STRIDE
Co-located domestic abuse intervention project

Working with Perpetrators of domestic abuse and Using the DASH-RIC (inc referral pathways)

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Aims and objectives of STRIDE:

Aim:
- Promote Good Practice principles for work with perpetrators of Domestic Abuse
- Provide a community response in terms of perpetrator accountability – rather than relying solely on social justice

Objectives:
- To improve knowledge and confidence in working with families where there is Domestic Abuse
- To build confidence in being able to recognise the signs of Domestic Abuse
- To increase awareness of the gendered nature of Domestic Abuse, and an increased understanding of coercive control
- Equip practitioners with skills/tools to encourage perpetrators to reduce their risk to their families

Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality.

The abuse can encompass, but is not limited to:

- Psychological, physical, sexual, financial, emotional

**Controlling behaviour**

Controlling behaviour is a range of acts designed to make a person subordinate and/or dependent by isolating them from sources of support, exploiting their resources and capacities for personal gain, depriving them of the means needed for independence, resistance and escape and regulating their everyday behaviour.

**Coercive behaviour**

Coercive behaviour is an act or a pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish, or frighten their victim.
Data:

• The number of survivors living in Nottingham is estimated between 36,000 - 48,000, with the estimated number of perpetrators being 14,000 (DART, 2016)

• **Nottinghamshire Marac (2014-2015)** – Women make up 96 – 97% of referrals to MARAC. These are the highest risk identified cases of domestic violence and abuse cases in the City and County.

• In 2013-14, 85 women were murdered by their partner or ex-partner in England & Wales. This accounted for just under half (46%) of all murders of women aged 16 or over. In comparison, 7% of men murdered were killed by their partner or ex-partner (office of national statistics 2013-14)

• From the implementation of the **Domestic Abuse Service for Men in Nottinghamshire** in Oct 2015 approximately 50% of the referrals to the service have been from men who have subsequently been identified as the primary perpetrator

• The annual financial cost to public services of DVA in Notts is £79m

• **Statistics from National VAWG Strategy 2015** – Less than 1% of repeat perpetrators receive specialist intervention
Key aims of direct work with a Perpetrator:

• To involve the perpetrator in the safeguarding process in a safe, structured way.
• To assess and reduce the risk posed by the perpetrator to child/ren and survivor.
• To **hold the perpetrator accountable** for his abusive behaviour and the intervention that is being undertaken.
• To challenge the perpetrator about the intentions underlying his abusive behaviour, including **coercive control**.
• To explore with the perpetrator the **impact of his abusive behaviour** on the survivor and child/ren.
• Enable practitioners to challenge perpetrator’s belief that they benefit from controlling behaviour.
• To explore with the perpetrator steps towards positive change.
Direct work with perpetrators:

WHY?

• Be clear about what you aim to achieve from any direct work and stick to your agenda – perpetrators can and do derail/ manipulate the process

• It is recommended that you undertake direct work with the perpetrator when a risk / contact assessment is required:
  - to promote shared parental responsibility – limit ‘failure to protect/ victim-blaming’ and ‘disguised compliance’
  - to increase engagement of both parents/ carers
  - improve outcomes for survivors and children
  - to hold them accountable for their abuse and its impact

• Key criteria for personal responsibility:
  - acknowledgement of abuse and impact on significant others

• Sometimes perpetrators present as victims - to ensure that we provide the appropriate support/ guidance to the appropriate person, we need to assess whether they meet the key indicators of a survivor or of a perpetrator - Complete relevant agency checks, and Equation’s screening tool to establish who the primary perpetrator is, and discuss concerns with your Manager, i.e. consider who has control, and is not afraid of the repercussions of their behaviour
Direct work with perpetrators:

Safety first!

Always assess the suitability of undertaking direct work

- In order to ensure that the risk to survivor/children is managed, there are some important checks to consider first:
  - Complete the DASH-RIC
  - Inform non-abusing parent about direct work with perpetrator
  - Counter-allegations? – complete checks with other agencies: Women’s Aid (9476490) & the PPU:
    dasupportsouth@nottinghamshire.pnn.police.uk
  - Information sharing is key
  - If necessary, complete Equation’s screening tool and perpetrator assessment and checklist
Direct work with perpetrators:

HOW? – The ‘Do No Harm’ Approach:

- This approach is aimed at ensuring that practitioners work in a way that reduces risk; and does not put child/ren or survivors at greater risk.

- When asking the perpetrator directly about domestic abuse only refer to knowledge that is in 3rd party reports wherever possible, e.g. Health/ Education/ Police reports. Steer clear of raising concerns that only the survivor has disclosed as this could put her at risk.

- Do not discuss the perpetrator’s use of abuse when you have contact with both partners. It is good practice to always see them separately when discussing violence and abuse. The perpetrator can maintain control of the survivor during these sessions, and in doing so the survivor may feel under pressure to protect the perpetrator/ herself and feel unable to fully disclose the abuse and its impact.

- It is best practice to inform the survivor about the direct work with the perpetrator, i.e. advise her that the emphasis is on his choices and his controlling behaviours; reducing his risk to the children; and that her behaviour will not be a focus for any of the direct work.

- Safeguard yourself – Don’t work in isolation, i.e. maintain links with colleagues and partner agencies. Make time after the session to reflect on what went well and what could be improved for next time.

