behavioural patterns. 2. Parties shall take the necessary legislative or other measures to set up or support treatment programmes aimed at preventing perpetrators, in particular sex offenders, from re-offending. 3. In taking the measures referred to in paragraphs 1 and 2, Parties shall ensure that the safety of support for and the human rights of victims are of primary concern and that, where appropriate, these programmes are set up and implemented in close co-ordination with specialist support services for victims. | https://research-strasbourg.coe.int/en/sexual-violence-perpetrator-programmes-article-16-of-the-istanbul-convention/02720217465-4848-8594-9792945181819192920111111 |

Violent dad in child shoes. A moment before

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| B_63 | 2014 | Jlodis Marcus, Sjarzonksi Andrew, Patre Stephen Woodworth Michael | A Comparison of Domestic and Non-Domestic Homicides: Further Evidence for Distinct Dynamics and Heterogeneity of Domestic Homicide Perpetrators | Journal of Family Violence, April 2014, Vol. 29, Issue 3, pp. 299-313 | Domestic Violence Homicide Assessment | <p>To facilitate a deeper understanding of domestic homicide (DH), the correlational files of 37 male DH perpetrators were examined. Victim, perpetrator and offense characteristics were compared against those for 8 non-domestic homicide perpetrator files to elucidate distinct dynamics. Risk factors predicting DH (e.g., prior DV, mental health, substance abuse) were examined via the Psychopathy Checklist-Revised (Hare 2003). DHs exhibited distinctive dynamics, especially in terms of perpetrators' performance drives to inflict harm out of proprietary revenge. Most DHs did not occur "out the blue," as 82.9 % of cases showed elements of planning, and 86.5 % were identified as a homicide risk according to the revised DA Psychopathic DH and more likely to kill in a dispassionate, premeditated and gratuitously violent manner. The findings underscore the importance of coordinated community responses.</p> | DOI: 10.1007/s10886-014-9583-8 |
| B_64 | 2014 | Jlodis Marcus, Sjarzonksi Andrew, Patre Stephen Woodworth Michael | What Can be Done About High-Risk Perpetrators of Domestic Violence? | Journal of Family Violence, May 2014, Vol. 29, Issue 4, pp. 381-390 | Domestic Violence Assessment | <p>This article addresses practical implications for preventing lethal and nonlethal domestic violence (DV) that stem from recent research on male domestic homicide perpetrators. The role of risk assessment and batterer intervention programs is emphasized, including specific programming for treatment-resistant perpetrators. Adjunct interventions for related problems (e.g., anger, suicidal behaviour, substance abuse) are offered, and risk management tactics are summarized. The article highlights the significance of safety planning for victims and teaching youth skills for forming and maintaining healthy relationships. Possible solutions to the problem of DV perpetrators who would arrest also are highlighted (e.g., public awareness campaigns). Additionally, this article discusses the importance of continuing research on the effectiveness of community education on psychopathy and early identification for youth at risk for the following these traits. Some policy implications concerning DV and psychopathy also are covered. The article underscores the importance of coordinated community responses to DV.</p> | DOI: 10.1007/s10886-014-9587-2 |
| B_65 | 2014 | Kohlman Stephanie, Bag Amber, Balice Gay, Di Judd, Sarah, He, Patricia Thomas, Jessica, Filmer, Jessica, Mizzed Fereshteh, Moescker Hilary and Aquino Shayne | Contribution of Media to the Normalization and Population of Domestic Violence | Austin Journal of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences, Volume 1 Issue 4 - 2014 | Domestic Violence | <p>Domestic violence (DV) is becoming more prevalent in social media, as well as academic literature. Based on the astonishing prevalence rates of DV, there are good reasons to consider this issue an epidemic. This paper discusses the mechanisms through which DV is normalized and desensitized in the public's eye. Specifically, DV awareness campaigns, psychosocial interventions, legal definitions, religious traditions, and family/cultural influences are each ways in which people understand the issue of DV. However, there are mechanisms through which DV is normalized and condoned through the media. These media outlets unfortunately tend to address DV by portraying sexism, devaluation of women, and most importantly, violence against women. Furthermore, DV continues to be normalized through its comedic portrayal via news outlets, magazines, advertisements, and television shows. Although there is a growing body of research and literature focused on the media's comedic portrayal of domestic violence, it is quite limited. Suggest that using sexist humor, offensive and prejudicial humor, jokes promoting devaluation to victims of DV, and the normalization of DV allow society to view this type of violence as more acceptable. Behavioral scientists should work to reverse this trend by demonstrating how the media responsibly shapes peoples' perception of DV through a lighthearted and comical fashion.</p> | ISSN : 2381-9006 www.austinpublishinggroup.com |
| B_66 | 2014 | World Health Organization | World Health Statistics 2014 | World Health Organization | Health | <p>World Health Statistics 2014 contains WHO's annual compilation of health-related data for its 194 Member States, and includes a summary of the progress made towards achieving the health-related Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and associated targets. This year, it also includes highlight summaries on the ongoing commitment to end preventable maternal deaths, on the need to act now to combat rising levels of childhood obesity, on recent trends in both the expectancy and premature deaths, and on the crucial role of civil registration and vital statistics systems in national and global advancement.</p> | https://www.who.int/publications/world_health_statistics/2014 |
| B_67 (Volume) | 2013 | Ardulesono Caterina, Testoni Ines, Godefrini Angelika | Deprive and the Century – Changing Gender based Violence | Barbara Budrich Publishers | Gender Violence, Intervention | <p>Description The authors of this volume look into the origins of gender-based violence as well as ways to tackle this issue. They do this by first exploring the role of culture in the development of gender-based violence. The book is a part of the European project "Ternover", which is part of the European Ill-Programme (2007-2013) and whose goal is to realize the objectives defined by European policy aimed at preventing and fighting all forms of gender based violence.</p> | https://azido.columbia.edu/books/depriveandthe-century/ https://www.budrichpublishers.com/9783847401247 |

