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Engaging Men and Boys in Preventing Violence Against Women

Applying a Cognitive–Behavioral Model

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Although historically the prevention of relationship violence has been seen as a women's issue, more recently recognition has emerged regarding the need to engage men as partners in these initiatives. Early attempts have been mainly driven by grassroots efforts and have not been consistent with a particular theory of behavior and attitude change. This article investigates the application of cognitive–behavioral strategies to engaging men and boys in violence prevention, within a profeminist framework. Three fundamental components of a cognitive–behavioral therapy approach—goal setting, core beliefs, and strategies for change—are discussed and examples of promising initiatives are used to highlight these ideas.

Keywords: *cognitive–behavioral; engaging men; violence prevention*

Violence against women and children occurs at staggering rates in our society. But who is responsible for addressing this issue? Do politicians and service agencies have sole responsibility for finding an answer? In an ideal world, every man, woman, and child would be part of the solution. While violence against women

has traditionally been considered a feminist issue, the solution ultimately has to involve both women and men. Indeed, there has been a call among political leaders to “engage men” in stopping the violence (Connell, 2003). Similarly, the Canadian Panel on Violence Against Women (1993) suggested that every man had a role to play in addressing this issue and offered a comprehensive list of activities in the final report. Unfortunately, there was no framework to address either the incentives or resistance to join this movement.

The purpose of this article is to present a paradigm for engaging men in ending violence against women. We are addressing the issue of involving nonviolent men to be an active part of the solution against violence. Thus, we are not talking about batterers or delinquent youth but the average man: the man who is faced with a colleague making sexist or degrading jokes about women and is not sure how to handle the situation, the man who hears the sounds of violence from the apartment next door and is not sure whether or how to get involved, the man who sees his adolescent daughter dating a boy who treats her badly and is not sure how to talk to her about gender equity and healthy relationships. To an extent, we are talking about mobilizing nonviolent men to play a more active role as bystanders in a world where violence and the glorification of violence is not uncommon.

We have chosen to define “engaging men” as helping men to make a profound personal commitment to stopping violence against women. This commitment inherently requires taking some sort of action. In the past decade, there has been a call to involve men and boys in the movement (Canadian Panel on Violence Against Women, 1993; Fabiano, Perkins, Berkowitz, Linkenback, & Stark, 2003; Hong, 2000; Kaufman, 2001) and some inspiring grassroots initiatives (e.g., the White Ribbon Campaign, Men Can Stop Rape, Mentors in Violence Prevention), yet there are no clear theoretical frameworks to guide us in achieving this engagement. Over the past few decades, research and clinical knowledge about men at the extreme ends of the violence spectrum have increased. There has been an improvement in the extent to which clinical and criminal interventions affect successful outcomes with batterers. For example, the results of a large multisite batterer intervention research project clearly indicate the need for treatment programs to be integrated into a responsive criminal justice system (Gondolf, 2002). At the other end of the continuum, some men play active roles in addressing violence against women in their professional and personal lives (Goodall, 2004). This article is *not* about either of those groups. Instead, this article is about the men in the middle of those two extremes: men who are not violent in their relationships but who have not yet made a personal commitment to be part of the solution to ending violence against women and children.

Violence Prevention—Where Are the Men?

An important starting point for this discussion is to explore some of the potential reasons that men have typically not been part of the violence prevention picture. As

noted by Berkowitz (2004), "Men who work to end violence against women are challenging the dominant culture and the understandings of masculinity that maintain it. Thus, male activists are often met with suspicion, homophobia and other questions about their 'masculinity'" (p. 4). Whereas the types of challenges identified by Berkowitz are contributing factors to men's passivity, there are also a number of other reasons. Furthermore, men are not uniformly unwilling to get involved and, when asked, identify a number of reasons for their lack of action.

In 2000, Peter D. Hart, Inc. conducted a national study sponsored by the Family Violence Prevention Fund, involving 1,000 men, to investigate some of these attitudes (Garin, 2000). With respect to reasons for not getting involved, one in five men (21%) reported that they did not actively support community efforts to stop violence against women because no one had asked them to get involved, 16% indicated that they did not have time, and 13% reported that they did not know how to help. In addition, another 13% of men identified that their reluctance to get involved stemmed from the perception that they had been vilified and were seen as part of the problem, rather than approached as an important part of the solution, and 11% indicated that they did not get involved because domestic violence is a private matter and they were uncomfortable getting involved (Garin, 2000). Thus, whereas defensiveness was one of the themes that arose, elements of helplessness, lack of prioritization, and fear about not being welcome were also present. The results of this survey suggest a window of opportunity. Some men want to be involved but are unsure of how to operationalize their motivation. Others have doubts about their role or ownership but are not adamant in refusing to participate. We further propose that the link between traditional notions of masculinity and violence makes it difficult for many men to be able to actively participate in violence prevention while maintaining their sense of masculine identity.

Understanding Masculinity

Violence is a major focus of attention within the academic discipline of men's studies. Michael Kaufman (1987/1998), a leading scholar in the field, identified a "triad" of violence in the lives of men: violence against women, violence against men, and violence against oneself. For Kaufman and other men's studies researchers, violence is not a necessary result of being male. Indeed, many authors take great pains to distinguish between the biological determinism inherent in an expression like "male violence" and the social construction of "men's violence." Kaufman noted that children are socialized into expectations of behavior by our broader society at a young age. Although recognizing that the focus of study should be on how society constructs gender identity, Kaufman and other commentators are clear that men must take individual responsibility for their actions and recognize the existence of societal power relations. The clearest manifestation of those power relations is violence against women.

