



Evaluating the effectiveness of domestic abuse prevention education

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Presentation Overview

- Introduction
- DA prevention education
- Evaluation of RwF:
 - Method
 - Findings
 - Implications
- Listening to the views of young people - the Who, the What and the How



Young people and domestic abuse

- High rates of abuse reported within teenage dating relationships (Barter et al., 2009):
 - For example, 25% of girls and 18% of boys have experienced physical abuse
- There is evidence that many young people will condone violence in certain circumstances (Burman & Cartmel, 2005)

Policy context

- VAWG - DCSF Report (2010) → HO Strategy:
 - Schools should include the issue within PSHE
 - PSHE to be compulsory
 - National campaign, e.g. 'This is abuse'
- VAWG Action Plan (2011):
 - Awareness raising campaign – teenage relationship violence
 - Issue of sexual consent to be covered in PSHE

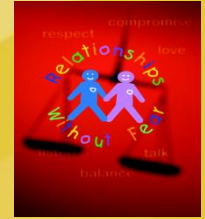
DA prevention education

- 84% of secondary school pupils want it - schools best place (Mullender, 2000)
- A number of school-based prevention programmes in the UK, but few formally evaluated
 - Small-scale evaluations with methodological limitations
- The main aim of the research was to evaluate the effectiveness of RwF
 - And see whether the outcomes vary based on gender and experiences of abuse

Study design

- Pre and post, treatment and control conditions
- Outcome variables:
 - Attitudes to DV
 - Help-seeking
- Moderating variables: Gender and experience of abuse: Victimisation, Perpetration, Witnessing
- Intervention effective?
 - Less effective for boys and for those who witnessed?
 - And for those for whom abuse already a feature of own relationships?

RwF: The Programme



- Delivered by Arch
- Primary-age and secondary-age children
- Looks at how positive relationships can be formed
- Aims to give children the knowledge, skills and advice to enable them to recognise an abusive relationship and seek help
- It also tackles the underlying attitudes that give rise to abusive tendencies.
- The sessions focus on:
 - what abuse is and the different types of abuse
 - how it makes people feel
 - the difficulties in leaving an abusive relationship, how to break out of an abusive relationship and what support is available.

The Attitudes towards Domestic Violence Questionnaire (ADV)

- Based on the NOBAGS questionnaire (Huesmann & Guerra, 1997).
- 12 questions which aim to capture young people's thoughts about how wrong it is for a man to hit a woman and also a woman to hit a man, under certain conditions
 - e.g. Do you think it is OK for a man to hit his partner/wife if HE says he is sorry afterwards?
 - e.g. Suppose a woman cheats on her husband/partner with another man, do you think it is wrong for him to hit her?
 - Each question is followed by a four-point scale – 4 = it's perfectly OK, 3 = it's sort of OK, 2 = it's sort of wrong, 1 = it's really wrong

Procedure

- 7 intervention schools and 6 control group schools
- $N = 1203$ year 9 pupils (13-14 years)
- 54 classes in total
- 572 male, 596 female (data missing for 35)