- STRIDE consider it best practice not to invite specialist domestic abuse workers who are supporting the survivor/ perpetrator to multi-agency meetings when the perpetrator will be present, as this may compromise the professional relationship between the survivor/ perpetrator and the worker.
Role play exercise:

• Different stances and the client-worker relationship they foster

Note your observations and feed back to the group
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Different stances and the client-worker relationship they foster

Collusive Stance

- Getting matey – an alliance forms and the session feels warm
- There is little challenge and conflict
- You sit alongside him to look at others behaviour
- You empathise when they speak of themselves as a victim of others
- He may feel that you are much more understanding than his partner

Neutral Stance

- An alliance forms with the side of him that wants to change
- You make gentle but persistent invitations to him to challenge himself
- You sit alongside him to look at his abusive behaviour
- You empathise when they seem to feel badly about their abuse
- He may come to value and respect your help

Persecutory Stance

- There is opposition, rather than alliance – session feels angry
- There is a high level of challenge and judgement
- You confront him with his wrongdoing
- You don’t empathise at all
- He dislikes you and may put you down

Challenges to statements which minimise, blame and deny abusive behaviours, in a non-confrontational way:

‘It was a one-off’
• You may feel strongly that the physical assault was a one-off but we’re here to talk about all forms of abuse, including your controlling behaviour (give examples of this that are in the public arena, e.g. control of finances, child contact).

‘It’s in the past’
• The incident may have been in the past but the consequences and the impact of that behaviour are in the present, and that is why we are undertaking this work.

‘I just lost it’
• Ask them to describe the events leading up to the incident of physical abuse or intimidating behaviour (e.g. smashing up belongings), and explore with them to show how they were making decisions and choices.

‘The survivor is just as bad’
• The purpose of these sessions is to focus on your behaviour, and this is our primary concern, and the reason we are working with your family.

‘I was under a lot of pressure at the time (e.g. work, family, finances)’
• We all make choices as adults, and we can all make positive/ healthy choices. We also make choices while we are misusing substances, whether we are able to remember them the next day or not. We are, as adults, responsible for our behaviour.

‘I experienced abuse as a child (physical/emotional/sexual abuse or witnessed domestic abuse)’
• We acknowledge the impact of abuse and there are support services available, if you feel you need support with this. However, we all make choices as adults, and we are responsible for our behaviour and its impact.

‘It’s a cultural issue, and you don’t understand my culture’
• We acknowledge that there may be cultural differences, but what we’re focusing on in these session is abuse and control, which cause harm and have an impact on the safety of children – there are also legal concerns in terms of safeguarding and coercive control.
Holding perpetrators accountable:

HOW? – Domestic abuse aware working:

• Avoid using language that puts the onus solely on the Mother and blames her for the perpetrator’s abuse, and her perceived ‘failure to protect’.

• Avoid vague terms like ‘argued’ if you mean physical violence – Always be clear about the perpetrator’s pattern of abuse, coercion and control, and make reference to this in reports: e.g. ‘the perpetrator engaged in an escalating pattern of abuse which included control of her movements and finances’.

• Be clear about the harm and impact the perpetrator’s abuse will have had on the children: e.g. ‘the abuse and control has led to the Mother becoming isolated from her support network, and the child/ren have had to move house and school’.

• Avoid terms that may distort who the primary perpetrator is, i.e. violence between the couple and the parents/ family has a history of domestic violence.
Holding perpetrators accountable:

- Explore the impact on children and their partner
- Explore the negative impact on them – costs & benefits
- Make clear how and why their abuse is a choice and that they can choose to stop
- Identify how these may be gendered and create negative expectations
- Identify with them their beliefs and intentions behind their abuse – BIB
- Set actions for change to their beliefs, intentions and behaviour
- Promote healthy relationships
What is a DASH/RIC?

- The DASH (2009) Model was developed by Laura Richards on behalf of the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) and in partnership with Coordinated Action Against Domestic Abuse (CAADA – now Safe Lives)

- It stands for: Domestic Abuse, Stalking Harassment and ‘Honour Based Violence and Abuse’ Risk Identification Checklist:
  - Improve information sharing
  - Improve the management of intelligence
  - Improved links across public protection and serial offending

The DASH-RIC form is for all professionals working with victims of domestic abuse, stalking and harassment and honour based violence
Why was it developed?

- Stalking behaviour - fixation and obsession was not being identified or understood in context of abuse
- Lack of understanding and training regarding risk identification, assessment and management
- Now all police services and a large number of partner agencies across the UK use a common checklist for identifying and assessing risk – improved joined up working

DASH-RIC:

Referral pathways:
http://www.equation.org.uk/library/local-services
Case study

Discussion points:
- What is coercive control?
- DASH-RIC exercise
Key Learning:

- Abuse is about choice, power and control
- The perpetrator’s belief system and attitudes inform his behaviour
- The impact of abuse and the influence of the perpetrator cannot be underestimated
- Utilise your skills and the resources available to explore negative choices and healthy relationships
- Coercive control is subtle, complex and pervasive
- Always complete the DASH-RIC when working with cases where there is domestic abuse and use it to capture coercive control
- **Men’s Advice Line**: 0808 801 0327 / info@mensadviceline.org.uk
  Opening hours: Monday-Friday 10am-1pm and 2-5pm
- **Equation training**: ‘URDVA’; ‘CDV’ and ‘Working with male survivors of domestic abuse’ or email: info@equation.org.uk
• Q&A

• Evaluation - thanks