Consistent with the feminist framework of violence against women is the idea that notions of masculinity play a major role in determining gender equality and violence (Pope & Englar-Carlson, 2001). It is important to recognize that masculinity plays a role at the individual level (i.e., men who perpetrate violence towards women are more likely to have negative attitudes about women), but also at the community or contextual level (Katz, 1995, 2003). Both individual and contextual factors are related to the perpetration of violence.

A review in the *Lancet* of factors predicting perpetration of violence against women identified issues related to male privilege and control as one of the top three major factors (Jewkes, 2002). In this review, male entitlement and stereotypical notions of gender roles, along with poverty and alcohol use, were the most significant predictors of perpetrating violence against women. In a sample of more than 600 undergraduate students, subscribing to concepts of traditional masculinity was associated with attitudes accepting violence against women and justifying violence and rape (Caron & Carter, 1997). In the measurement realm, research to develop scales of masculinity has found that traditional notions of masculinity show high convergence with attitudes that accept violence (Ludlow & Mahalik, 2001). These different threads of evidence underscore the relationship between highly rigid traditional ideas about masculinity and violence against women at the individual level.

For the purpose of this article, we adopt a profeminist approach, which promotes a particular perspective on masculinity. Although recognizing patriarchy, a profeminist approach also recognizes that men may experience considerable dissonance between the power that society has apparently bestowed upon them and their actual lived experiences of powerlessness. Authors like Michael Kaufman (1994, 1987/1998), founder of the White Ribbon Campaign, maintain that men need support to come to terms with this “contradictory experience of power” and to move through it to fully embrace relationships with women and other men. Thus, although theoretically men are seen to have more power than women, it is important to engage them at the level of their lived experience, which may include feeling powerless.

The profeminist position is primarily a sociological and philosophical stance and is not prescriptive at the individual level. It is our position that incorporating profeminist ideals into a psychological attitude and behavioral change framework provides a better guide for action. One of the models of attitude and behavior change that has been most successful in understanding and changing a wide variety of behavior is cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) (Beck, 1976; Ellis, 1969). In this article, we discuss the application of CBT to engaging men and boys in violence prevention, some challenges that arise with this application, and some potential solutions. Specifically, we use the CBT framework to discuss affecting change in widely held notions of masculinity, consistent with a profeminist outlook. We are not arguing that this framework is the only one for understanding how to engage men. Rather, applying a theoretical framework allows for a consideration of some of the challenges and resistance that have been faced in the movement to engage men, and the same framework can identify possible solutions. The aspects consistent with a

CBT framework that will be discussed include goal setting, core beliefs, and strategies for change. In each of these areas, challenges and solutions to applying a CBT model will be identified.

Goal Setting

Goal setting is a fundamental part of any CBT intervention; it is difficult to engage in a change process without envisioning a desired end state as well as being able to identify smaller steps and minigoals that will lead to the desired outcome (Persons, Davidson, & Tompkins, 2000). In the case of engaging boys and men in violence prevention, both of these types of goals are difficult to define. In this section, we discuss two particular difficulties in applying CBT to goal setting: the lack of an identifiable end state of intervention and a lack of small steps for making change. We will also explicate two strategies for overcoming these challenges, namely, creating new notions of masculinity and engaging men at any point along the profeminist continuum (i.e., making room for the “well-meaning” man).

Lack of a Well-Defined End State

The position of most men with respect to violence against women—passivity—can hardly be considered a condition. Lack of engagement in violence prevention is not a pathology—it cannot be diagnosed, it is not illegal, nor is it even socially frowned upon in most circles. Unlike an eating disorder or depression, the failure to engage in antiviolence discourse or even recognize the existence of violence against women is not a clinical manifestation. Indeed, this lack of recognition may do more to define normalcy than deviancy from societal expectations. Without the discursive tension provided by an identified clinical condition, it becomes difficult to define and set goals.

The end goal for violence prevention has typically been defined at the societal level: the cessation of all violence against women and girls and the establishment of full gender equality. At the individual level, it is much harder to identify the end state toward which we hope men and boys will progress. Are we simply looking for all men to commit to nonviolence? Are we looking for all men to renounce male privilege and commit to gender equality? Are we looking for men to organize rallies and marches? Without this clear end goal in mind, prevention initiatives are often constrained to the absence of violence perpetration. The expanded notion of violence prevention in terms of advocacy and personal commitment to being part of the solution is relegated.

As a case in point, we recently reviewed a manual for a teen relationship program that aimed to prevent adolescent dating violence. In the preface to the manual, several testimonials were offered by enthusiastic teens and teachers alike. One testimonial that caught our attention was from a student who enthused about the workshop

and concluded by saying, “I will never rape anyone again.” Although the author of this quote clearly enjoyed the program and felt that it had a big impact on him, and the developers of the program felt that the quote was worthy of inclusion in the manual, we would argue that his sentiments are hardly indicative of a male who has been truly engaged in preventing violence. Another example of defining violence prevention goals in relation to violence perpetration appeared in a public service announcement (PSA) that aired in Canada. In this PSA, a young woman is shown struggling against a male. The narrator identifies the behavior as sexual assault and admonishes parents to talk to their sons. Yet the PSA does not equip parents with ideas about how to approach personal topics such as dating and gender relationships; nor does it give parents an idea of what they should encourage their son *towards*. Teaching men and boys to not commit violence is only the first step in identifying goals consistent with engagement.