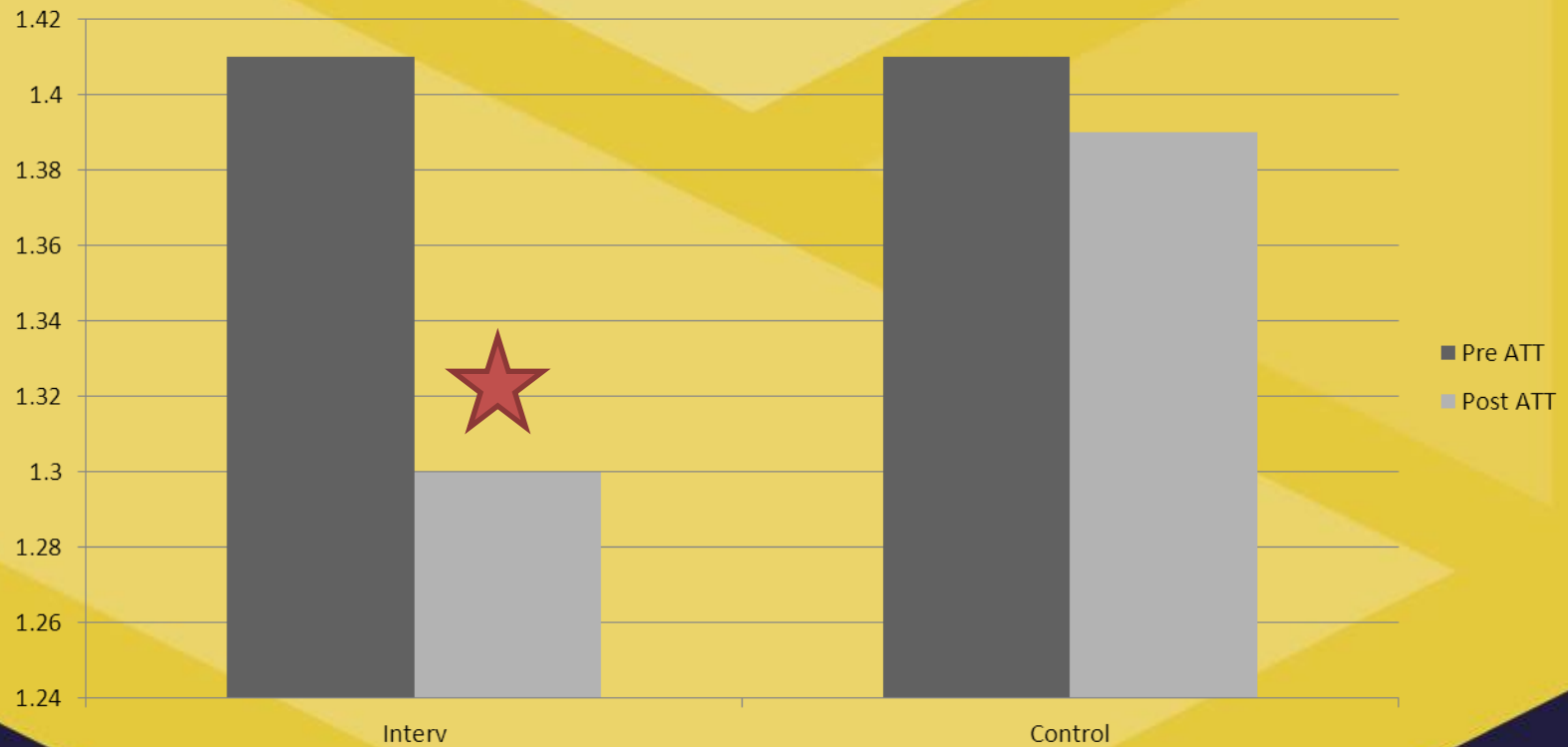
Procedure (cont.)

- Completed ADV – pre, post-test and follow-up
- + asked about experiences of abuse
 - Been abused
 - Been abusive
 - Witnessed abuse
- + 2 help-seeking questions: if witnessed abuse; if experienced it in own relationship

