

Conducting domestic violence research in schools: Experiences from an evaluation of a school-based domestic abuse prevention programme

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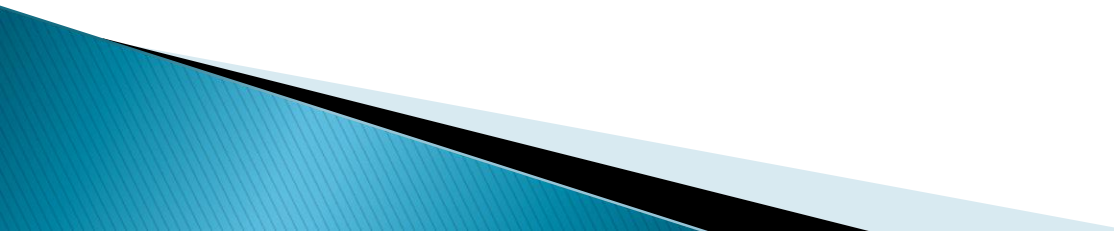


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Research Context

- ▶ Attitudes towards DV
 - 1 in 2 males and 1 in 3 females think that violence/abuse against a woman is 'ok' in at least one of 16 circumstances (Burton & Kitzinger, 1998)
 - Context of sexual infidelity.
 - A male has a **right to hit** or **good reason to hit** a woman if she has hit him or if she has cheated on him (Burman and Cartmel (2005)
- ▶ Experiences of DV and Dating Violence
 - Barter et al. (2009)
 - Radford et al. (2011)

School-based domestic abuse prevention

- ▶ A number of school-based prevention programmes have been developed in the UK
 - ▶ 84% of secondary school pupils want it – schools best place (Mullender, 2000)
 - ▶ Aim to influence attitudes and increase knowledge of dating violence and consequences
 - ▶ A change in attitudes and knowledge are expected to influence behaviour
 - ▶ But evidence as to the effectiveness of such programmes is limited.
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Evaluations

▶ United States

- Pre/post test control group design.
- Randomised control trials (e.g. Foshee et al., 1998; 2000; 2005)

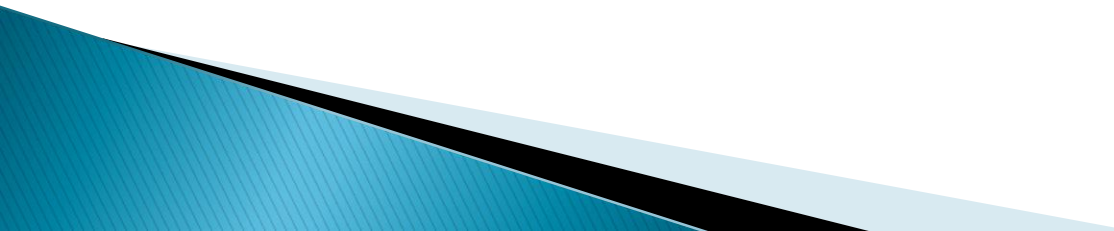
▶ United Kingdom

- Small-scale, mixed-methods.
- Pre and post test designs
- No control groups.
- Descriptive statistics only.
- E.g. Bell and Stanley (2006); Hester & Westmarland, (2005); Scottish Executive (2002)

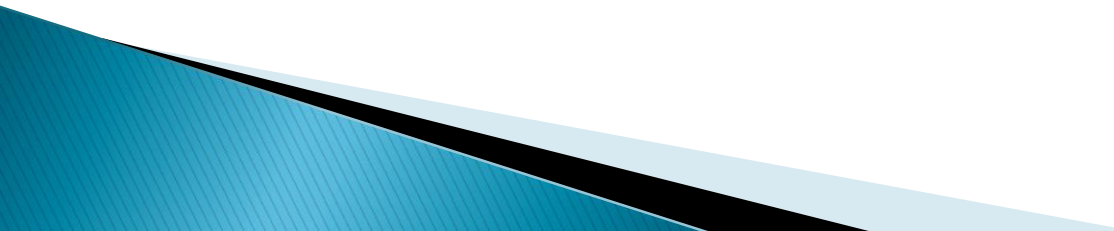
From Boys to Men Study

- Stage 1: survey on young people's attitudes towards and experiences of DV; quasi-experimental evaluation of a school-based domestic abuse prevention programme.
- Stage 2: focus groups on young people's attitudes towards violence
- Stage 3: in-depth biographical interviews with teenage men who have perpetrated violence, or experienced it as victims, or witnesses

REaDAPt

- ▶ REaDAPt: Relationship education and domestic abuse prevention tuition
 - ▶ DAPHNE III project, funded by the European Commission's DAPHNE III violence prevention programme.
 - ▶ Seven partner organisations in six countries (UK, Spain, Malta, France, Sweden and Belgium).
 - ▶ Project aims to support and enhance the resilience of young people so that they are able to cope with the effects of domestic violence.
 - ▶ This includes parent/step-parent perpetrated domestic violence and violence in their own dating relationships.
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REaDAPt

- ▶ Evaluate secondary school programmes in UK, France and Spain using ADV and pre-test post-test design
 - ▶ Focus groups on pupils' opinions conducted
 - ▶ UK strand also includes control groups
 - ▶ Primary school programme in UK also being evaluated – using NOBAGS questionnaire
 - ▶ Findings from evaluation used to inform Education Toolkit
 - ▶ Research Toolkit also developed
 - ▶ Education Toolkit being implemented and evaluated in Malta
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Relationships without Fear