Lack of Identifiable Small Steps

Related to the lack of a clear end goal, it is difficult to identify steps that lead to the amorphous final state. As part of a cognitive-behavioral framework, the importance of identifying small goals that lead stepwise to the desired outcome is well established. If a client is being treated for a phobia of spiders, it is easy to develop a hierarchy of fears to tackle in treatment (Beck, Emery, & Greenberg, 1985). The steps in this hierarchy might range from looking at a picture of a spider to letting a tarantula crawl on one’s arm. In the case of engaging men and boys in violence prevention, there is not the same clear linear path.

A further confound in identifying the trajectory to engagement is the distinction between the public and the private domains (Goffman, 1959). A commitment to violence prevention includes a variety of ongoing tasks and actions at both the public and private levels. Some actions that are public may seem indicative of a highly committed stance (e.g., attending a rally or march), yet it is the innocuous, personal daily challenges that are more difficult for most men to undertake (e.g., confronting a sexist coworker by the water cooler). Going to a rally may simply require the public role of sitting on a blanket surrounded by supportive, like-minded individuals. In contrast, confronting a coworker (or even harder, a supervisor) by the water cooler involves a huge personal commitment to counter deeply ingrained social interaction norms. In this context, there appears to be a dearth of small steps; indeed, there appears to be one small step to a public persona, yet a giant leap to acting on personal conviction.

Solution: Building a Roadmap for Men and Boys

In trying to understand both the end state and small steps for male engagement, it is informative to listen to the stories of men who have developed a profeminist

stance. Although we are not aware of any large studies on this topic, there are some smaller, ethnographic studies that provide valuable insight into the challenges and benefits for men associated with becoming involved in violence prevention. Some examples include Micheal Kehler's (2000) ethnographic study of 8 male high school students who were identified as profeminist, and Rebecca Coulter's (2003) interviews with 10 young men, aged 15 to 20, who had become involved with gender-equity-related volunteer work. Another excellent narrative, titled, *How Two Aspiring Pornographers Turned Me Into an F-Word*, charted how a "beer-and-hoops loving guy . . . finally opened his eyes to the HUGE local, national, and international problem of violence against women and girls" (Shaw, 2001). These stories of men and boys who defied the prevailing culture and became engaged in gender equity issues are informative in understanding this transformation process. Anecdotes from these sources will be used to illustrate points throughout this article.

The young men in Coulter's study identified a number of pathways or series of steps that led them to be involved in gender equity volunteer work. What was most apparent from these stories was the lack of a single pathway or series of steps to becoming engaged. The teens spoke of numerous factors that led to their involvement. Some spoke of individual teachers who encouraged and/or challenged them to consider gender equality, some had been witnesses to domestic violence, and one even admitted that his decision to join his school's gender equity club was initially motivated entirely by a desire to impress a young woman (Coulter, 2003). What is interesting in this last case is that although the initial motivations were not particularly related to social action, this young man's involvement in the gender equity club came to be a meaningful and important experience for him of its own accord (Coulter, 2003). One of the themes underlying all of these stories is the need to develop new notions about masculinity as a final outcome (Frank, Kehler, Lovell, & Davison, 2003).

Developing New Notions of Masculinities and Identifying Steps

We propose that at the heart of the end goal of engaging men and boys in violence prevention is broader and more varied concepts of masculinity (Frank et al., 2003). As a society, we have to fundamentally extend the notion of what it means to be a man. At one level, exploring new masculinities is an intellectual, philosophical, and introspective endeavor and one that many men may never undertake. Rather than lamenting this lack of existential self-evaluation, men and boys need to be engaged wherever they may be with respect to this process. Sometimes men seem to be expected to have completed this sort of work prior to becoming involved in the anti-violence community. There is a sense that unless they have a sophisticated understanding of power and control dynamics and gender inequality, they will not be able to make a meaningful contribution to ending violence against women. In contrast,

we are arguing that the average man needs to be given an identifiable action list as a starting point and that his involvement with some of these actions may lead to a reevaluation of masculinity.

Although defining a new notion of masculinity is difficult, it is possible to identify some of the key themes of traditional masculinity as a point of comparison; for example, Hong (1998, 2000) used the key tenets articulated by David and Brannon (1976): “no sissy stuff,” “be a big wheel,” “be a sturdy oak,” and “give ’em hell.” Hong summarized: Men must avoid behaving in any manner that can be perceived as feminine; they must be the most important individual in their domain; they must be independent, controlled, and unemotional; and they must be aggressive risk-takers. We suggest that masculinity can be extended beyond these constricted notions and redefined on the basis of universal social justice (Fabiano et al., 2003). As suggested by Berkowitz (2004), this definition would extend to men’s roles in violence prevention, namely, men can be involved by “not personally engaging in violence, by intervening against the violence of other men, and by addressing the root causes of violence” (p. 4).

Although extending notions of masculinity can seem esoteric, the concept of the cognitive-behavioral triad dictates that taking specific action will likely alter men’s thoughts and attitudes. Thus, rather than targeting the notion of masculinity in a vacuum, the focus can be on encouraging men to take actions that, in turn, may raise their awareness of gender issues and challenge their beliefs. The example of the young man who joined the gender equity club to impress a young woman is an excellent case in point. Even though he did not initially engage with the intention of challenging himself to view gender equality differently, he came to do so as a result of his involvement with activities through the club (Coulter, 2003). Too often boys and men seem to be held to an unrealistic standard of choosing to engage in violence prevention already possessing a highly developed understanding of the issues. Men need to be engaged *wherever they are at* with the expectation that action can have an impact on their beliefs and understanding of these complex issues.

