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TOOLS TO WORK WITH MAN IN IRELAND

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Daphne Project JUST/2009/DAP3/AG/1235
Project workstream 4



SUNIA GEEL – Prevent and combat violence
against children, young people and women and to
protect victims and groups at risk

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www.suniageel.eu

PROJECT- COORDINATOR

Exchange House
National Travellers Service
Great Strand Street 61
Dublin 1, Ireland
www.exchangehouse.ie
info@www.exchangehouse.ie



Methodologies for social service provision for Travellers affected by Domestic Violence

Tools to work with Men



Sunia Geel
Daphne Project JUST/2009/DAP3/AG/1235

Domestic Violence – Introduction

Violence within families is a worldwide social problem. Besides children, women in particular are victims and the deeds go mostly unpunished. Estimates suggest that more women worldwide die within their own homes than as a result of war and civil war. Domestic violence is one of the most common human rights violations and is a result of structural power asymmetries within intimate relationships and families.

Violence hinders development: such traumatic experiences have a serious negative influence on the self-esteem of affected women and undermine their ability to be strong members of a strong civil society, who stand up for their rights. Furthermore, the damages caused by violence affect health, education and working ability. Therefore it contributes to poverty in affected families. (*Basics and Source: "Bread for the World"(Editor): Overcoming of domestic violence – A global challenge, Stuttgart 2007)*

Objectives of the tools

The tools are meant to offers social workers additional instrument to work with Traveller families affected by domestic violence within the framework of social service provision.

The tools concentrate on methods of awareness raising, self-awareness and of acceptance of the presence of domestic violence within families. The tools can be applied to support families in developing internal instruments to prevent domestic violence by understanding the reason of the problem and by understanding how domestic violence has been developing and has been dealt with within the family structure.

The tools help family members to better understand their role within the family-power-relations, to reflect upon the function of their position within the family and to learn how to find ways to overcome domestic violence.

If an exercise asks participants to write notes, self-reflective stories or other forms of written expression, these elements may also be replaced by oral stories or the social worker taking written notes on a flip chart. This method is suitable when working with illiterate participants.

NOTE: *The tools are for social workers. The tools are not intended for use in psychotherapy-settings, for individual with psychological disorders due to severe trauma experience and are not intended for confrontational therapy settings between victims and perpetrators.*

Required equipment for the different tools

Flipchart	Pens
Flipchart pens	Pins
Paper	Toys
Name tags	Evaluation sheets
Video camera and player	

Duration

Each session will probably take 45 to 60 minutes, in some cases 90 minutes – depending on the size of group.

Tool 1: Transcultural Biography Work (TBW)

What is Biography Work?

Biography Work explores people's life stories and their memories in order to develop beneficial self concepts and broaden choices both in the present and future. It stimulates a holistic mutual understanding of people.

It is an approved approach, with a variety of uses such as in adult education, care and elderly care, in the support of foster and adopted children, and in counselling/coaching.

Biography Work is an approach and an attitude rather than a method – it can be a way to relate to other people professionally and privately. The basic attitude is: *"I want to find out how you became what you are now, what you experienced on your way, how your points of view developed."*

Biography Work's base is humanistic values:

1. A human is a psychic entity and part of the universe – to the same degree autonomous and interdependent. The autonomy of an individual expands the more he/she is conscious of the interdependency with everybody and all.
2. All living beings deserve awe and respect.
3. Free decisions are taken within inner and outer borders. It is possible to broaden the borders.

Biography Work uses all kind of methods to stimulate memory, to exchange it and reflect on it. It works with memory to learn from past experience, to have biographical resources available for present and future life. Occasionally, it also traces back inadequate patterns of thinking, feeling, acting and taking decisions, with the aim to inspire new ways.

How to combine Biography Work with transculturality?

Culture is how people – communities of people – create and organize their life.

Cultures are always changing, mixing, and influencing each other. They are not fixed entities. Each culture is a product of a long historic process and continuous influences. Culture is actually not a thing but something people do and experience.