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| B.68 | 2013 | Arias Esther, Acea Ramon and Vilhinho Manuel | Batterer/Intervention programmes: A meta-analytic review of effectiveness | Psychosocial Intervention, Vol. 22, Issue 2, August 2013, pp. 153-160 | Domestic Violence; Intervention | <p>A meta-analysis of the state-of-the-art on the efficacy of batterer treatment programmes was conducted from the year 1975 to 2013. A total of 19 Spanish and English language research articles were retrieved yielding 49 effect sizes from a sample of 18,941 batterers. The results revealed that the recidivism rate as measured by couple reports (CR) was significantly higher than the rate based on official reports (OR), since the recidivism as measured by OR is underestimated. Overall, treatment showed a non significant positive weighted mean effect, $d = 0.41$. Nevertheless, the counterfactual effect size, $ES_{counterfactual} = 0.62$, suggested a null effect as probable as a treatment effect rate of 38%. The intervention type was not a significant moderator of recidivism, but the counterfactual effect sizes, $ES_{counterfactual} = 0.62$ and 0.94, revealed an efficacy rate of 38% and 42% based on ORs, for Duluth Model and behavioral-cognitive treatment, respectively. The long-term treatment interventions had a significantly positive medium effect size, $d = 0.43$. The implications of these findings for the design and assessment of future intervention programmes are discussed. (PsyINFO Database Record (c) 2018 APA, all rights reserved)</p> | <p>https://doi.org/10.5093/PI20131818</p> |
| B.69 | 2013 | Akenisi Thomas D., Koehler Johann A., Friedrich Lisele, & Humphreys David K. | Domestic Violence Perpetrator Programs in Europe, Part II: A Systematic Review of the State of Evidence | International Journal of Offender Therapy and Criminology, October 2013, Vol. 57, Issue 10, pp. 1206-25 | Domestic Violence; Intervention; Treatment | <p>In Part II of this article, we present the results of a systematic review of European evidence on the effectiveness of domestic violence perpetrator programs. After searching through 10,446 titles, we discovered only 12 studies that evaluated the effectiveness of a perpetrator program in some systematic manner. The studies applied treatment to a total of 1,386 domestic violence perpetrators, and the sample sizes ranged from 10 to 100. The studies used a variety of methodological approaches, and the methodological problems relating to the evaluation designs do not allow attribution of these findings to the programs. Overall, the methodological quality of the evaluations is insufficient to derive firm conclusions and estimate an effect size. Accordingly, one cannot claim that one programmatic approach is superior to another. Evaluation of domestic violence perpetrator treatment in Europe must be improved and programs should become more tailored to the characteristics of the participants.</p> | <p>https://doi.org/10.1177/0096224X12468110</p> |
| B.70 | 2013 | Borja Santiago Lopez del Horno Ybarra, Teresa Argonostoluda, Caspar Aya R. | Efficacy of different batterer modalities in men convicted of intimate partner violence | Anales de Psicología, Anales de Psicología, Vol. 29, Issue 1, pp. 18-28 | Domestic Violence; Intervention; Treatment | <p>The results obtained in a psychological intervention program for men convicted of intimate partner violence are presented in this study. The sample consists of 62 men distributed into three treatment modalities: unstructured group therapy (N = 15), structured group with pre and post intervention assessment (N = 16), and control group (N = 15). A quasi-experimental design with pre and post intervention assessment is used to measure the effect of each treatment modality. Although the results clearly do not conclude in the best of the three modalities, the results suggest that the differences are observed between individual and group therapy regarding participants' goal achievements. When comparing the two group formats, the structured therapy group shows more significant values of change in the administered questionnaires. In the individual therapy format, post-treatment measures show higher values in the following scores of the SCL-90-R (Interpersonal Sensitivity, Depression, Hostility, GSI, PSD and PST). We discuss the relevance of using self-report questionnaires in evaluating such programs</p> | <p>https://doi.org/10.6018/AnalesPsic.29.1.130631</p> |
| B.71 | 2013 | Dayen Koch, Fox Sheau and Morag Michal | Validation of Spouse Violence Risk Assessment Inventory for Police Purposes | Journal of Family Violence, November 2013, Vol. 28, Issue 8, pp. 811-821 | Domestic Violence; Risk Assessment | <p>The Spouse Violence Risk Assessment Inventory (SVRA-I) is a new scale developed by the Israeli police to measure the likelihood of male perpetrators repeating violent behavior toward their partners. This article describes the objectives of the inventory, its distinction in comparison to existing inventories, and the process of its development. Our preliminary study demonstrated a reasonable level of inter-rater reliability. Two subsequent studies examined the relationship between clinical assessments and SVRA-I scores, and additional studies tested the validity of the inventory against criteria of offender recidivism. The results of these studies suggest that the SVRA-I is a valid instrument of intimate partner violence (IPV). In the discussion, we review the limitations of devices aimed at predicting repeated IPV.</p> | <p>DOI: 10.1007/s10986-013-9947-4</p> |
| B.72 | 2013 | Lluis Marsico, Oliver Amparo, Galiana Laura, Gracia Enrique | Predicting success indicators of an intervention programme for convicted intimate-partner violence offenders: The Cornejo Programme | The European Journal of Applied Psychology, January 2013, Vol. 5, Issue 1, pp. 75-85 | Domestic Violence; Intervention | <p>Recent legal changes in Spain have led to an important increase in the number of men court-mandated to community-based partner violence offender intervention programmes. However, just a few of those interventions have been systematically examined. This study aims to predict success indicators of an intervention programme for convicted intimate-partner violence offenders. The sample consisted of 212 convicted intimate-partner violence offenders who participated in the Cornejo Programme. Three 'intervention gains' or 'target criteria' were established (increasing the perceived severity of violence, increasing the responsibility assumption for one's actions, and reducing the risk of recidivism). A structural equations model was tested (using data appropriately). Participants with major gain in recidivism risk were those who presented lower levels of alcohol consumption, shorter sentences, lower impulsivity, and a higher degree of the satisfaction. The largest gain in perceived severity was found in younger participants with lower impulsivity. The largest gain in responsibility assumption was found in younger higher participation in their community and higher self-esteem. And, finally, participants with the highest support in responsibility assumption were older participants, participants who presented higher intimate support, higher anxiety, higher sexism, lower anger control, higher depression, higher impulsivity and higher self-esteem.</p> | <p>http://easid.issid.es/doi/pdf/2e0d1f3c1_athx&doi=10.1002/9781118201300.ch004</p> |

Violent dad in child shoes. A moment before

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| B_73 | 2013 | Slover Smith Carla | Fathers for Change: A New Approach to Working with Fathers Who Perpetrate Intimate Partner Violence | J Am Acad Psychiatry Law. 2013 ; 41(1): 65-71. | Domestic Violence, Fatherhood | Legal and social service systems rarely acknowledge the status of men as fathers in the conceptualization and delivery of interventions for intimate partner violence (IPV). Large percentages of men who are arrested and mandated to intervention programs for IPV are fathers who continue to live with or have consistent contact with their young children despite aggression and substance use. There are currently no evidence-based treatments that address co-morbid substance abuse and domestic violence perpetration with emphasis on paternal parenting for fathers. This paper will describe the components of a new intervention, Fathers for Change, which addresses the co-morbidity of substance abuse, domestic violence, and poor parenting for fathers of young children. Fathers and mothers on the panel will provide a practical application of the intervention. Key words and implications of the intervention will be discussed to provide an understanding of the key ingredients and the gap. This intervention could fill in the field once tested in efficacy trials. | https://pubs.sagepub.com/home/psv/42/2/65 https://doi.org/10.1177/1043986213501103 |
| B_74 | 2013 | Subitana Malaret Montse, Andres-Puayo Antonio | Proactive retention and therapeutic adherence in programs for male perpetrators of intimate partner violence | Psychosocial intervention, August 2013, Vol. 22, Issue 2, Madrid | Domestic Violence, Motivation to treatment, Intervention | Adherence to treatment in intervention programs for male perpetrators of intimate partner violence is one of the most relevant factors of the effectiveness of prevention of intimate partner violence. Despite controversies arising from different studies on this subject, there is unanimity in highlighting the key role that participants' motivation plays in adherence to treatment and program completion. Techniques ensuring participants' motivation in therapeutic programs include proactive retention techniques. In this paper we analyze the effect of proactive retention techniques at the beginning and throughout the intervention. The results indicate that both proactive retention techniques and support influence adherence to treatment. | https://doi.org/10.5083/psv.1213a12 |
| B_75 | 2013 | Westmarland Nicole and Kelly Liz | Why Extending Measurements of 'Success' in Domestic Violence Perpetrator Programmes Matters for Social Work | British Journal of Social Work (2013), 43, 1092-1110 | Domestic Violence, Programs | Ever since domestic violence gained prominence on the social policy agenda, the focus of interventions has been on victims. A range of studies on social work/social welfare note the invisibility and/or lack of interventions aimed at domestic violence perpetrators. The exception has been perpetrator programmes (known in the USA as batterer intervention programmes, or BIPs), which increasingly receive referrals from social workers. However, there remains ongoing disagreement internationally about their effectiveness. Part of this disagreement stems from the failure to consider a broad range of potential outcomes, with most research focusing on overly narrow understanding of what 'success' means (as no subsequent police callbacks or incidents of physical violence). A total of seven, three interviews with men on programmes, their partners/partners, programme staff, and funders and commentators were conducted to explore the ways in which the focus of interventions and the ways in which success was to be redefined and connected not just to criminal justice, but also to health and social care agencies. | doi:10.1093/bjsw/bcs049 |
| B_76 | 2013 | World Health Organization | WHO-World Health Statistics 2013 | World Health Organization | Health | World Health Statistics 2013 contains WHO's annual compilation of health-related data for its 194 Member States, and includes a summary of the progress made towards achieving the health-related Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and associated targets. This year, it also includes highlight summaries on the topics of reducing the gaps between the world's most-advantaged and least-advantaged countries, and on current trends in official development assistance (ODA) for health. | https://www.who.int/publications/world_health_statistics/2013/en/ |
| B_77 | 2012 | Cameron Gary, Cooley Nick and Hoy Sandy | Perspectives on being a father from men involved with child welfare services | Child and Family Social Work 2014, 19, pp 14-23 | Welfare Service | Fathers can make positive contributions to their children's well-being. However, involving the literature and this research indicate that fathers are much less likely to be engaged with child welfare services than mothers. This paper reports the findings of the story research with 18 fathers involved with child welfare. It focuses on these men's perspectives of fatherhood and their relationships with their children. Also, reactions to these fatherhood stories from father and service provider focus groups are examined. The findings challenge common perceptions of these fathers and highlight similarities and differences past practices between fathers and service providers. Implications for engaging fathers in child welfare practice are discussed. | doi:10.1111/j.1365-2206.2012.00876.x |
| B_78 | 2012 | Duranzo Raquel Conchell, Murillo Marisol Lilia, Williams Aida Catala | Cambios psicocociales en un programa de intervencion con hombres penados por violencia contra la mujer | Revista de Psicologia, diciembre 2012, Vol. 21, No 2 | Domestic Violence, Intervention, Treatment | This paper presents the results obtained in relation to the evaluation of the efficacy of an intervention program for men convicted of violence against women, developed in an open environment in the province of Valencia (Context Program). The sample is composed of 109 men. A pre-experimental design was used with pre- and post-treatment measurement. According to the results obtained, significant changes take place at the attitudinal level, reducing the victims' guilt attitudes. On the other hand, there are changes related to psychological variables, with the participants experiencing a reduction in depressive symptomatology and, finally, at the social level, participation in the community increases. The implications of this study for future research are discussed. | DOI: 10.5540/719-0681.2012.28841 |