Engaging men as mentors to boys is a natural avenue for challenging dominant theories of masculinity. One excellent example of an initiative to support men in their roles as coaches, parents, and teachers of boys is the Family Violence Prevention Fund’s *Coaching Boys Into Men* initiative. The multipronged campaign is predicated on a “teach early, teach often” message that underscores the need for adults to explicitly talk to boys about relationships and violence. The campaign has developed a number of PSAs to draw attention to this need but also a number of tools to assist men, all of which are available on its Web site: www.endabuse.org. These materials give specific advice about ways to listen to boys (and ask questions that will encourage them to share their experiences), how to broach the topic of gender relations in conversation, and how to use natural teachable moments. One PSA from the campaign shows a series of vignettes of young boys walking up to strangers and male family members and asking for advice on relationships and how to treat women. The narrator underscores the absurdity by noting that boys are never going

to approach men with respect to discussing gender equality and relationships, and that men need to take the lead for initiating these discussions (this PSA can be viewed at www.endabuse.org). This campaign challenges men to help boys develop an alternate view of gender equity and healthy relationships to that which is portrayed by the popular media. This alternate view of gender equity and masculinity is akin to the goal in a typical CBT approach.

Acknowledging “Well-Meaning” as a Launching Pad

Earlier in this article, we highlighted the need to identify end goals but also smaller interim goals. If the former is conceptualized as expanded notions of masculinity, the latter can be translated to the acknowledgement of an acceptable middle ground. Somewhere between violent males and profeminist males are many average men, who may fall into the category identified in one call to action as “well-meaning men” (Porter, 2004). In a conference brochure by the New Jersey Coalition Against Sexual Assault targeting men to get involved with the prevention of sexual assault, keynote speaker Anthony Porter’s (2004) definition of well-meaning men serves as a useful middle ground in our conceptualization. This conceptualization helps to address one of the identified barriers to men’s involvement, namely, the perception that all men are viewed negatively as perpetrators of violence rather than as a potential part of the solution to violence (Garin, 2000):

It’s time for those of us who are “well-meaning men” to start acknowledging the role male privilege and socialization plays in sexual assault as well as violence against women in general. As well-meaning men, we must begin to acknowledge and own our responsibility to be part of the solution to ending sexual assault.

Porter continued by defining a well-meaning man as

a man who believes women should be respected. A well-meaning man would not assault a woman. A well-meaning man, on the surface, at least, believes in equality for women. A well-meaning man believes in women’s rights. A well-meaning man honors the women in his life. A well-meaning man, for all practical purposes, is a nice guy, a good man.

Furthermore, Porter identified the well-meaning man as one who has reached a midpoint (or in the CBT framework being applied, an interim goal):

It is with this understanding that our work, our vision, is not to beat up on well-meaning men, but instead to help us understand through a process of reeducation and accountability, that with all our goodness, we have still been socialized to maintain a system of domination, dehumanization and oppression over women.

In this depiction of the well-meaning man, there is simultaneously appreciation for choosing nonviolence and a challenge to extend further through personal growth. This identification of a middle ground is more in keeping with typical problems addressed with CBT. For example, a client with social phobia may initially focus on eliminating avoidance strategies, and getting to school or work. At the same time, he or she may not have met the end goal of having a rich and meaningful social life. This midpoint is analogous to the well-meaning man; he is not perpetrating violence, yet he is simultaneously aware that there may be further steps to take on the journey. Having such a launching pad for further progress is important for countering helplessness and disengagement; men can take some pride in their success and simultaneously be encouraged to take further action.

In conclusion, it is difficult for men and boys to know how to begin the process of becoming engaged in violence prevention. There is a large gap between taking a small public step and the full personal transformation and new concept of masculinity that we are identifying as the desired end goal. In helping men and boys to navigate this territory, we argue the need for specific opportunities to engage them in action-focused initiatives and the acknowledgement a middle ground between violent males and profeminist males—perhaps the domain of well-meaning men. By shifting the emphasis to action and away from a complete commitment to personal transformation as the initial step, more men and boys may be able to envision beginning the process of becoming engaged. This involvement in identifiable action, in turn, will create cognitive dissonance and support men in developing new ideas about masculinity and gender equity.

Core Beliefs

One of the fundamental goals of CBT is to alter maladaptive core beliefs. Core beliefs are the set of operating principles that individuals hold, and that influences their interpretations, emotional reactions, and responses to daily events (Ellis, 1996, 2001). For example, someone who presents with anxiety and is highly critical of herself may have a core belief that if she does not experience a high degree of success in every area of her life, she is a complete failure as a person. Individuals are typically not aware of these core beliefs, and it is through intervention that these operating principles become clearer. Once these beliefs are apparent to the client, he or she can work to alter these beliefs. It is difficult to identify the maladaptive core beliefs that lead men to not actively work to prevent violence, in part because these beliefs are part of our larger cultural reality. In this section, we discuss some of the culturally held beliefs that are implicated in violence and introduce the concept of cultural inoculation to messages that counter these beliefs. We then present strategies to counter these beliefs, in part through an understanding of cognitive authority.

The Core Beliefs of Men: Do We Believe the Media?

Although the core beliefs of individual men and boys vary, there are also pervasive media-driven core beliefs that are shared at a societal level. The importance of understanding these beliefs cannot be overstated. Indeed, changing the core beliefs of men is the basis of the work of many noted commentators (Kaufman, 1994). Perhaps more important than understanding all of the core beliefs of men is gaining some insight into those beliefs that are challenged as men become engaged in the violence prevention community. In a first-person account of his experience of profound transformation to a profeminist stance, Hank Shaw (2001) identified a number of his beliefs that were challenged. The beliefs he identified as integral to his own transformation include disbelief regarding the extent of violence against women and issues of societal responsibility for dealing with it. We have used Mr. Shaw's language not to belittle men's experiences but rather to capture some of the culturally held beliefs in the language of a well-meaning man.