- ▶ Healthy relationships and domestic abuse prevention programme.
- ▶ Building positive and healthy relationships.
- ▶ Develop communication skills, moral and social understanding.
- ▶ Enable children to recognise an abusive relationship and seek help
- ▶ Primary-age and secondary-age children (Y4–Y11).
- ▶ Delivered over six weeks; 1 hour a week

REaDApt: Primary Schools

- ▶ Normative Beliefs about Aggression Scale – NOBAGS, developed for elementary age children (Huesmann & Guerra, 1997).
- ▶ Two subscales:
 - The Retaliation Beliefs Subscale → 12 items. Measures children's attitudes towards things that can happen among children, e.g. suppose a boy says something bad to another boy, James. Do you think it's OK for James to scream at him? Do you think it's OK for James to hit him?
 - The General Beliefs subscale → 8 items. Measures attitudes towards aggression in general, e.g. in general, it is wrong to hit other people.
- ▶ Completed by years 3–6. Year 6 children also completed the ADV
- ▶ Some children participated in focus groups

Research Instrument: Secondary Schools

Attitudes towards Domestic Violence Questionnaire

- ▶ Drew inspiration from the Normative Beliefs about Aggression Scale – NOBAGS (Huesmann & Guerra, 1997).
- ▶ The *Attitudes towards Domestic Violence* Questionnaire: 12 questions which aim to capture young people's thoughts about how wrong it is for a man to hit a woman and a woman to hit a man, under certain conditions
- ▶ Administered at pre test, post test and three month follow up (intervention school only)

Attitude questions

Here are some questions about things that can happen between an adult couple. For each question please think about whether you think it is really wrong, sort of wrong, sort of OK or if it is perfectly OK. For each question please tick just one box to indicate your response. Please be as honest as you can. What do YOU think?

1) Do you think it is OK for a man to hit his partner/wife if HE says he is sorry afterwards?

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
It's perfectly OK	It's sort of OK	It's sort of wrong	It's really wrong

2) Do you think it is OK for a woman to hit her partner/husband if SHE says she is sorry afterwards?

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
It's perfectly OK	It's sort of OK	It's sort of wrong	It's really wrong

3) Suppose a woman cheats on her partner/husband with another man, do you think it is wrong for HIM to hit HER?

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
It's really wrong	It's sort of wrong	It's sort of OK	It's perfectly OK

4) Suppose a man cheats on his partner/wife with another woman, do you think it is wrong for HER to hit HIM?


<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
It's really wrong	It's sort of wrong	It's sort of OK	It's perfectly OK

Experience questions (at Pre Test and High School only)

- ▶ Three sections:
 - Victimisation (10 questions)
 - Perpetration (10 questions)
 - Witnessing (8 questions)
- ▶ Response options:
 - Never, Once, More than Once?
 - If once or more than once has this happened in the last 12 months?
- ▶ Measured: physical, sexual and emotional abuse.

Challenges and Considerations

Recruitment of Schools

- ▶ Recruitment of intervention schools initially dependent on partner organisation...
 - ▶ Identifying control schools: location, size, % of pupils receiving free school meals, from minority ethnic backgrounds, with special educational needs.
 - ▶ Accessing schools and contacting teachers; allocation of time to questionnaire.
 - ▶ Maintaining relationships: feedback reports; presentations at school events; research methods classes.
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Consent and Refusals

- Informing parents and parental consent: opt out basis.
- Pupils had opportunity to opt out.
- 47 pupils were opted out of the research: 33 for males and 14 for females; 19 by parents and 28 by pupils.
- Opt out at second/third questionnaire – absence/fatigue

Complete Anonymity

- Implications for matching questionnaires over pre/post test.

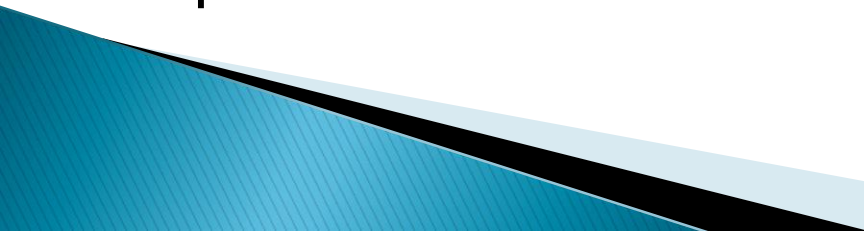
Classroom setting

- Administered on a whole-class basis
- Classroom management.
- Maintaining confidentiality/privacy (spacing issues).
- Underreporting or culturally expected views?

Disclosures of abuse

- ▶ Anonymous questionnaires
- ▶ Face to face disclosures

Challenges and Considerations: Primary schools

- ▶ Younger children → shorter attention, less understanding than secondary school children etc.
 - ▶ Thorough (but simple) introduction: what happens at universities, what research is, give examples from TV e.g. Newsround survey
 - ▶ Read through the questionnaire as the children complete it → some children very low reading age.
 - ▶ Short Questionnaires, and lots of encouragement while children complete it → facilitates completion.
 - ▶ DV sensitive topic and some primary school teachers and parents will have concerns. Need to provide as much information as possible and be available for parents and teachers to contact.
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Limitations

- ▶ Unknown whether these changes are lasting or have an influence on behaviour during adolescence and into adulthood.
 - ▶ Attrition
 - ▶ Children / teenagers guess the aim of the study (i.e. there will be a change in the post-test questionnaire) and this influences their responses
 - ▶ Children / teenagers not reading questions properly – respond same way to all questions, but response order changes.
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