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| <p>B_79 2012 (Volume)</p> | <p>Iacoma Riccardo</p> | <p>Se quest' anno gli uomini Italia 2012. La strange date domne</p> | <p>Publisher: Charafelidre</p> | <p>Domestic Violence</p> | <p>Description: What you are about to read is the incredible story of a national tragedy, which orients grief and sprouts pain like a real war machine. A war that before ending up in the newspapers is born in the houses, inside the families, in the place that should be the safest and the most protected and instead suddenly becomes the most dangerous. Only in mid-2012 are more than 80 women killed in Italy by their comrades. 137 in 2011. One every three days. Riccardo Iacoma has crossed the country chasing the stories of the many ill-treatment and feminicides. Finally, the voice of those who suffer violence can listen to it, along with the words of the men, those who have been reported: "I was afraid of losing it, I gave them so strongly that it flew out of bed ...". What then is true Italy, where love is a choice and women are free, or that of the many prison houses we have entered? ... This is a story that concerns us closely, because it tells us how we are deep inside writes Iacoma. It is a phenomenon that can't be classified among borderline facts: there are dozens of cases of silent and everyday violence that are consumed in our homes. In the evening, as the children go to bed, the wife says to her husband: "I would say to them, 'Get in front of the TV right away.' This is the becomes a hell, if these are men."</p> | <p>https://www.ils.it/se-questi-sono-uomini-italiani-riccardo-iacoma/</p> |
| <p>B_80 2012</p> | <p>King Byn</p> | <p>Psychological Theories of Violence</p> | <p>Journal of Human Behavior in the Social Environment, June 2012, Vol. 22, Issue 5, pp. 553-571</p> | <p>Violence</p> | <p>Psychology, largely attributes the causes of aggression, especially extreme or chronic criminal violence, to individual and familial dysfunction or pathology. The pathways evidence are considered at an individual level and the processes of perpetration, their immediate consequences, and the broader social context are not fully considered. This literature review offers theoretical models for understanding violence, which can facilitate the integration of multiple psychological constructs from varying schools of thought. From that general overview, theories of violence were separated into two major categories: violence as a condition of human nature (including psychobiological and temperamental vulnerabilities and violence as an instigated) and violence as the consequence of a damaged psyche (including five interrelated processes: self-regulation; attachment and relationships; the role of shame; self-concept and self-esteem; and learning and cognitive theories).</p> | <p>https://doi.org/10.11907/0911599.2011.599742</p> |
| <p>B_81 2012</p> | <p>Langhinrichsen-Rochling Jeanette, McCullers Adriane, A. Maria Titany</p> | <p>Motivations for Men and Women's Intimate Partner Violence Perpetration: A Comprehensive Review</p> | <p>Partner Abuse, October 2012, Vol. 3, No. 4, pp. 429-468. Publisher: Springer Publishing Company</p> | <p>Domestic Violence, Motivation</p> | <p>The main purpose of this review article was to collect and summarize all available papers that reported empirical data related to men's and women's motivations for IPV. To facilitate direct gender comparisons, the motives reported in each contained study were coded by the current authors into seven broad categories: (a) individual characteristics (e.g., personality, mental health, and physical health), (b) communication difficulties, (c) retaliation, (d) jealousy, and (e) other. Across the 75 samples (located in 74 articles) that were reviewed and coded for this study, 24 contained samples of only women (32%), 6 samples consisted of only men (8%), and 45 samples used both women and men (62%). Power/control and self-defense were commonly measured motivations (75% and 61%, respectively). However, using violence as an expression of negative emotion (63%), communication difficulties (48%), retaliation (60%), or because of jealousy (49%) were also commonly assessed motives. In 62% of the samples, at least one other type of motive was also measured. Only 18 of the located study samples (24%) included data that allowed for a direct gender comparison of men's and women's reported motivations. Many of these studies did not subject their data to statistical analysis. Among those that did, very few gender-specific motives for perpetration emerged. These results should be viewed with caution, however, because many methodological and measurement challenges exist in this field. There was also considerable heterogeneity across papers making direct gender comparisons problematic.</p> | <p>https://www.lingpubsonline.com/doi/abs/10.1891/1548-3659.2012.00827.x</p> |
| <p>B_82 2012</p> | <p>Maxwell Nina, Scourfield Jonathan, Featherstone Brid, Holland Sally & Toman Richard</p> | <p>Engaging fathers in child welfare services: a narrative review of recent research evidence</p> | <p>Child & Family Social Work, Volume 17, Issue 2</p> | <p>Domestic Violence, Fatherhood</p> | <p>It is widely recognized as problematic that there are generally low levels of engagement with child welfare services from biological and social fathers. The result can be limited resources for children's care and potentially poor risk assessment and management. This paper reviews the published research from 2000 to 2010 about the barriers to and facilitators of better father engagement, as well as the very limited evidence on the effectiveness of work with nonresident fathers. There is relatively little known about what works in engaging men, but there are some promising indicators from family support and child protection practice contexts. These include early identification and early involvement of fathers; a proactive approach, including an insistence on men's involvement with services; and the use of practical activities, such as home visits, to build relationships and address practical barriers to engagement with cognitive-behavioural approaches. Although there is no direct evidence of the effectiveness of individual interventions in this context, its effectiveness in allied fields of practice would suggest that it may hold some promise for the initial engagement of fathers who pose a risk to children.</p> | <p>https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1365-2206.2012.00827.x</p> |