“It's Exaggerated!”

“I had this sneaking suspicion that my feminist friends—including my esteemed co-mortgage holder—were blowing this whole violence against women thing WAY OUT OF PROPORTION” (Shaw, 2001). As indicated by Shaw (2001), men may assume that the problem of violence against women has been exaggerated. Often the logic used to support this assumption is based on the peculiar notion that if the problem were significant it would receive a lot of media coverage, but because there is little coverage, the problem must be overstated. This tautological reasoning enables men to defer to the cognitive authority of an external source, the media. The media, however, have little motivation to report domestic violence issues given that one of their target demographics, men, have little interest in the issue. From a process of change perspective, this situation inherently supports and validates the hegemonic worldview of many men and affords their continued lack of involvement.

“It's Not My Problem!”

“Yes dear. That's awful. Terrible! Pass me the Doritos, would ya?” (Shaw, 2001). Activism regarding violence prevention has largely been considered a women's issue (Berkowitz, 2004; Connell, 2003). Activist groups are composed mostly of women, community agencies have been established primarily for and by women, and much of the rhetoric of violence prevention falls within the subjects of “feminism” or “women's studies.” This situation has led to the common societal expectation that men have no place in violence prevention work. Indeed, this opinion has even been echoed by commentators within the violence prevention community (Mohan &

Schulz, 2001). Whereas the underlying causes and assumptions of this situation are subject to debate and opinion, it has resulted in a dynamic that is extremely detrimental to the engagement process. If men feel they have no ownership of the problem it becomes extremely difficult for them to sufficiently engage in the process to support any change of attitudes or beliefs. As long as violence against women is construed as a women's issue, as opposed to a universal issue of civil rights and justice, attempts to engage men will be impeded (Connell, 2003).

“It’s a Feminist Issue!”

“You think you’re saying, ‘I’d like to talk to you about an important issue that often gets overlooked: violence against women.’ But what gets heard on the other end is this: ‘I’d like to waste valuable time by talking about a REALLY ANNOYING FEMINIST ISSUE!’” (Shaw, 2001). Many communities have any number of committees, groups, and panels devoted to ending violence against women. These bodies are often self-identified and publicly recognized as feminist organizations. The message that men may perceive is that if they are not feminists, they have no place in this issue. The core beliefs of men can therefore synthesize into a combination where many consider violence against women to be an overstated issue that is not necessarily any concern of theirs largely because it is publicly owned by the feminist community. As a “nonproblem” belonging to someone else, men may have little incentive or desire to become engaged with the violence prevention community.

Cultural Inoculation: The Product of Feminist Discourse

In sum, these core beliefs converge to create a situation where many men recognize that violence against women is a problem but suspect that it is likely overstated, is strictly a feminist issue and does not concern them. Unfortunately, these beliefs combine to form a state of “cultural inoculation” in which men may be immune to the effects of programs designed to engage them. Any consideration of programs addressed at changing the core beliefs of these men must consider the impact of this cultural inoculation.

Solution: Shifting Beliefs at the Public and Personal Levels

Education is an important part of overcoming some of the misconceptions regarding violence against women. Hank Shaw (2001), for example, has produced a 16-page pamphlet with the White Ribbon Campaign that provides a number of statistics and headlines that directly counter the contention that the problem is exaggerated. Similarly, bodies such as the Family Violence Prevention Fund, the White Ribbon Campaign, and Dads and Daughters have been actively involved in creating educational campaigns for men and boys. However, although these educational campaigns are necessary, they are not necessarily sufficient. Indeed, the nature of the core

beliefs of many men and the cultural inoculation they experience may drastically limit the effectiveness of these campaigns.

Individuals process information in a variety of ways. In general, people can acquire information through an active search process or through a considerably more passive monitoring process. The actual perception and recognition of information is largely dependent on a variety of factors related to personal characteristics and core beliefs. Pendleton and Chatman (1998), for example, maintained that information processing is largely related to what they call Social Norms, World View, and Social Types, which are essentially comparable to individuals' core beliefs and ways of understanding the world. As applied to the current context, the primary consideration of their work is that the cultural inoculation experienced by men may lead to their ignoring or "blunting" the information contained within these education campaigns (T. D. Wilson, 1997). An additional education intervention beyond simply distributing pamphlets and posters may be required to engage men in actively considering their core beliefs.

One issue pertinent to engaging men in identifying and challenging core beliefs is cognitive authority. Cognitive authority refers to the salience that is attached to a message based on the perceived expertise or reliability of the source delivering the message (P. Wilson, 1983). Messages are more likely to be attended to and integrated in a way that alters existing beliefs if individuals view the source of information as credible and knowledgeable. Within this context of cognitive authority, it is not surprising that single-sex prevention groups led by male facilitators tend to be more effective in changing attitudes than coed groups or groups with female facilitators (Berkowitz, 1994). One initiative that uses high-profile athletes to establish cognitive authority with youth has been developed by Jackson Katz (1995), cocreator of the Mentors in Violence Prevention (MVP) Program at Northeastern University's Center for the Study of Sport in Society.

The MVP program enlists high school, college, and professional athletes to act as spokesmen for the prevention of violence against women. The MVP program has four main goals: to raise awareness, challenge thinking, open dialogue, and inspire leadership. One of the activities used in MVP is a "playbook" of scenarios that helps youth identify a situation where they may be in the bystander position, recognize possible beliefs and thoughts they might have in the situation, and consider various options. For example, the following scenario is in the playbook (retrieved from <http://www.sportinsociety.org/mvp/samplescenario2.html>):

You're in the hallway between classes. You see a couple you know arguing, then you see the guy push his girlfriend into her locker. Other students in the hallways aren't doing anything.