As soon as people of seemingly different culture meet, some kind of influence and change happens – transculturality.

Orienting Biography Work as transcultural focuses on:

- Exploring what feels foreign in me – to understand better what I experience as foreign outside myself.
- Identifying and appreciating personal talents and capabilities learned through living in different cultural contexts.

- Identifying what is needed to handle life from the perspective of another culture
- Stimulating and cultivating processes of mutual understanding among people who regard themselves as “members” of different cultures; creating a “common third” – doing culture through transcultural communication.

Some further characteristics of Transcultural Biography Work (TBW)

Transcultural biographical self-exploration leads to a qualitative exchange which has the potential to change mind-sets. An important stimulus for such change is the recognition that human beings – regardless of their cultural background, gender, age – are similar in terms of basic needs and emotional patterns and reactions.

A transcultural mind set and related practice does not eradicate difference but extends possibilities of mutual understanding. Approaching other people as “basically similar” creates a different perception, reflection on one selves’ and others behaviour, decision-taking and approach.

TBW can activate a communication, understanding and learning process. A main merit of conceptualizing Biography Work as “transcultural” is that comprehensive communication will be stimulated and suggested to participants.

TBW helps us express ourselves, rediscover and share our memories, get into dialogue with each other and understand our dependencies and differences on the basis of mutual respect and understanding. TBW respects people’s unique experience, to start from their horizon of experience and understanding. Biography Work helps overcome misunderstanding and stereotypic perceptions among people.

Social worker – Male Client relation

This tool offers materials where male clients will be asked about their own emotional qualities. Males may feel more confident to talk about emotions with male social workers. Thus the social service institution has to decide before the set of exercises if gender issues have to be considered.

In general, it is recommended that these exercises for male clients are hosted by male social workers.

The only exception to this rule is for male clients who have suffered from extreme violence experience by other males themselves. In such a case a male individual may feel more comfortable with a female social worker.

Note: *Transcultural biography work is suitable as a method for social workers working with men who know that there are violent and who accept that they have to learn to handle their violent outbreaks. Biography work is NOT suitable for social workers who work with men with psychological disorders, men in detention centers as result of domestic violence and for work with men who have committed murder. For such men, only professional psycho-therapists should use methods of transcultural biography work.*

Exercise 1: Transcultural biography exercises for men

Aim:

To provide an opportunity for men to reflect about their own role within their families based on experience made during their own phases of life.

To provide support in this process

To increase insight and understanding

For men in conflict situations, for men with a personal history of being violent and for men who participate in social service provision due to being identified as perpetrators in their own relationships and in their own families, biography work can lead to a deeper insight into personal characteristics which cause violent outbreaks.

The Violence biography

Several schools of psycho-therapy and sociology define violent outbreaks either as a one-time incident or as a basic disposition for acting violently. One-time incidents can happen when an individual is drawn into a fight, is being attacked, is under severe pressure or under drugs. Generally speaking, individuals with one-time incidents where they act violently, often feel very sorry for their behaviour. They do not have any personal records of violence and there are no criminal charges or police records against them regarding any form of violence.

Men with a basic disposition for violent outbreaks often have their own “personal story of violence”. They grew up with violence, saw male role-models acting violently, experienced violence themselves (as victims) and often learnt as boys that conflicts can be resolved with violence. The more violent a person is within a group or cultural setting, the more respect this person will be granted by other members of this group. Such a group can be a relationship of two people, a family, a larger family cluster or an entire neighborhood which is controlled by violent social structures.

This exercise on violent biography is especially suitable for men of this second group, for men with their own personal story of violence.

For social workers it is important to understand, that a “violent biography” in no way may be used as “excuse” for being violent. Male clients have to understand that this exercise may help them to better understand their own situation, their own personal background but that this will not be taken as an excuse and will not prevent state authorities or other institutions to place legal charges on them.