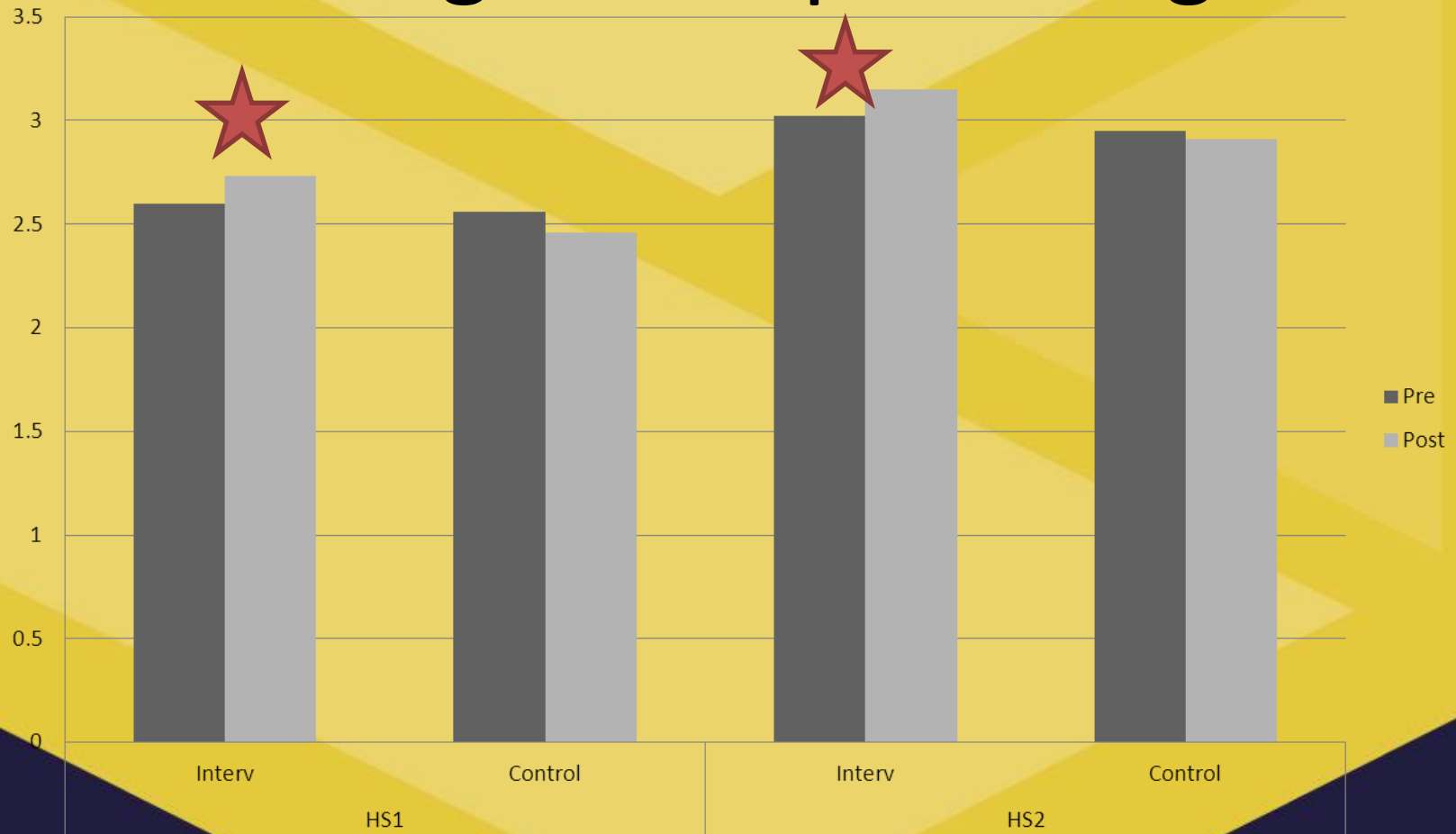
Results

- Use of Multi-Level Modelling (MLM)
- Significant improvement in the attitudes of those in the intervention group from pre to post-test (compared to the control group) and this was maintained at FU
 - For girls and boys
 - And this does not vary by experiences of DA
- Significant improvement in help-seeking also, but this was not maintained