Next, the playbook identifies "Train of Thought," which is internal dialogue that represents the different attitudes and beliefs that could lead a young man to intervene or not:

If nobody else is stepping in, why should I? . . . It could get ugly. . . . He could turn on me. . . . Am I ready to get into a fight, if it comes to that? . . . What if he has a weapon? . . . Besides, if he treats his girlfriend like that and she stays with him, why should I get involved? . . . Is it any of my business? . . . But if I don't do something, I'm saying it's okay for a guy to abuse a young woman. . . . What should I do in this situation?

Following the "Train of Thought" section, there are several options outlined for youth to consider, as well as space for individuals to generate their own responses. This approach helps boys become aware of their various attitudes and beliefs and gives them the opportunity to discuss these attitudes and the role of the bystander with high status facilitators (e.g., athletes), thus invoking cognitive authority for the entire process.

In conclusion, the need to challenge and change core beliefs is an integral component of the cognitive-behavioral change process. In the arena of violence prevention, the core beliefs of lack of ownership, exaggeration of the problem, and lack of responsibility are culturally reinforced by the media and stereotypes about men. Other important attitudes are the ones that are triggered specifically in bystander situations (e.g., it's not my business; if she really didn't like it she'd leave him). To challenge these core beliefs, educational approaches are important, and the concept of cognitive authority may augment the effectiveness of these education campaigns. Indeed, Kaufman (1994, 2001) has written extensively about the need for men to have opportunities to discuss and consider these issues with other men in safe spaces. At an individual level, providing a carefully structured opportunity for boys and men to be confronted with the fallibility of these core beliefs, such as through athlete-facilitated workshops as part of Jackson Katz's MVP program provides an avenue to challenging beliefs.

Strategies for Change

For sustained behavioral change to be achieved, CBT frameworks point to the importance of reinforcement, behavioral skills, and self-efficacy. One of the most fundamental components of CBT or any strategies that incorporate social learning theory is the critical role that reinforcement plays in shaping behavior (Bandura, 1977). Simply stated, people are more likely to repeat behaviors that are positively reinforced. In addition, self-efficacy, the feeling of being competent in a particular area and feeling confident that a behavior will lead to a desired outcome, exerts a powerful force on behavior choice. On the other side of the same coin, people are unlikely to behave in ways that are not reinforced (or that result in punishment) or to attempt behaviors they do not have confidence will lead to a positive outcome. In this section, we discuss the lack of inherent reinforcement for men and boys to engage in violence prevention. Furthermore, lack of opportunities to build skills and

the accompanying lack of self-efficacy related to intervening as an effective bystander are highlighted. Strategies proposed include using groups to create reinforcement and building opportunities for practice and success.

Lack of Inherent Reinforcement

There is no obvious inherent positive reinforcement for becoming a male leader in violence prevention. With the exception of famous athletes and celebrities who receive widespread praise and recognition for public actions to end violence, most men and boys are not reinforced for this behavior. When using CBT for more typical targets, there is an assumption that initial changes in behavior will be inherently reinforced and magnify future efforts. For example, a depressed client who manages to get up and out of the house for a daily walk will likely experience greater feelings of well-being, and this success experience translates to motivation to make further attempts to be active. There is not a similar foreseeable benefit for men to choose to embrace feminism.

Indeed, men and boys who engage in profeminist behavior will likely be ridiculed or harassed for their lack of conformity with the hegemonic culture (Berkowitz, 2004). In Kehler's (2000) study of profeminist young men, one of them spoke of the challenge of trying to read cues from others and knowing what risks were acceptable. Specifically, he talked about trying to decide whether to hug another male or whether to stick to a handshake or high five. In some situations, this social directive is clear. In others, individuals have to read ambiguous clues and take risks that may lead to rejection or harassment. Among youth, the impact of male peers and involvement in sports groups that reinforce stereotypic notions of masculinity cannot be overstated. High school culture tends to glorify the male "jock" ideal, and boys who stray from these norms may be swiftly punished or ostracized by their peers (Martino, 1999; Messner, 1990; Pascoe, 2003). Although peer harassment is typically identified as the most prevalent form, boys who do not meet stereotypic ideals of masculinity have also reported being harassed by their physical education teachers (Davison, 2000).

A starker example of the potential costs of getting involved was relayed in the Coulter (2003) study. One of the young men talked about making the "split second" decision to intervene when he saw a man, several years older than himself, assaulting his girlfriend on the street. The outcome was extremely negative for this young man, both in terms of being physically assaulted himself, as well as in the lack of gratitude the victim conveyed. "I get the crap beaten out of me and he goes and cools off for a second. She comes up to me and says, 'What'd you do that for?!' and starts raggin' me out for interfering" (p. 142). Although those of us who work in the domestic violence field can understand and conceptualize the victim's response, without this frame of reference the young man's experience of intervening was one in which there was no apparent reinforcement, but rather, significant punishment.