Exercise I - Drawing to support working with memory

Single Work:

Procedure:

“Draw a picture which shows the way through your life: What meaning did violence have? How did it influence your life? Highlight three important experiences / phases on your way of life with a special color or put a symbol at these points (these symbols could be brought by the trainer or could be collected by the participants before as a personal item which is of importance for them).”

Analysis:

Discussion in the group or in small setting

Participants are asked to describe their pictures. The others may give feedback as to what they see. Feedback is to be only on their perception, not interpretation or evaluation.

Group work:

Procedure:

The participants bring a picture or photo from their past or an important object, something that has to do with their experiences within their culture(s) of origin. These objects can be used for a group setting where everybody has to tell something about the objects they brought along with them. The trainer may also form smaller groups. Then they work along the following questions:

- Which objects of the others make me especially curious?
- About which objects to I wish to learn more?

Analysis:

Discussion within the group aims to strengthen the understanding through listening, reflection, comparing and drawing conclusions.

In a similar way music or pieces of music can be used for this exercise. Music may especially be used to discuss the impact music may have on an individual in specific situations.

Tool 2: Personal definition of violence

Preparation:

Social worker explains to the client that the exercise will be a form of analytical session on violence. During this session, the client will see, where and when he experienced violence himself or was witness of violence.

Social worker clearly explains that the experience of violence of the man himself will in no way be an excuse for being violent as well. Own experience of violence is not an excuse for being a perpetrator! But reflection upon one's own biography may help to understand what events and situation may cause violent outbreaks due to similar experience during former stages of life.

The social worker and the client sign a small "contract" in which the client states that he fully understood this pre-condition of the exercise.

Materials:

- Post cards / Post-its
- Pens
- Flipchart

Setting:

- This exercise is suitable for individual sessions as well as for group sessions

Duration:

- In individual sessions up to 60 minutes including discussion with social worker.
- In group sessions up to 90 minutes including discussion with social worker.

Exercise:

Procedure:

The client is asked to take as many post cards as he wishes to take.

Card 1: Write his own definition of violence:

What is violence for you?

(To hit someone? To beat someone up? To keep a person in a room with locked doors? To rape someone? To control a person's access to food, money, communication, friends, family members etc.?)

Card 2 List what is NOT classed as violence for him

For example: Is violence only something that physically hurts?

Is violence only physical impact or is there psychological, material, emotional violence as well?

Is shouting at somebody violence?

Card 3: list what he expects from being violent:

For example: Do I expect that the other person hits or shouts back and I have the chance to be stronger, louder and by that to be the winner?

Do I expect that the other person is intimidated, remains silent and I have a quiet life again and do not have to discuss or argue?

Do I assume that the other person “enjoys” me being violent? (Does the person want to be hit, raped (as a form of sex), being shouted at etc.)

Do I expect that my violence will cause a domino-like multiplication of violence with a group helping me to support my power-position within the group?

Do I use violence in conflict situations because I am unable to argue, to make an argument, a statement or to clearly but quietly say and explain my position?

Card 4: list other men he knows (father, brother, grandfather, friends etc.) who act violently as well.

Who are other men who are violent as well?

Where are they violent?

Is violence part of a normal relation with a woman?

Does my culture “teach me” that violence is a “correct” way to treat women?

Is a violent male superior to non-violent male and females?

Once the client is finished with the cards, the social worker sticks the cards in the same order above on the flipchart. *If possible, each participant should have his own colour.* The cards are grouped together according to the question asked.

If clients are illiterate or unable to write, the social worker should decide for individual sessions only. In such a case, the session should be done in form of an interview during with the social worker asks the questions listed above and makes notes of the answers.

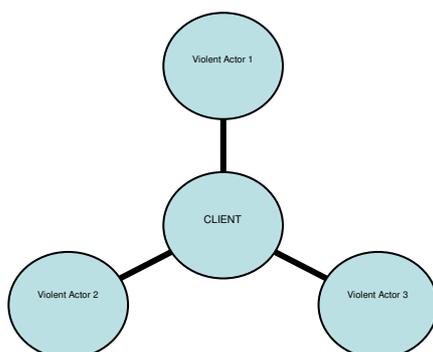
Analysis:

Discussion to increase understanding of a definition of violence

The intention is that clients learn that violence consists of a full range of activities which they themselves often do not see as violence.