Change in attitudes



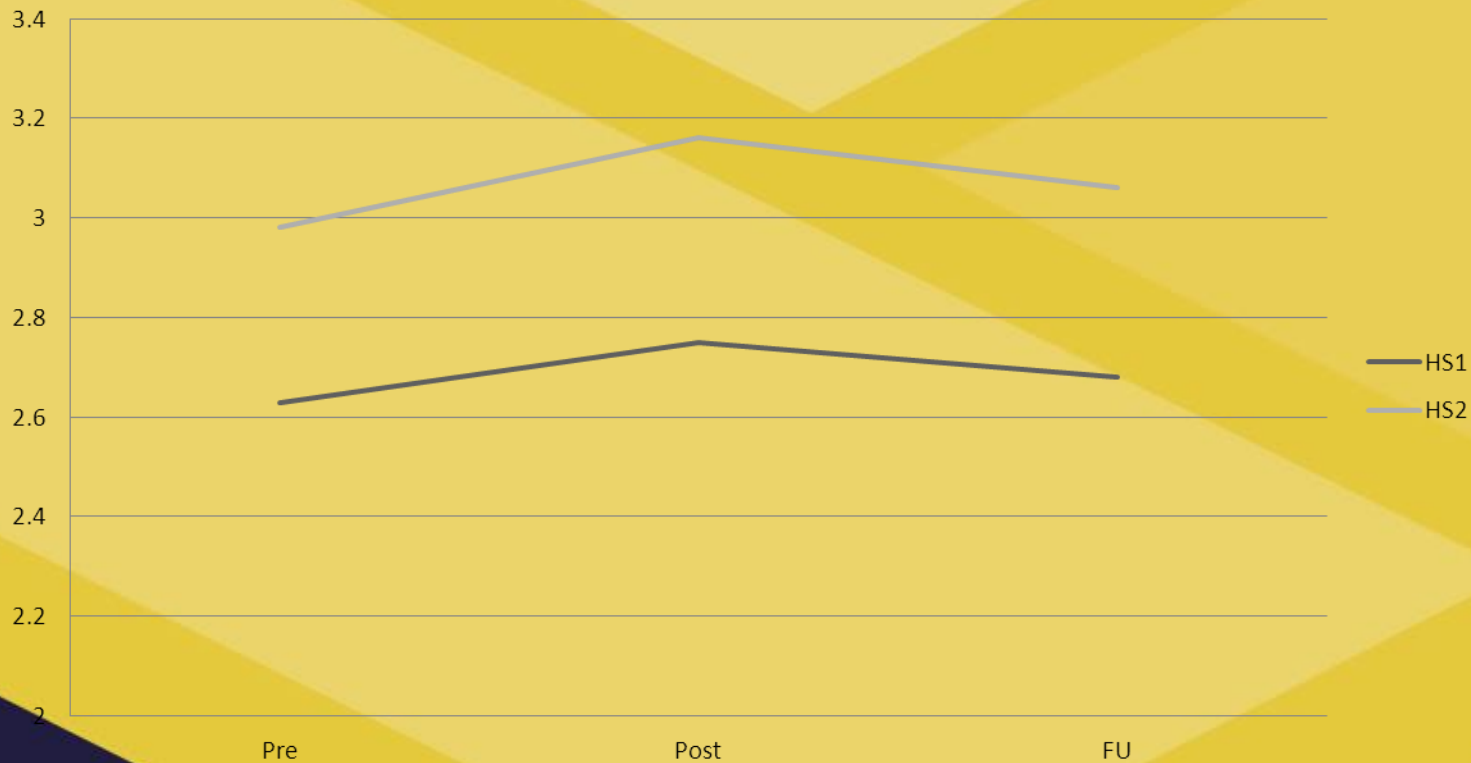
Change in help-seeking



Change in attitudes maintained



Change in HS not maintained



Conclusions

- DA prevention education a worthwhile endeavour
- 'At-risk' groups can benefit from a wider school-based programme
- Supports the call for such education to be compulsory
- Each year of secondary school



The who, the what and the how...

- Need for more qualitative research exploring young people's perspectives
- Variability in programme models
 - Should programmes focus explicitly on notions of gender inequality and power?
 - What are the most effective teaching methods?
 - Where should this education 'sit' within the curriculum?
 - Mixed or single sex groups?
 - Workshop leaders: teachers or external organisations?

REaDAPt project



- An EU-funded DAPHNE project aiming to help young people cope with the effects of domestic violence and enhance their resilience to it
- Toolkits produced, see www.readapt.eu

Focus Groups

- Five focus groups conducted
- Two with 10-11 year olds
- Three with 13-14 year olds
- Thematic analysis identified five main themes

The need for varied activities, active participation and flexibility

She told us too many stories

Boy

We could have made a power point presentation

Girl

*You have to find information,
not like people telling you*

Boy



The difficulty in managing pupils' opinions

*Every time you said something
our teacher put the point against
it even though it was your
opinion, he'd put a point against
it, and it'd just do my head in*

Girl

*The teacher was like
stirring it a bit, even
though it was our
opinion, he like, he had
to be right*

Girl



The programme is sexist

*That's not fair when it's
always men beating women
- it's sexist against men*

Boy,

*Most of the time it
seemed like the male
gender was getting the
blame for abuse, and I
don't think the lads felt
that happy with that*

Girl



The limitations of raised awareness

*Girls don't go with a stranger that
you hardly know*

Boy

*Hearing about other people's
situations it's like, worrying
to get into a relationship if
you think something is going
to happen*

Girl

*But it's kind of her fault
because if she left ... like she
was told if she left, she'd
get killed, and she left*

Boy



Conclusions

- Important to listen to the views of young people
- Need to be alert to students who gain greater awareness but not necessarily understanding
- Material on gender needs to be delivered in a thoughtful way
- Flaws in taking a 'one size fits all' approach
- Teachers best placed to deliver it
 - Can adapt materials to learning preferences of group
 - Only way to ensure long-term sustainability
 - Good quality training essential
 - Not necessarily all teachers
 - And support from external agencies

Thank you for listening

Any questions?

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