



**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY, FINDINGS & CONCLUSIONS**





## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The psychologist felt very privileged to witness the changes which occurred in the people taking part in the programme. She was able to observe the differences in the men and women at a personal level as well as through their questionnaire scores. She acknowledged that the staff had persevered in very challenging and in-depth work over a long period to help people achieve these changes. Their efforts should not go unrecognised.

Many thanks are also extended to Professor Rudi Dallos of the Clinical Psychology Department, University of Plymouth, for guidance gratefully received on the design of the research, including repertory grids, and to Professor Guillem Feixas of the Department of Personality, Faculty of Psychology, University of Barcelona, who wrote the repertory grid programme used in the research and who provided ongoing support throughout the programme. He has used repertory grids with victims of domestic abuse in Spain.<sup>1</sup>

### Staff/participants

Donna Apicella	Outreach Assistant Manager	Exeter Women's Aid
Ann Burgoyne	Children & Young People's Worker	Exeter Women's Aid
Viv James	Women's Support Worker	Exeter Women's Aid
Chris Pearson	Manager	Exeter Women's Aid
Tina Feather	Manager (May 2008)	North Devon Women's Aid
Wendy Fudge	Women's Support Worker	North Devon Women's Aid
Kath Jones	Children & Young People's Worker	North Devon Women's Aid
Anne-Marie Parkin	Manager	North Devon Women's Aid
Christine McKenna	Manager	South Devon Women's Aid
Jenny Veale	Assistant Manager	South Devon Women's Aid
Paula Wilson	Children & Young People's Worker	South Devon Women's Aid

### Independent Staff

Richard Dealler	Exeter Project Manager
Sarah Adams	Exeter Co-worker with the men
Neal Bennett	Exeter Cover Worker for the men
Catherine Dare	Group Co-worker with the men
Pete Rosser	Manager, Group Worker & Individual Worker

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<sup>1</sup> Feixas, G. et al (2007) Construction of Self and Others in Unipolar Depressive Disorders: a Study using Repertory Grid Technique. *Journal of Cognitive Therapy Research* DOI: 10.1007/s10608-007-9149-7. Springer Netherlands, Volume 32, Number 3, pp386-400 ISSN 0147-5916 (print) (June 2008) and 1573-2819 (online) (June 2007).

Stephen Miller	Male Cover Worker for Group working with men
Jo Palmer	Female Cover Worker for Group working with the men
Marian Swinfen	South Devon Project Manager
Paul Wolf-Light	Supervisor and Co-worker South Devon

For this report, **Sue Penna Associates** provided:

- Quantitative data for Figures 3.3 to 3.17; 3.19; 3.20; 4.2 to 4.6; 4.8 to 4.10; and 5.2
- Quantitative and qualitative data from the psychologist
- The cost-benefit analysis.

The analysis of the quantitative data undertaken by Sue Penna Associates was based on data collected by project staff. Sue Penna Associates can take no responsibility for the accuracy of the collection of the original data. Any use of this report by any third party does not absolve them from using due diligence in verifying the report's contents. Any use which a third party makes of this document or any decisions it makes based upon it are the responsibility of the third party. Sue Penna Associates accepts no duty of care or liability of any kind to any such third party and accepts no responsibility for any damages suffered by any third party as a result of action taken, or decisions made, based on this document.

### Home Office/Government Office for the South West

John Dunworth	Home Office DVA Lead and Project Sponsor
Sam Darby	Home Office Violent Crime Unit
David Warren	Government Office for the South West Lead for Domestic Violence and Abuse

### Devon County Council

Katrina Calcutt	Adva Finance Manager
Rachel Martin	Adva and REPAIR Manager
Roy Tomlinson	Joint REPAIR Manager

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY, FINDINGS & CONCLUSIONS

### INTRODUCTION

This executive summary identifies key findings from Devon adva's three-year community perpetrator programme, REPAIR, (2005 to 2008). The purpose of the project was to introduce a whole-family intervention model. The original intention of the project was to:

1. Establish a comprehensive prevention model to reduce the overlap of agencies at the point of crisis
2. Reduce the social, educational and emotional impact that domestic violence has on children and young people
3. Lessen behavioural problems and educational underachievement in children of school age and to design methods for monitoring change
4. Establish a voluntary recovery model for father-perpetrators with the subsequent diminution of criminal violence and associated costs to criminal justice agencies
5. Reduce the level of offending by perpetrators through intervention which changes the pattern of their behaviour
6. Increase safety of mother-victims through co-ordinated, multi-agency risk assessment and safety planning
7. Develop self-esteem and resistance to further victimisation amongst survivors
8. Develop skills for mainstream practitioners in identifying and changing current practice in relation to domestic violence
9. Compile an evaluation report and present at a regional conference and ambassador workshops to disseminate findings to influence national and regional domestic violence and abuse strategies.