During this discussion the social worker will include answers from question 2, 3 and 4 as well. Question 2 often includes answers which according to the legal definition of violence clearly ARE violence but which often are not seen as violence by the clients.

Questions 3 and 4 opens up the discussion to the social environment a client has been living in. The answers to these questions help the social worker to draw a “map of violence” in the individual life of a client.



The session closes with a citation of a suitable official definition of violence and a list of violent activities which the client did NOT defined to be violent BEFORE the session.

Tool 3: Personal experience of violence

Note:

For this exercise on personal experience with violence, participants will talk about passive or active experience they have made in their private life. For individuals this may relate to trauma experience. Exercises recalling such experience may lead to trigger outbreaks of traumatic events. Thus this exercise should be applied with great care. Social workers may seek support and assistance by a psychotherapist to be present during this exercise!

Exercise:

To follow on only after Tool 2 exercise has been completed.

Preparation:

The flipchart with the paper cards and the “map of violence” from the first session is present during this second session.

In this session the man / the man is/are asked to reflect upon their own experience with violence according to different phases of life. Phases of life are defined according to age:

- Small child
- Young child (kindergarten, primary school)
- Older child (going to school)
- Teenager (in puberty)
- Young adult
- Adult in his twenties
- Adult in his thirties
- Older adults
- Seniors

Materials:

- Paper cards for flipcharts
- Flipchart-Paper with a time-line starting with
 - Age 0 – 4
 - Age 5 – 8
 - Age 9 – 12
 - Age 13-17
 - Age 18-21
 - Age 22-28
 - Age 29-40
 - Age 41-55
 - Age 55 and over

The time line is drawn in the middle of the flip chart paper so that there is space on the left and right side of the line to later stick the paper cards to it.

Setting:

- This exercise is suitable for individual sessions as well as for group sessions with a maximum of four men.

Duration:

- In individual sessions up to 60 minutes including discussion with social worker.
- In group sessions up to 90 minutes including discussion with social worker.

Exercise:

Clients are asked to think about violence and domestic violence in their own life. Clients will be given two sets of paper cards, each with a different color. Color 1 will be the “passive colour”, colour 2 is the “active colour”.

The “passive color” means: When and where did I experience violence myself either as a witness (not directly suffering from violence) or as a victim (directly suffering from violence)?

The “active color” means: When and where did I myself act in a violent way as an active individual / perpetrator? The social worker may decide to add the question “Why did I do so?” as well if this was suitable for the client.

Once the client is done with filling out the cards in the two colors, the social worker takes the card and asks the client during which age of life the experience was made. The card is then ticked on the flip-chart in the respective time-line of age of life. Passive cards are posted on the left side of the time line, active cards on the right side of the time line.

As soon as all cards are posted on the flip chart, the social worker will ask the client or each client individually, to narrate his passive life-story of violence. This narration is followed by the active life-story of violence. After this, the client is asked to draw conclusions between both “life stories of violence”. When did a passive experience cause an active violent action? The social worker links passive and active cards with a line drawn with a flipchart marker.

This exercise will support perpetrators to learn how violence has been part of their life, how specific situation and personal memories may cause violent actions and how the client “uses” his social environment, individual and cultural background to certify violent actions.

Tool 4: Feelings, affects and emotions

In this exercise, the social worker discusses violence in a client's relationship. In general, the male client will be the perpetrator and his wife or girlfriend will suffer from his violent outbreaks.

This exercise will help to explain, how violent outbreaks are linked to emotional conditions of the client.

Preparation:

The flipchart with the paper cards and the "map of violence" from the prior sessions are present during this third session.