Violent dad in child shoes. A moment before

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| | | | <p>This thesis proposes a number of Implicit Theories (ITs) for male and female perpetrators of intimate partner violence (IPV) and, guided by these ITs, develops implicit measures to assess IPV offence supportive cognition indirectly. Chapter 1 systematically reviews the empirical IPV literature and finds varying levels of empirical support for six ITs in men and women, namely, "Opposite sex is dangerous", "Relationship entitlement", "General entitlement", "Normalisation of relationship violence", "Normalisation of violence", and "It's not my fault". Chapter 2 reports the development of seven implicit measures and their pilot testing. Chapter 3 explores the psychometric properties of these implicit measures and found them to be reasonably reliable and valid. Chapter 4 includes two studies which assessed a wide range of IPV offence supportive cognitions with both implicit and explicit measures in two UK samples: (a) partner violent and nonviolent university students, and (b) male bailiffers referred to treatment and community controls. In both studies the IPV groups demonstrated more explicit offence supportive cognition than the nonviolent groups but this was more prominent in the offender group. Only the offender group showed more offence supportive cognition than the control group at the implicit level. The implicit measures demonstrated very good validity, and the utility of these measures with this type of offenders was highlighted. Chapter 5 concludes this thesis and provides an overview and a general discussion of the main findings, limitations, practical implications, and future directions for research.</p> | <p>http://etheses.bham.ac.uk/4134/</p> |
| <p>B_83 2012</p> | <p>Pornai Chisaa</p> | <p>IMPLICIT THEORIES IN PERPETRATORS OF INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE AND ASSESSMENT OF PARTNER VIOLENCE OFFENCE SUPPORTIVE COGNITION THROUGH IMPLICIT MEASURES OF SOCIAL COGNITION</p> | <p>Ph.D. thesis, University of Birmingham</p> | <p>Domestic Violence, Assessment</p> |
| <p>B_84 2012</p> | <p>Stanley Nicky, Graham-Kevan Nicola, Bortnick Rachel</p> | <p>Fathers and Domestic Violence: Building Motivation for Change through Perpetrator Programmes</p> | <p>Chief Abuse Review Vol. 21, pp. 294-274 (2012). Published online in Wiley Online Library</p> | <p>Domestic Violence, Motivation for change, Programs</p> |
| <p>B_86 2011</p> | <p>Williams Kirk R</p> | <p>Family Violence Risk Assessment: A Predictive Cross-Validation Study of the Domestic Violence Screening Instrument-Revised (DVSIR)</p> | <p>Law and Human Behavior, Vol. 36, No. 2 (April 2012), pp. 120-133 Published by: Springer</p> | <p>Domestic Violence, Risk Assessment</p> |

The Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention) is a Council of Europe convention against violence against women and domestic violence, approved by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on 7 April 2011 and open for signature on 11 May 2011 in Istanbul (Turkey). The treaty aims to prevent violence, promote the protection of victims and prevent the impunity of perpetrators. It was signed by 32 countries and on 12 March 2012 Turkey became the first country to ratify the Convention, followed by the following countries in 2015: Albania, Poland, Montenegro, Moldova, Italy, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Austria, Serbia, Andorra, Denmark, France, Finland, Spain, Sweden. (Source: Wikipedia)

This research was a cross-validation study of the Domestic Violence Screening Instrument-Revised (DVSIR), using a diverse, statewide sample of 3,599 family violence perpetrators in Connecticut assessed in February and March of 2007. Retained retested data collected during an 18-month period post assessment. Three issues were central, which have been ignored in previous research on family violence assessment: (1) the predictive validity of the DVSIR for future violence (2) the effects of whether perpetrator characteristics and types of family and household relationships (beyond just heterosexual intimate partners) moderate the empirical relations between the DVSIR and the behavioral recidivism measures; and (3) determining whether structured clinical judgment about the imminent risk of future violence to the victim or to others corresponds with recidivism predicted by the DVSIR total numeric risk scores. The empirical findings showed that the DVSIR had significant predictive accuracy across all five measures of recidivism. With one exception, these relations did not vary by gender, age, or ethnicity, and again with one exception, these relations were found that types of family or household relationships moderated those empirical relations. In short, the evidence suggested that the DVSIR was a robust risk assessment instrument, having applicability across different types of perpetrators and different types of family and household relationships. Finally, the empirical findings showed that structured clinical judgment about imminent risk-to-victim and risk-to-others corresponded with the prediction of recidivism by the DVSIR total numeric risk scores, but the effects of those scores were significantly stronger than the predicted risk-to-victim or the predicted risk-to-

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DOI: 10.1037/h0093977

http://www.gazzettaufficiale.it/@@id/serie_generale:articolo?caid=imp134057891000001011100286d9a2013_07_02&at=cl&ip=pubblicazione&serie=2013_07_02&id=cl&id=edit&id=conferma=13405789&id=num=1&id=inscrive=53

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| B_87 | 2011 | Humphreys Caitly and Astler Deborah | History repeating: child protection responses to domestic violence | Child and Family Social Work 2011, 16, pp 464-473 | Domestic Violence, Child Protection | Statutory child protection has a long and contested history in domestic violence intervention where children are involved. The inadequacy of the response has been raised by researchers, women and their advocates for more than 20 years. In fact, Linda Gordon, in her classic analysis of the files of charitable agencies from 1880 to 1980, showed that violent men were ignored, women whose own lives were in danger were judged as inadequate when they failed to protect their children and 'child rescue' was frequently seen as the solution to protecting vulnerable children. The same issues continue to be raised today. The repetitive pattern points to the structural nature of the problem which goes beyond the intentions and practice of individual workers. A policy response and a cultural change is needed, which tackles not only the aged out, but also some of the newer permutations of domestic violence. This paper will explore the implications of the repetitive pattern and then draw from international research and projects which are grappling with positive changes to child protection intervention in this area. | doi:10.1111/j.1385-2006.2011.00761.x |
| B_88 | 2011 | Johnson Michael P | Gender and types of intimate partner violence: A response to a request for a literature review | Science Direct, July-August 2011, Vol. 16, Issue 4, pp. 289-296 | Gender Violence Aggression and Violent Behavior | This article presents a feminist perspective on domestic violence that is rooted in an explanation of the differences among three major types of intimate partner violence (Johnson, 2008). Theory and research implications are then reviewed to inform research on feminist scholarship and policy regarding intimate partner violence. | doi:10.1016/j.avb.2011.04.006 |
| B_89 | 2011 | Sheehan Kathleen A, Tinker Sumaya, Donna E, Stewart | Turning Points for Perpetrators of Intimate Partner Violence | Trauma, Violence, & Abuse, January 2012, Vol. 13, Issue 1, pp. 30-40 | Domestic Violence | Understanding why and how perpetrators of intimate partner violence (IPV) change their behavior is an important goal for both policy development and clinical practice. In this study, the authors investigated the concept of "turning points" for perpetrators of IPV by conducting a systematic review of qualitative studies that investigated the factors, situations, and attitudes that facilitated perpetrators' decisions to change their abusive behavior. Two literature databases were searched and six studies were found that met the inclusion criteria for the systematic review. Most included participants from batterer intervention programs (BIPs). The data indicate that community, group, and individual processes all contribute to perpetrators' turning points and behavioral change. These include identifying key incidents that precede change, taking responsibility for past behavior, learning new skills, and developing relationships within and outside of the BIP. Using a case study approach, the authors explore the process of change in one perpetrator of IPV, including the role of the leader and the extent of change. The review of studies and the case study, combining quantitative and qualitative approaches, will be helpful in the modification of existing BIPs and the development of new interventions to reduce IPV. | https://doi.org/10.1177/1524838011426018 |
| B_90 | 2011 | Stanley Nicky | Children Experiencing Domestic Violence: A Research Review. | Research in practice | Domestic Violence, Childhood | Responding effectively to children's experience of domestic violence is a major challenge for those planning and delivering children's social care services. This is in part because children's experience of domestic violence is so widespread. Chapter 2 of this review presents the latest UK prevalence figures, which show that nearly a quarter of young adults have been exposed to at least one incident of domestic violence in their lifetime (Radford et al forthcoming 2011). Subsequent to the Adoption and Children Act 2002, which defined exposure to domestic violence as a form of significant harm, children's social care departments in England and Wales have experienced a high volume of police notifications of domestic violence incidents in families with children, which has been described as overwhelming for some areas (Social Services Inspectorate of Wales 2004; Olsed 2008; Laming 2009). | http://www.merseyside.nhs.uk/infocentre/infocentre.asp?documentid=5181&docid=520&emenu=explore&v=violence-dc-general/Children-Experiencing-Domestic-Violence-dc-Research-Review.pdf |
| B_91 | 2010 | Westerland, N. and Kelly, L. and Charde-Mills, J. | Domestic violence perpetrator programmes: what counts as success? | London Metropolitan University and Durham University, London and Durham | Domestic Violence, Intervention | Whether domestic violence perpetrator programmes work' is contested by researchers, policy makers and practitioners. Some evaluations have concluded they do reduce violence, whereas others claim they do not and may even make things worse. Much of the disagreement is related to three issues: variations in methodological approaches, disagreements over the interpretation of data, and differing definitions of what the term works means. Whilst there is now extensive literature exploring the methodological questions, rather less attention has been paid to tackling the latter issue. It is this topic that we address in this ongoing work. What does it mean a programme to work, to be 'successful', to have positive outcomes, and whose perspectives on these questions should we be mindful of? | http://dx.doi.org/10.1155/1711515.pdf?D=DD344&S=84&E= |
| B_92 | 2009 | ADVA and Sue Parra Associates | REPAIR Research: End the Perpetration of Abuse in Relationships? A community- and whole-family-based intervention programme targeting perpetrators of domestic violence and abuse in Devon. An evaluation of a | Exeter, UK, Devon County Council | Domestic Violence, Intervention, Treatment | This executive summary identifies key findings from Devon adva's three-year community perpetrator programme, REPAIR, (2005 to 2008). The purpose of the project was to introduce a whole-family intervention model. | http://www.devon.gov.uk/adva_repair_summary.pdf |