During implementation of the programme it was necessary to modify some of the original project aims. The bulk remained intact, however, and are covered in the report. Objective 3, above, had to be modified to focus just on those children directly worked with (which proved to fully engage the capacity of the workers employed). This has meant that the wider intention to develop work in Devon's 380+ schools was unrealistic, given the available ISB project resources.

Whilst the project partially met Objective 8, it has not been possible to expand the learning in the wider mainstream agencies. It has, however, led to the introduction of two new county-wide training courses, 'Tackling Perpetrators' and

'Preventing Murder', the content of which has been directly influenced by the experience of workers engaged in the REPAIR programme.

Additionally, two DVDs have been produced, one looking at two male perpetrators' response to the interventions they experienced, the other looking at the impact on the whole family. These have been used in national and international conferences and workshops and will form a core part of adva's future communication and training strategies.

### Establishment of REPAIR & its delivery in Devon

The project was managed within the existing adva partnership team led by the adva Manager as part of a wider brief of responsibilities. This had the advantage of its being integrated into a much wider community intervention model of provision, enabling referrals from the programme, follow-up and ongoing support, once the programme interventions had ended (especially for women and children).

Devon's population of 750,000 is widely dispersed across a largely rural county. This required the establishment of three geographically separate projects: Exeter/East/Mid Devon; North Devon/Torridge; and South Devon including South Hams, Teignbridge and West Devon. This area-based approach was the most appropriate model of delivery, enabling reasonable access for workers and clients.

The management and delivery involved the following staff:

- Project and financial management, based within Devon County Council
- Three area REPAIR Managers (part-time consultants)
- Three area Co-workers (part-time consultants)
- Multiple Cover Workers for men's group work
- Chaperones in each area to ensure the safety of workers during evening and group work
- Three Women's Support Workers, part-time, hosted by three independent Women's Aid Trusts within the geographic areas
- Pattern-changing group work staff in each location
- Three Children & Young People's Workers, full-time, hosted by Women's Aid
- Two supervisors who supported all project workers
- An independent evaluation team.

The delivery of the one-to-one and group work for the men had to be located in

neutral premises within each of the areas. The other elements of the work either took place within the Women's Aid premises or neutral venues across the county.

The complexity of establishing programmes in three dispersed rural areas was increased by the need to recruit independent men's workers without any readily available host agency to employ them - hence the decision to use self-employed contractors.

To run a community programme of this nature requires highly skilled individuals for all elements of the work. There is a shortage of people with the necessary skills and experience in running community-based perpetrator programmes such as this, particularly in a rural area like Devon.

It was essential to develop a client database for the programme and, as nothing existed locally or nationally at the time, Sue Penna Associates developed a customised, web-based database system.

## Outputs

Detailed analysis of the outputs is contained in the separate chapters on men, women and children. Key outputs are:

- 334 men made contact with the REPAIR programme of which 34% (115) started the assessment and one-to-one part of the programme
- 36% (42) of the 115 men who started the assessment and one-to-one went onto the group work element of the programme
- The known overall completion rate is 23% (26 of 115)
- The potential overall completion rate is 37% (42 of 115)
- 96 women were referred to REPAIR, and 76 received support
- 43 children and young people whose fathers were on the programme took up support through REPAIR; 33 of these (77%) completed their support programme
- The majority of children whose fathers completed the programme saw improvements in self-esteem, self-image and peer relationships
- 165 children and young people received support outside of REPAIR during the three-year period
- North Devon area supported between three and four times the number of children compared with either the Exeter or South Devon areas
- The majority of children supported lived with a single parent (mother)

- For the children served (both inside and outside the REPAIR programme), the results of interventions were positive, most noticeably with improvements in emotional literacy; improved relationships with mother and siblings; decreased anxiety, stress and anger; and less disturbed sleep.