Materials:

- Paper cards for flipcharts
- Handout with the "5 basic emotions"

Setting:

- This exercise is suitable for individual sessions as well as for group sessions with a maximum of four men.

Duration:

- In individual sessions up to 60 minutes including discussion with social worker.
- In group sessions up to 90 minutes including discussion with social worker.

Exercise:

The social worker hands out each client(s) a paper showing the five basic emotions.

Client(s) are asked to report about one specific situation during which they deeply felt

- the emotion of Joy
- the emotion of Love
- the emotion of Sorrow
- the emotion of Fury
- the emotion of Fear.

Client(s) are asked to take a paper card and to note

- what they enjoyed most during each emotion
- what they were most afraid of during each emotion.

Social workers at this stage may point out that even very positive emotions such as love and joy may have negative characteristics as well. A person may feel that deep love has elements of isolation, fixation or emotions of "being bound". Another person may link love and emotion to sexual expectations and qualities which are seen as "specifically male" (such as being a good

lover etc. which, depending on the situation, a male does not wish to be at a specific point of time or during a specific situation of love).

Client(s) are asked to specifically report about the three conflict emotions:

- When did / does violence come in?
- How does violence help me to handle conflict emotions?
- Do I feel better after being violent or do I feel guilty?

The social worker discussed these aspects of how to handle conflict emotions with the client(s) and draws a mind-map on a flip-chart paper with the client. If this is a group session, each participant will get his own mind-map.

After this discussion the social worker asks the client(s) of possible ways how to maybe handle the three conflict emotions in another way, without violence:

- Is this possible or just an illusion?
- May non-violent conflict resolution work elsewhere but not in MY situation of life?
- May non-violent conflict resolution be accepted in other cultures but not in MY culture?
- Is violent conflict resolution very male?

In the final phase of this exercise, the social worker takes the cards from the former exercise and the “map of violence” in which the client(s) identified other males in their life who acted violently. Did the clients learn from them and their way of violent actions how to handle conflict emotions?

The answers will be included in the mind-map.

The 5 basic emotions

Joy

&

Love

Need for closeness and emotional openness



The three conflict emotions

Sorrow

Grief
Hurt
Suffering

Fury

Anger
Rage
Hatred

Fear

Apprehension
Panic
Terror

Tool 5: **A dynamic model of a destructive pattern of conflict emotions in life**

It has happened to everyone. During an argument, you suddenly get the feeling that you are getting nowhere, there is no point, you are going over the same ground again and again. At this point one or other of the antagonists has become entangled in a particular pattern of conflict.

Preparation:

The flipchart with the paper cards and the “map of violence” from the prior sessions are present during this fourth session. Results from the “emotion”-session, may be present as well in form of paper cards of flip-chart mind-maps.

Materials:

- Paper cards for flipcharts
- Handout of the “4 conflict characters”
- Video camera

Setting:

- This exercise is suitable for individual sessions as well as for group sessions with a maximum of four men.

Duration:

- In individual sessions up to 60 minutes including discussion with social worker.
- In group sessions up to 90 minutes including discussion with social worker.

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Exercise:

In this exercise, the social worker hands out a paper with the description of the “4 conflict characters”.

The social worker asks the client or each client to briefly describe himself. Which one of the four characters does best describe the client’s own character?

If this is a group session, a role play will be a good method to show how the four different characters interact. In an individual session, the social worker may play one part of the role-play.

The role-play situation: You are standing in a line waiting. A person comes, ignores the line and stands directly into the front position in order to be served next. The person is informed about his misbehavior and asked to go to the rear of the line. The person ignores this and starts to get aggressive. It is your task to calm down the situation WITHOUT using any violence at all. The role-play may be video-taped if applicable.

Note: This role-play should only be applied with clients who know about the situation of being in a social service provision setting and who are able to control their aggressive emotions during such a role-play!

The 4 conflict characters

The adjuster

- Outwardly friendly and compliant
- Tries to please others
- Directs anger towards him/herself
- Complaining and self-pitying
- Excessive desire for harmony
- Inwardly feels is in the right

Attitude: the clever one backs down.