Violent dad in child shoes. A moment before

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| B_93 (Volume) | 2009 | Merzgora Betson Isabella | Uomini violenti | Raffaello Corina Editore | Domestic Violence | Uomini violenti, che insegue una nuova collana di "Criminologia e scienze forensi", affronta l'argomento della violenza in famiglia, in particolare dell'uxoricidio, sfidando non pochi pregiudizi e consentendo una conoscenza scientificamente fondata soprattutto dei fattori di rischio. Alla parte teorica si affianca il racconto, dalla voce dei protagonisti, di tre storie di violenza, anche letale, compresi alcuni casi assurdi all'ovvero della cronaca. Un'altrettanto praticare e dedicata ai progetti di trattamento, finora del tutto assenti in Italia e per la prima volta in questi volumi, si ne analizzano le modalità e gli scopi, primo tra tutti la responsabilizzazione degli aggressori. | http://www.raffaellocorina.it/scrivete/libro/isabella-merzgora-uomini-violenti-9789893024956-1192.html |
| B_94 (Volume) | 2009 | Murphy,Christopher, Roland Mauro | Motivational interviewing and Stages of Change in Intimate Partner Violence | Springer Publishing Company | Domestic Violence, Motivation to change | Motivational interviewing has become increasingly widespread among counsellors and therapists, but no book to date has focused exclusively on applying motivational interviewing to domestic and partner violence. Written by established authorities in the field, the chapters in this volume represent important applications of motivational enhancement strategies to intimate partner violence with both victims and batterers. These studies include descriptive research on victims and perpetrators of abuse, measurement and assessment of change, an overview of motivational interviewing, Murphy and Mauro illustrate both the benefits and challenges inherent in this growing area of research. | http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/1077558509339407 |
| B_95 | 2009 | Salsbury Emily J, Heming Krs and Holdford Robert | Attitudes on Children's Exposure to Interparental Violence as Risk Factors for Child Abuse | SAGE JOURNAL: Child Maltreatment, Volume 14 Number 3, page(s) 232-242 | Domestic Violence, Childhood | A substantial body of research concludes that children in homes marked by intimate partner violence (IPV) and conflict are at increased risk for maladjustment. Although studies often attribute these difficulties to the aggressive acts witnessed, other research and theoretical work suggests that disrupted parenting and co-occurring child maltreatment play an equally critical role in the onset of the children's psychological and behavioral problems. Despite the clear importance of parenting in the context of IPV, relatively little scholarship has been devoted to the topic, particularly when it comes to examining fathers. The current study sought to better understand the paternal relationships of men arrested for spouse/partner abuse, to examine their beliefs about children's exposure to interparental conflict and to investigate the extent to which these beliefs were related to their parenting. Data from 100 men participating in a questionnaire administered to 3824 men attending a court-ordered evaluation after they were convicted of assaulting an intimate partner. Analyses revealed that most of the men had some type of fathering role with underage children (n = 2,508; 65.6%) and in most cases these relationships continued following their arrest. Although the majority of the men acknowledged that their children had been exposed to interparental conflicts, few perceived that their children had been affected by the arguing. Also of concern was the fact that risk factors for child maltreatment were highly prevalent in this population. Implications of these findings and suggestions for those working with domestic offenders are discussed. | https://doi.org/10.1177/1077558509339407 |
| B_96 | 2009 | Stark Evan | Rethinking Coercive Control | SAGE JOURNAL, Volume: 15 Issue: 12 page(s): 1509-1525 | Domestic Violence | The critical appraisals of Coercive Control focus largely on what my analysis implies for intervention, a matter to which the book devotes only limited space. In this reply, I reiterate core concepts in the book and offer some suggestions for further research. I also provide a critical appraisal of the book's legal and advocacy stipulations. I review how coercive control differs from partner assault and so why it merits a distinct response; the extent to which coercive control targets gender identity; the wisdom of complementing the focus on violence with an emphasis on male domination, sexual inequality and personal liberty; what this implies for shelters and the law; why sexual inequality differentiates coercive control from female partner abuse of men; how sexual equality can be both cause and antidote for violations inflicted by coercive control; and what it means to "stay" coercive control by integrating women into the larger liberty narrative on which our national identity rests. | https://doi.org/10.1177/1077801209342452 |