Solution: Opportunities to Build Skills and Socially Constructed Reinforcement

To effectively engage men and boys in violence prevention, we need to socially construct engagement as a positive experience. Men and boys need to be reinforced for involvement, but they also need the expectation that being involved will lead to a desired outcome (i.e., improved self-efficacy). The latter concept speaks to the need for competence and skill building. To use an analogy of a social skills group for socially anxious adults, these adults may highly value having a social life and expect that having an active social life would be a positive experience. However, if they do not think that there are any actions they can take to increase the likelihood of obtaining this active social life (i.e., their self-efficacy is low), it will be difficult for them to take risks and try new behaviors. Similarly, many men may want to intervene in a situation that they suspect might be violent. The Family Violence Prevention Fund has a series of powerful print ads that encourage men to confront friends that are abusive in their intimate relationships. These ads portray injured women and slogans such as, "It's hard to confront a friend who abuses his wife . . . but not nearly as hard as being his wife" and "If the noise coming from next door were loud music you'd do something about it." These ads have a powerful emotional impact and may be successful at motivating men to take action; however, there may still be a significant skill gap with respect to knowing what action to take.

Building Opportunities for Practice and Success

Building opportunities for practice and success is easier with children and adolescents than with adults, simply because these experiences can be structured into the school setting. The school setting provides a particularly effective vehicle to create these opportunities for reinforcement and motivation, given the degree of structure and monitoring that can be implemented (Berkowitz, Jaffe, Peacock, Rosenbluth, & Sousa, 2003). One such project currently under evaluation in 26 high schools in our school board is the Fourth R (reading, 'riting, 'rithmetic, and *relationships*; www.the-fourthr.ca).

The Fourth R is a comprehensive school-based program to build healthy relationships and prevent risk behaviors (Wolfe, Jaffe, & Crooks, 2006). The cornerstone of the Fourth R is a 21-lesson skill-based curriculum that promotes healthy relationships and targets violence, high-risk sexual behavior, and substance use in adolescents. In the program, adolescents are provided with accurate information about dating violence and woman abuse, but the majority of the time is spent on skill development. The Fourth R has three units: Violence Prevention, Sexual Behavior, and Substance Use. Each unit contains similar themes of values clarification, provision of information, decision making, and an extensive skill development component. Adolescents receive ample practice with role-playing for ways to resolve conflict scenarios, both as

participants and in the role of bystander. The opportunity to see their peers role-play solutions is an important part of the program, because observing models successfully complete a behavioral response is one of the most effective ways to increase self-efficacy (Bandura, 1977). This skill-focused interactive approach is effective. Preliminary evaluation indicates that compared to students in control schools, students who have participated in the Fourth R have more knowledge and less accepting attitudes regarding violence and also demonstrate better conflict resolution skills in a role play behavioral analog paradigm.

The most innovative components of the Fourth R, currently being piloted, are ways to further integrate these skill development opportunities into the real fabric of high school life. One of the authors of this article (Hughes), who was previously the Learning Coordinator for Violence Prevention for the entire school board, has been experimenting with live role-plays in sports situations. For example, during a classroom visit to a Grade 9 boys' physical health education class, he was watching a group of young men throw footballs back and forth and he set up a quick role-play with three of the boys. One of the boys was to take on the role of having been out with a girl on the weekend and wanting to talk about the sexual behavior that had occurred in a way that clearly objectified the young woman. The second boy was to encourage the first to tell more details and to reinforce the first boy's objectification. The third boy was to role-play being a friend of the young woman in question, feeling uncomfortable with the situation, and trying to intervene to challenge his friends and redirect the conversation. The role-play went smoothly, with the rest of the class observing and debriefing afterwards. Indeed, the whole exercise took less than 5 minutes. Obviously, the success of this *in vivo* role-play built upon the boys' previous experience in structured classroom role-plays as part of the Fourth R. Attempting a role-play like this one from scratch would be difficult. The boys' feedback of the experience was positive, and they indicated that the situation was realistic, which increases the possibility that learning experiences will generalize to the boys' lives. Furthermore, the attempts to resolve the situation provided the rest of the class with a model for an alternate response to a not uncommon situation.

The concept of appropriate role models is a complex issue. On one hand, celebrities may have the star appeal and cognitive authority to deliver a message, but on the other hand, youth and men will relate more closely to role models with whom they can identify. In both of the ethnographic studies involving young men, the role of parents, teachers, and friends as role models was evident (Coulter, 2003; Kehler, 2000). There is a compelling account in Coulter's (2003) study of a young man describing the profound impact of seeing his father confront his uncle about domestic violence. That his father was typically an unemotional man who did not discuss relationship issues only made the experience more salient. Whether or not the father was able to prevent future violence with respect to the uncle, he clearly conveyed an important violence prevention message to his son about the role and responsibility of bystanders to violence.

Building Opportunities for Reinforcement

Reinforcement can be extrinsic or intrinsic in nature. The former involves getting an external reward for a behavior in comparison to the latter, where the reward is built into the behavior (Bandura, 1977). In building reinforcement opportunities for men who engage in violence prevention, both types of reinforcement are possible. Our local school board hosts an annual violence prevention leadership awards night for high school students who have excelled in violence prevention and gender equity activities, cosponsored by several community agencies. The leadership awards night, now in its 5th year, has grown from 50 parents attending to witness their children win awards to a sold-out crowd of hundreds, with each of the 29 high schools in the district nominating two or three award winners. The concept is simple and adolescent-centered; the speeches are short, the menu is pizza, and the awards are followed by two IMAX films. The impact is tremendous. It is an opportunity for the community to come together and publicly thank the youth for their involvement, and the award winners take great pride in their accomplishments.

Inherent reinforcement opportunities stem from establishing groups with positive identities about violence prevention. In Coulter's (2003) ethnographic study, some of the young men identified belonging to their schools' gender equity clubs as an important public platform for their engagement. Group identity is a positive experience in and of itself but also provides some protection from being forced to take the huge leap to personal transformation and commitment alone. The Family Violence Prevention Fund has developed community-organizing tools to help individuals mobilize a group to engage in the process together, including a neighbor-to-neighbor domestic violence action kit and a worker-to-worker domestic violence kit. These kits provide guidelines for organizing a group, a list of specific activities for the group to carry out, and a list of books and videos with accompanying discussion guides (available at www.endabuse.org). They provide an opportunity for a group to be created to support individuals' work in the area but also skills-based ideas to increase the likelihood of a positive experience, thus boosting individual self-efficacy.