Privately thinks: the idiot

The grumbler

- Complains endlessly
- Always knows best
- Defiant and spiteful
- Is fundamentally not guilty
- Always has something to whinge about
- Threatens, but is not violent

Attitude: I am right; it is all your fault!

The conflict avoider

- Never argues, is cool, apparently without feelings;
- Objective, arrogant;
- Suppresses aggressive feelings and fear;
- Unemotional
- Feels emotionally cold
- Just wants to solve problems

Attitude: feelings are a luxury
Arguing is just a waste of time

The aggressor

- Verbally and/or physically violent
- Unable to reach consensus, addicted to winning
- Incapable of feeling own vulnerability
- Lust for power
- Full of hatred and loathing
- Hates self
- Injures, wounds

Attitude: it's fun to argue
Come here if you want something

All four types tend to be violent in situations of emotional conflict, and persistently put the opponent down. The conflict usually ends unsatisfactorily for all concerned, without any clear constructive solution of the problem. Above all, there is no mutual esteem or considerate listening to each other. The four types of antagonist are negatively entangled with each other, i.e. they need each other in order to stabilise their own destructive system.

Tool 6

Transcultural biography wrap-up

During this final session, the “map of violence” and the individual “life-time-line of violence” from the first session are being discussed again.

In this session the client will be asked for any options or possibilities which they see in order to replace (domestic) violence breakouts with other forms of person-to-person or individual-to-group communication.

Important: The social worker has to point out that any follow-up sessions during which a client will learn how to replace domestic violence breakouts with other forms of handling emotions, conflicts and direct communication will be provided by therapists.

Preparation:

The flipchart with the paper cards and the “map of violence” from the other sessions are present during this fourth session. The video tape of the role play may to look at again in order to start the discussion process in relation to the “life-time-line of violence”.

Materials:

- Paper cards for flipcharts
- Handout of the “4 conflict characters”
- Video player, screen

Setting:

- This exercise is suitable for individual sessions as well as for group sessions with a maximum of four men.

Duration:

- In individual sessions up to 60 minutes including discussion with social worker.
- In group sessions up to 90 minutes including discussion with social worker.

Exercise:

The social worker asks the client if his definition of violence has changed during the five sessions. If yes, in which way, if no, why not?

The social worker places the flip-chart papers with the map of violence, the life-time-line of violence, the mind-map and the emotion cards of each participant next to each other.

Discussion of how biography experience, transcultural influence, individual emotional characteristics and behavioral patterns resulting in domestic violence are interlinked.

The social worker and the client will prepare a report of this discussion of links between biography, emotions and violent behavior. The client will be asked if the role-play-exercise or the analytical discussions helped him to see any opportunities to better control violent breakouts. If yes, this will be reported in a short contract which will be signed by both, the client and the social worker.

The social worker will ask the client to meet again in a two months time to monitor the client’s behavior during the upcoming months.

The social worker will offer the client access to continuing therapy sessions in order to support him in his process of improvement and prevention of domestic violence breakouts.



Exchange House
National Travellers Service
Great Strand Street 61
Dublin 1, Ireland
www.exchangehouse.ie
info@www.exchangehouse.ie



IEIE – International Education
Information Exchange
Hölderlinplatz 2A
70193 Stuttgart, Germany
www.ieie.de, info@ieie.de



Verein Multikulturell
Bruneckerstraße 2 d, 3. Stock
6020 Innsbruck, Austria
www.migration.cc
office@migration.cc



ANUP- International
Bd. Nicolae Titulescu, nr.
163, sector 1, Bucuresti , cod
011137, Romania
www.updalles.ro
ileanaboeru@yahoo.com



PROLEPSIS
Prolepsis
Institute of Preventive Medicine
Environmental & Occupational Health
7 Fragoklisias Street, 151 25, Marousi
Athens Greece
www.prolepsis.gr, info@prolepsis.gr