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| B_97 | 2009 | Wainsley, Christopher | Fathers and the Child Welfare System | BC Federation of Child and Family Services of BC | Domestic Violence, Fatherhood | <p>Introduction: Today, men are present in the lives of child welfare involved children as resistant or nonresident fathers, step-fathers, the mothers' partner, the mother's brother or father, and family friends. Yet the overwhelming focus of child welfare policy, practice, research and education is mothers. This essay explores why men and fathers are often not involved in child welfare services, describes how to encourage their involvement, and identifies some of the complexities of increased father involvement in child welfare. In Canada 80% of first level child protection social workers are women (Fallon et al., 2003), and historically child welfare has been viewed as a practice that takes place between women (Davies, 2005; Callahan and Wainsley, 2007; Scaurfield, 2006). Although men are found in the field today often as managers, parenting experts and child development researchers, research, education, and practice in child welfare services are still focused on mothers as the central players in residential care practice (2007). Men's potential violence may be a reason to avoid them in practice (Buckley, 2003). But clearly, social workers gave little importance to involving fathers in planning for a child's care. In our society, caring work is constructed as female dominance activity (Chrisle, 2009), and with the feminization of the child welfare workforce, men perceive social services as designed for women (DeVault et al., 2003), or mother-centric (Ball & George, 2006).</p> <p>Processes that exclude, marginalize or render fathers invisible are not unique to child welfare. A study of popular parenting literature (Fleming and Tolin, 2005) found that although most books are written for the gender-neutral "parent", the images portraying adults with children were most frequently female (69.1%) in comparison to male (22.9%). In parent education materials, fathers are often depicted only in peripheral ways as sideline participants or helpers (Hodgins, 2007a). A study of popular parenting materials in Britain and the United States found fathers portrayed as doing more than helping and helping, whereas mothers were depicted as doing more than helping and helping (Hodgins, 2007b). In a study of parenting expert advice, I visited the for fathers to change a deeper or make the formula occasionally after a day's work outside the home, but parenting was fundamentally viewed as a mother's work. Carter and McCoddrick, (1999, p. 252). Today fathers are portrayed as "helping" at home, but co-parenting still means "Mom's responsible, Dad helps out" (Carter and McCoddrick, 1999, p. 255). The gendering of work is expressed in child welfare practice by focusing on mothers and ignoring or excluding fathers.</p> | <p>http://chic.library.ubc.ca/etd/etd/cdmwv200907064=10_1_1_5321&wp=print&wp=pdf</p> |
| B_98 | 2009 | Sivaga Susan, Bowen Leslie, Carahan Marilyn, Dornell Wainstay Christopher | Working with Me, Working at Me: Fathers' Narratives of Child Welfare | Journal of Progressive Human Services, 2011, 72-91 | Domestic Violence, Fatherhood | <p>This article explores the experiences of fathers involved in the child welfare system. Fathers who were interviewed as part of a multiyear Canadian project were atypical in that they were actively engaged with the child welfare system. Their stories show how, although not always physically present, child welfare's ghostly form is still very much a part of the daily lives of fathers and their families. These fathers had to be resourceful and resilient as they endeavored to look "promising" to the child welfare system. The critical analysis offers insights into a more father-inclusive approach to child welfare that has implications for policy and practice development.</p> | <p>https://doi.org/10.1080/10428230902871202</p> |
| B_99 | 2008 | Bowen Erica, Elizabeth A. Glitsch, Anthony R. Beech | Change in treatment has no relationship with subsequent re-offending in UK domestic violence sample: A preliminary study | International Journal of Offender Therapy and Criminology, October 2008, Vol. 52, Issue 5, pp. 598-614 | Domestic Violence, Intervention, Treatment | <p>In this study, data is presented from a sample of 52 male domestic violence offenders who were court mandated to attend a premarital psycho-educational rehabilitation program in the West Midlands. The extent of both self-rated and clinical significant psychological change achieved across a variety of self-report measures (e.g., anger, depression, anxiety, self-esteem, self-efficacy, self-blame, self-respect) and pre- and post-treatment, and their association with post-treatment re-offending within an 11-month follow-up period is examined. The results indicate that program completers achieved limited significant psychological change. However, the level of psychological change achieved had no association with re-offending.</p> | <p>https://doi.org/10.1177/0306624X08319419</p> |
| B_100 | 2008 | Eckhardt, Christopher, Holtzworth-Munroe Amy, Nordner Bradley, Sibley Ashley, Canill Melissa | Readiness to Change: Partner Violence Subtypes, and Treatment Outcomes and Long Term Treatment for Partner Assault | Violence and Victims, February 2008, Vol. 23, Issue 4, pp. 446-75 | Domestic Violence, Intervention, Treatment | <p>Men court-mandated to attend a batterer's intervention program (BIP) were evaluated to determine whether pre-BIP readiness to change and the presence of partner violence subtypes predicted BIP completion, criminal recidivism, and postjudication partner violence 6 months post-BIP. Of the 199 sample, 40% did not complete BIP. Four readiness-to-change clusters were found, with most men (76%) reporting change-resistant change profiles. The partner violence typology reported by Holtzworth-Munroe et al. (2000) was supported with clustering into four subtypes: family only (FO), low-level antisocial (LLA), borderline/psychotic (BP), and generally violent/antisocial (GVA). BIP completion was predicted by violence subtype (with BP and GVA more likely to drop out) but not by pre-BIP readiness to change. Men readjusted scored higher on the precontemplative stage of change and were more likely to be in the BP and GVA subtypes. Implications for counseling strategies are discussed.</p> | <p>DOI: 10.1891/0886-6708.23.4.446</p> |
| B_101 | 2008 | Laperriere Simon | Mothering in the context of domestic violence: the pervasiveness of a deficit model of mothering | Child & Family Social Work, Volume 13, Issue 4 | Domestic Violence, Motherhood | <p>Despite growing concern with the situation of children exposed to domestic violence, and although women have been seen as central in the welfare of their children, limited attention has been paid to the issue of mothering in this context. This paper examines how concerns regarding abused women's mothering have been articulated in the academic literature on children's exposure to domestic violence, and argues that the dominant discourse in this area has been characterized by a deficit model of mothering. Implications of the pervasiveness of a deficit model for child welfare policies and practices are highlighted. Finally, this paper identifies key elements that should be considered in the development of a feminist perspective on mothering in the context of domestic violence, which could lead to less blaming and more supportive practices.</p> | <p>https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1365-2206.2008.00563.x</p> |

Violent dad in child shoes. A moment before

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| B_102 | 2008 | Strega Susan, Fleet Claire, Brown Leslie, Donnell Lena, Callahan Marilyn and Wainstay Christopher | Connecting father absence and child welfare policies and practice | SocProDated, Children and Social Policy Review, 30 (2008) 705-716 | Domestic Violence and Childhood | <p>This paper reports the results of research about fathers and child welfare conducted in a mid-size Canadian city. The overall study uses a variety of methodologies to assess the current state of child welfare practice, with particular attention to fathers of the children of mothers who were adolescent at the time of at least one child's birth. Our research includes birthological fathers, stepfathers and men providing emotional, financial or social support to a child or children. This paper reports on the first phase of the study, in which we reviewed a random sample of child protection case files utilising both quantitative and qualitative methods. Our analysis and discussion is informed by a review of recent child welfare literature related to fathers and by related research team members have completed or are currently engaged in, including studies about young mothers in care, kinship care, risk assessment, failure to protect and the narratives of child welfare workers. Our intention is to contribute to reframing child welfare practice, policy and discourse in ways that are more inclusive of fathers and less blaming of mothers.</p> <p>© 2007 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.</p> | doi:10.1016/j.chipkyp.2007.11.012 |
| B_103 | 2008 | Pared Guy & Pared Enah | The Fathering of Violent Men: Construction and Yearning | SAGE JOURNAL: Violence Against Women, 14 Number 4 April 2008 457-482 | Domestic Violence, Fatherhood | <p>The study presented in this research note aims to expand our understanding of the experience of men who are violent to their children. The methodology applied was shaped by phenomenological, feminist, and interpretive intrasubject influences. In-depth interviews were conducted with 14 abusive men identified through domestic violence intervention centers. The findings describe the drama of fathering for abusive men, centered on an inter dialogue between an experienced construction and a yearning for a closer, deeper connection with their children. The discussion focuses on the meaning of fathering for abusive men, and possible applications for intervention are proposed.</p> | https://doi.org/10.1177/10782901208314846 |
| B_104 | 2007 | Brown JAC PhD | Shame and domestic violence: perpetrators from self psychology and affect theory | Sexual and Relationship Therapy, February 2004, Vol. 19 Issue 1, pp. 59-56 | Domestic Violence, Treatment | <p>Perpetrators of domestic violence have traditionally been seen as an underserving client group when considered in relation to the victims of their violence. Apart from anger management and psycho-educational groups for male perpetrators, very few other treatment options have been suggested. In treating couples, Godner (1998) has advocated holding men accountable for their violence while at the same time utilizing concepts from attachment theory to provide treatment for them. This paper draws mainly upon self psychology and the affect theory literature to better understand the underlying dynamics of violent behaviour in intimate relationships, with particular reference to the role of shame as a precursor of violence. Qualitative data linking shame and violence were drawn from interviews with men attending a group for their violent behaviour. I argue that treatment may focus at the level of shame and its connection to violence, and that this may require working with the individual perpetrator, rather than the couple, in order to adequately address the issue of violence. I suggest some general guidelines for working with violent men that incorporate aspects of shame.</p> | https://doi.org/10.1080/14681990410001640926 |
| B_105 | 2007 | Featherstone Brid and Packer Sue | Letting them get away with it: Fathers, domestic violence and child welfare | Critical Social Policy, October 2007, Vol. 27(2): 181-202, 07/08 SAGE PUBLICATIONS (London, Los Angeles, Delhi and Singapore) | Domestic Violence, Fatherhood | <p>Recent developments at policy, legislative and practice levels have led to the mainstreaming of domestic violence as a child welfare issue. How ever, research evidence would suggest that familiar and well established tensions in service provision to women and children continue to be recycled. Moreover, there remains a central dichotomy in relation to men. Constructed as perpetrators or offenders, their identities as fathers remain invisible with serious consequences for the development of policies and practices which engage with men as domestically violent fathers. The discursive removal of violent men from the category of father or indeed parent needs addressing in order to support women and children, but also to offer possibilities for men to develop non-violent parenting and partnering relationships patterns.</p> | DOI:10.1177/0281018306075708 |
| B_106 | 2007 | Gondolf Edward W. | Theoretical and research support for the Duluth Model: A reply to Dulton and Corvo | SocProDated, Aggression and Violent Behavior, Volume 12, Issue 6, November-December 2007, Pages 644-657 | Domestic Violence, Aggression and Violent Behavior | <p>In a recent article, Dulton and Corvo denounce and reject the so-called Duluth Model of batterer intervention based on cognitive-behavioral counseling, reinforcement from the criminal justice system, and the use of court orders to restrict batterers' access to their children and to control their financial and activist motivations. These authors call for research-based treatment that is more psycho-therapeutic in nature, along with a diminished role for the criminal justice system and more attention to women's violence. The authors, however, are highly selective in the research they use to substantiate their position and apply their own activist biases to its interpretation. Their portrayal of the Duluth Model, and the fundamentals it represents, is a distorted caricature of its current conception. There is psychological theory and criminal justice research that support the Duluth Model and its utility. Moreover, developments in the field contradict the claims that the Duluth Model has an "iron-clad" hold that is impeding progress. The categorical condemnations in the Dulton and Corvo article shut-off needed dialogue and debate rather than further those developments.</p> | https://doi.org/10.1016/j.avb.2007.03.001 |