In summary, engaging in violence prevention can be a positive experience for men and boys if it is constructed as such. Building self-efficacy and skills is one avenue for increasing the likelihood of individuals taking action, although this may be easier to achieve with boys in the school setting than with men in general. For adults, community mobilization may serve a similar function. Using group dynamics to create a reinforcing experience is also useful, and specific initiatives have emerged to help direct these groups' formation and activities.

Putting It All Together: The Forum Theatre Example

In this article, we have discussed the need to engage men and boys in violence prevention by identifying clear goals regarding equitable gender relationships. In

addition, we have highlighted the importance of countering beliefs that support violence or bystander apathy. Finally, we have underscored the need to provide opportunities for men and boys to develop skills to use as bystanders, be reinforced for involvement in profeminist activities, and develop self-efficacy in these domains. Our local school board, the Thames Valley District School Board in London, Ontario (Canada) has a wide variety of innovative, action-oriented violence prevention initiatives (see www.tvdsb.on.ca). One of their programs that provides young men and women the opportunity to engage in all three of these areas is Forum Theatre (Jaffe, Wolfe, Crooks, Hughes, & Baker, 2004). Forum Theatre is a form of social action drama that was developed by Brazilian Augusto Boal, author of *Theatre of the Oppressed* (Boal, 1990). This form of theatre transforms the spectator into a *spect-actor*, by involving the audience in an interactive manner.

Forum Theatre, as it has emerged in the Thames Valley District School Board, is a social action form of drama involving troupes of young actors who travel to different schools and perform plays that have strong themes of violence and harassment. The plays, written as a collaborative effort between students and teachers, are quite disturbing to watch. Plays in recent years have included themes of dating violence, homophobia, bullying-related suicide, group violence, and Internet bullying. The Forum Theatre approach involves the play being performed start to finish once. After watching the play through the first time, a teacher facilitator tells members of the audience that they will have the opportunity to change the reality they have just seen unfold in front of them. This time, when the play starts, people in the audience are encouraged to put up their hand and yell "stop" when they see something they find unacceptable (e.g., an episode of violence or harassment). When someone yells "stop," the tableau freezes, and the person who has stopped the action is given the opportunity to replace either the victim or the bystander (but not the perpetrator). The scene is then replayed with the person who has intervened having the opportunity to affect a different outcome in the scene. The interactions are very realistic, and the perpetrators do not back down simply because they are told to stop. The person who has attempted to intervene has to be creative and persistent to change the course of events.

Forum Theatre demonstrates all of the elements that have been discussed in this article. It encourages male and female youth to find nonviolent solutions and to become involved bystanders. It demonstrates the beliefs that lead to violence and to a code of silence among bystanders. It also provides youth with the opportunity to try different skills and increase their self-efficacy for being able to handle a situation. Even youth who do not come up on stage to intervene will benefit from seeing their peers role-model various solutions. Youth who do take the risk to participate receive ample positive feedback from the student actors and the teacher facilitator. The message arising from the Forum Theatre experience is a powerful one: Everybody has both the opportunity and the responsibility to stop violence, and without intervention, these scenes play out to distressing conclusions. Discussion groups that are facilitated after Forum Theatre presentations have found students to be disturbed by

the scenes, but at the same time galvanized to take action to stop violence in their own schools. The Forum Theatre experience creates a strong sense of cognitive dissonance and distress in the audience. Continuing to dismiss violence as “not my problem” has clear consequences as the play unfolds. More recently, Forum Theatre is being piloted with adults in open community venues. This initiative, organized by a group of men working to engage other men in violence prevention, involves a group of actors presenting a play called, “Missed Opportunities.” The play features a family where the husband is abusive to his wife and teenage daughter. Throughout the play, a number of other adults come into contact with the family—the wife’s boss (who is a friend of the husband), a friend of the wife, the teenage boyfriend of the daughter, and a reverend from the church. Each of these individuals has the opportunity to intervene, and a sense that something is wrong, but is unsure how to get involved, and the opportunity passes. As with the youth version, the play is presented a second time with spectators having the opportunity to stop the action and intervene. The early pilots of this venture have met with enthusiasm and high praise, with numerous community members participating. This initiative represents an innovative and enjoyable way to mobilize men by challenging bystander attitudes.

Summary

The movement to involve men as equal partners in preventing violence against women and girls has gained considerable momentum over the past few decades. In this article, we have proposed a tentative CBT-based framework for conceptualizing some of the challenges and solutions in this area from a profeminist position. Perhaps most important, we believe that engaging the average man or boy requires the “invite, don’t indict” stance endorsed by the Family Violence Prevention Fund (www.endabuse.org). Approaching males with respect, rather than as toxic agents, is an essential part of this approach (Connell, 2000). It involves recognizing that although some men are clearly part of “the problem” and others are clearly already part of the solution, a great number of men fall somewhere in the middle. These men in the middle may be well-meaning men who are looking for opportunities and direction about what steps they can take. Allowing this action-based contribution as a first step will likely have a more pervasive effect on underlying ideas about masculinity than directly attacking these core beliefs, which are culturally supported. Recognizing the role of public action in the transformation of personal ideas and core beliefs provides a strong rationale for encouraging well-meaning men to get involved.

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