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| B_107 | 2007 | Mauricio, Arria Marie, Jenni, Yun Yen, Frederick G. Lopez. | Borderline and antisocial personality scores as mediators between attachment and intimate partner violence. | Violence and Victims, 22, 139-157. | Domestic Violence and Psychopathology | Court-mandated male batterers (n = 192) attending an intervention program completed measures examining adult attachment orientations (anxious and avoidant), personality disorders (borderline and antisocial), type of violence (psychological and physical), and social desirability. Structural equation modeling was used to determine whether there were significant relationships between anxious attachment and physical and psychological violence that are mediated by either borderline or antisocial personality disorders. Social desirability was found to be a significant predictor of psychological violence. Social desirability as a psychological violence mediator, the relationship between avoidant attachment and physical as well as psychological violence. Personality disorders only partially mediated the relationship between anxious attachment and psychological violence. Implications for intervention are discussed. | http://dx.doi.org/10.1891/0898-7627.2007.22.39 |
| B_108 | 2006 | Hanning Kris, Renauer Brian, Hodford Robert | Victim or Offender? Heterogeneity Among Women Arrested for Intimate Partner Violence | Journal of Family Violence, Volume 21, Issue 6, pp 351-368 | Domestic Violence | Mandatory arrest laws for intimate partner violence (IPV) have increased both the number and proportion of arrests that involve female offenders. Whether these numbers should be as high as they are remains a source of controversy. Most practitioners argue that women are usually arrested for defensive actions used in the face of assaults perpetrated by their spouse/partner. Others believe that these higher arrest rates more accurately reflect the true prevalence of physical aggression perpetrated by women. One way to help clarify this debate is to take a closer look at the women charged with IPV. The present study used self-reported information and criminal justice records on prior aggression to classify 488 women convicted of IPV into four distinct subtypes (i.e., no prior violence, primary victim, primary aggressor, and primary aggressor not identified). Despite the fact that all of these women were arrested for and convicted of IPV, analyses consistently found that less than half of these women could be considered as the primary aggressor in their relationship. Moreover, more of these women (classified as primary aggressors) had psychological issues as discussed as well as the policy, practice, and research implications of this study. | DOI: 10.1007/s10896-006-9032-4 |
| B_109 | 2006 (Volume) | Mizen Richard, Morris Mark | On Aggression and Violence: An Analytic Perspective | Publisher: Red Globe Press | Violence, Treatment | Description Aggressive and violent patients are an increasing concern for mental health professionals. Mizen and Morris critically review psychoanalytic literature and present their own content and practical new model. The clear clinical focus and emphasis on managing violence in therapy, makes this book essential reading for practitioners and trainees. | https://www.routledge.com/Books/9781108595219 |
| B_110 | 2006 | Sourfield Jonathan | The challenge of engaging fathers in the child protection process | Critical Social Policy, Vol.26, Issue 2, 2006 | Domestic Violence, Fatherhood | This is an overview of the well-known difficulties of engaging fathers in the child protection process and the implications for child protection practice. It is written from the perspective of a practitioner and a theoretical context of the problem. Current child welfare policy, the culture of front-line practice and the child protection staff and the behaviour of fathers who come to the attention of child protection staff ideas for changes in policy and practice include embracing more sophisticated theory, avoiding the dualistic responses of seeing men as either risk or resource, institutionalizing the engagement of men as core business and building on interventions that have been found by research to be effective. A range of effective interventions may be relevant, including cognitive-behavioural work with abusive men and strengths-based family work such as the family group conference. | https://doi.org/10.1177/0261018306026294 |
| B_111 | 2005 | Bowen Erica, Glorioti Elizabeth A. and Beech Anthony R. | An examination of the impact of community-based rehabilitation on the offending behaviour of male domestic violence offenders and the characteristics associated with recidivism | Legal & Criminological Psychology, September 2005, Vol. 10, Issue 2, pp. 189-209 | Domestic Violence, Rehabilitation, Treatment | Purpose. The aim of this study was to examine the impact of completing a community-based rehabilitation programme on both the rate of domestic violence reoffending, and time to first post-treatment offence within an 11-month follow-up period. In addition, the pre-treatment psychological, demographic, and offending history characteristics of recidivists were examined. Methods. Prior to attending West Midlands Probation Areas Domestic Violence Perpetrator Programme (DVPP), 86 male offenders completed a battery of six psychometric tests. The tests were the Novaco Anger Scale, Inventory of Beliefs about Wife Beating, Abusive Behaviour Inventory, Interpersonal Dependency Inventory, Multidimensional Locus of Control Scale and Balanced Inventory of Desirable Responding. Post-treatment reoffending was identified from police contact data. Results. The DVPP programme was significantly more effective than the control group in offenders within an 11-month post-treatment period. Comparing the two programmes, significantly smaller rates of small (w=0.20), it was found that higher interpersonal dependency and more frequent contact with the police in the 24 months prior to attending the programme for their and violent domestic violence predicted post-treatment domestic violence offending. Conclusions. The results of this study indicate that the programme did not significantly reduce the rate of alleged reoffending among programme completers, or the time to first post-treatment offence reported to the police. However, the results suggest that those offenders who were alleged to have reoffended may represent a distinct offender subgroup. These results are discussed with reference to client treatment matching and the move towards nationally accredited rehabilitation programmes in the UK. | https://doi.org/10.1348/17585320500536778 |

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| B_112 | 2004 | Batcock, Julia C., Green Charles E. and Robie Orlie | Does batterers' treatment work? A meta-analytic review of domestic violence treatment | Clinical Psychology Review, January 2004, Vol. 23, Issue 8, pp. 1023-93 | Domestic Violence Treatment | <p>This meta-analytic review examines the findings of 22 studies evaluating treatment efficacy for domestically violent males. The outcome literature of controlled quasi-experimental and experimental studies was reviewed to determine impact of such programs (cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT), and anger management) on rates of violence. Study and type of intervention, and type of assessment, were identified as moderators. Treatment design tended to have a small influence on effect size. There were no differences in effect sizes in comparing Duluth model vs. CBT-type interventions. Overall, effects due to treatment were in the small range, meaning that the current interventions have a minimal impact on reducing recidivism beyond the effect of being arrested. Analogies to treatment for other populations are presented for comparison, implications for policy decisions and future research are discussed.</p> | DOI: 10.1016/j.cpr.2002.07.001 |
| B_113 | 2003 | Mears Daniel P. | Research And Interventions To Reduce Domestic Violence Revictimization | Trauma, Violence and Abuse, April 2003, Vol. 4, Issue 2, pp. 127-147 | Domestic Violence Intervention | <p>Despite decades of research on domestic violence, considerable challenges must be addressed to develop sound, theoretically and empirically based interventions for reducing domestic violence revictimization. Many basic and applied research issues remain unaddressed by existing studies, and evaluations frequently do not sufficiently highlight their limitations or program or policy implications. This article reviews existing research on domestic violence interventions from which to select. This article reviews research on domestic violence and focuses particular attention on interventions aimed at reducing revictimization among individuals known to have been abused. It also provides a conceptual framework for practitioners and policy makers to situate existing evaluation research and highlights the need for better data to understand and assess efforts to reduce domestic violence revictimization. The author concludes by discussing directions for future research and recommendations for practice and policy.</p> | https://doi.org/10.1177/1524838902259264 |
| B_114 | 2003 | Scourfield Jonathan & Welsh Ian | Risk, Genderity and Social Control In Child Protection: New Times or same Old Story? | SAGE JOURNAL: Critical Social Policy, Vol 23, Issue 3, 2003 | Domestic Violence, Childhood | <p>The article addresses some recent attempts to reassess the contemporary child protection system as potentially liberalising. These are, first, discussions of child protection in the context of welfare modernization and the risk society, and, second, postmodernist feminist writings. After initial theoretical debate about some of these perspectives, the authors go on to present ethnographic research evidence showing that social control is alive and well in child protection work. The article concludes that, while these recent optimistic accounts of the child protection system are welcome contributions, they have overstated the liberalising potential of the current system. While much of the discussion deals with child protection specifically, another aim of the article is to contribute to a debate about the application to social policy in general of theories of welfare modernization and the risk society.</p> | https://doi.org/10.1177/02610183030233005 |
| B_115 | 2002 | Anderson Kristin L. | Perpetrator or Victim? Relationships Between Intimate Partner Violence and Well-Being | Journal of Marriage and Family, November 2002, Vol. 64, Issue 4, pp. 851-863 | Domestic Violence Assessment | <p>In national surveys around half of intimate partner violence perpetrators are also victims of partner violence. However, data on intimate partner violence victimization and perpetration are rarely examined together, and few studies assess the extent to which these two roles are related. Results from a national longitudinal study of 1,000 couples are used to examine the relationship between intimate partner violence and well-being. Results indicate that associations between substance abuse and self-esteem and partner violence perpetration are mediated by controlling for victimization, but depression is associated with both victimization and perpetration. Associations between mutual violence and depression and substance abuse are greater among women than men, supporting the position that gender symmetry in reported violence perpetration does not imply symmetry in outcomes.</p> | https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1741-3727.2002.00961.x |
| B_116 | 2002 (Volume) | Gondolf Edward W. | Batterer Intervention Systems: Issues, Outcomes, and Recommendations | SAGE Publications, Inc. | Domestic Violence Intervention, Treatment | <p>One of the most burning debates in the domestic violence field is over the effectiveness of batterer programs and how to improve them. Batterer Intervention Systems responds to this debate with research from a multi-site evaluation of batterer programs—the most comprehensive and extensive evaluation to date. It critiques current experimental evaluations, exposes the complex issues of evaluation, and presents alternatives to assessing effectiveness. A four-year follow-up of program participants reveals a surprising de-escalation of abuse, a subgroup of unresponsive repeat reassaulters, and the difficulty in identifying the most dangerous men. Conventional batterer counseling appears to be appropriate for the vast majority of men. Most of all, the book shows that the equus/systemic/quot matters and can be improved through some straightforward adjustments & steps.</p> | http://dx.doi.org/10.4135/9781452229283 |
| B_117 | 2002 | Kimmel Michael S. | Gender Symmetry? in Domestic Violence | Violence Against Women, November 2002, Vol. 8, No. 11, pp. 1332-1363 | Domestic Violence | <p>Despite numerous studies that report the preponderance of domestic violence is perpetrated by men against women, other empirical studies suggest that rates of domestic violence by women and men are equivalent. This article explores these claims of gender symmetry in intimate partners use of domestic violence. The author suggests methods to reconcile the disparate data and encourages researchers and practitioners to acknowledge women's use of violence while understanding why it tends to be very different from violence by men toward their female partners.</p> | DOI: 10.1177/1078012302237407 |

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| <p>B_118 (Volume) 2000 Fonagy Peter & Trigg Mary</p> | <p>Alteccamento e funzione riflessiva</p> | <p>Traduttore: F. Gazzillo F. Odorino M. Simola Curatore: V. Lugiardi, M. Ammaniti Editore: Cortina Raffaello Collana: Psicomatisti e ricerca Anno edizione: 2001 in commercio dal: 1 Pagine: XXI,433 p. EAN: 9789870796736</p> | <p>Violenza di Genere. Alteccamento e funzione riflessiva</p> | <p>Description The book collects the writings of Peter Fonagy and Mary Target, researchers working at the Anna Freud Centre in London. Fonagy aims to compare and combine the richness of the psychoanalytic heritage with cognitivism, attachment theory and infant research. The book is divided into five sections: attachment and psychoanalysis; attachment, borderline states and theory of mind; play with reality; aggression and violence; psychoanalysis and change (of the technique and goals of treatment).</p> |
| <p>B_119 1993 Murphy Christopher W, Hoyes Sharon-lee & O'Leary K Daniel</p> | <p>Family of Origin Violence and MCMHI. Psychopathology Among Partner Assaultive Men</p> | <p>Violence and Victims: New York Vol. 5, Fasc. 2.</p> | <p>Domestic Violence and Psychopathology</p> | <p>DOI:10.1891/0886-6708.8.2.165</p> |
| <p>B_120 1993 Nazioni Unite</p> | <p>Dichiarazione sull'eliminazione della violenza contro le donne</p> | <p>Nazioni Unite</p> | <p>Gender and Domestic Violence against women</p> | <p>https://www.un.org/en/development/desa/destat/ibid/20090927-ibid2002_IL.pdf</p> |
| PRESS REVIEW | | | | |
| <p>PR_01 2018</p> | <p>Save the children-italian ONLUS</p> | <p>Save the children-italian ONLUS</p> | <p>Domestic Violence and Children</p> | <p>https://www.savethechild.it/comunicazione/abbattiamo-il-muro-della-silenzio-cosa-significa-assistere-a-violenza</p> |
| <p>PR_02 2018</p> | <p>Repubblica.it</p> | <p>Repubblica.it</p> | <p>Domestic Violence and Children</p> | <p>https://www.repubblica.it/cronaca/2018/07/05/news/s3a-ve-the-children-maltreatment-violenze-domestiche-2009168892/</p> |
| <p>PR_03 July 2018</p> | <p>Mirror online</p> | <p>Mirror online</p> | <p>Domestic Violence</p> | <p>https://www.mirror.co.uk/health/child-reality-saved-treat-domestic-12090555</p> |

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