## Findings about referrals & take-up

- 66% of initial contacts by male perpetrators do not proceed to assessment for a variety of reasons (which were not systematically identified as part of this evaluation). **Learning point:** a programme like this needs to have the capacity to manage the high level of contacts, as well as deal with assessments, one-to-one and group work
- A three-year funded programme needs a period to build up the project, recruit staff, promote referrals and an exit period to close down referrals. This means, at best, delivering two years of full assessment, one-to-one and group work. Given the duration of the programme (42 weeks minimum), this means only 8 completions per area, per year. Over three areas in two years this would be a maximum of 48 completers against an actual figure of 42
- Men who themselves apply - i.e., where no agency originated the contact - have a higher chance of making it from contact to the assessment stage of the programme. This could reflect motivation levels at contact stage
- A high percentage (79%) of women referred to the programme engaged with it (96 referrals, with 76 supported)
- A high percentage of women stay with the programme, once referred, despite their partners or ex-partners leaving the programme (42 men remained engaged, 76 women)
- Pattern-changing is a programme taken up by 50% of the women within three months of engaging for support
- Pattern-changing is completed by 75% of the women who start the 14-week support programme
- 61% (47 of 76) take up more than six sessions of support from the Women's Support Worker
- There is a significant number of children (60%) associated with the perpetrators who do not take up support for one reason or another (72 of 115)
- 92% of children referred for support under REPAIR take up that support.

## Findings about demographics

- The work did not explore the relationship between younger age (under 30 years old), rates of completion and risk-level. **Learning point:** An analysis of the correlation between younger age (under 30 years old), rates of completion and risk-level should feature in evaluation in any future project or programme
- While timing activities to make them accessible for people matters, the evidence suggests that for those who are motivated, full-time employment is not a barrier to attending programmes
- This programme reached managers, professional occupations and associate professionals. Comparative research on the Probation-run programme for convicted offenders (IDAP) would be useful to test if a community programme such as REPAIR reaches a different employment/ social group
- At least half of the women supported were in employment
- Physical ill-health, depression and anxiety are the most common medical issues affecting both men and women
- The majority of women supported had not previously been in an abusive relationship
- 58% (23 of 39) of the children supported were between 11 and 17 years of age; the remainder were under 11 years old
- The majority of children supported were not living with their father, but had contact with him. Most of the children were living with a single parent (mother) or with their natural mother and a stepfather.

## Findings about outcomes

- Of the 19 men on whom full psychological assessment was undertaken, 15 saw their risk-level reduced; 12 saw their self-esteem increased; 16 became less rigid in their thinking; 18 saw themselves as more similar to their partners (so possibly less likely to abuse) and 14 saw their sense of personal-effectiveness increased
- Using self-reporting measures, 27 (64%) of the 42 men who completed 'beginning risk assessments' and 'end risk assessments' showed reductions in levels of risk
- The data suggests that abuse starts early in relationships and can go on for a lengthy period. This suggests that the earlier the intervention with men, the more chance it has of reducing long-term abuse

- There is a significant reduction in incidents reported by men over time. This indicates that the longer the men are on the programme, the less likely they are to be involved in domestic violence and abuse incidents. This reflects a real change because men's awareness of, and their honesty about, what is abuse is enhanced by being on the programme
- Both one-to-one and group work have a valid role to play in reducing incidents of domestic violence and abuse
- Some modules of group work proved more sensitive than others and made integration of new members to the group more difficult. **Learning point:** It is important to build flexibility into the delivery of a community perpetrator programme like REPAIR to allow men to enter group work at an appropriate time for themselves and others already on the group
- The programme is most successful for those men who complete both one-to-one and group work
- Outcomes for men seem to indicate positive life changes, such as increased self-esteem and improved stability of relationships with children and partners
- Women are initially slow to engage and it takes them time to build up a relationship of trust with the Women's Support Workers
- Women report a steady decline in the number of abusive incidents they experience over the course of the intervention with their partner/ex-partner
- Women report increased self-esteem, resistance to victimisation, and increased safety planning and safety at the end of their intervention support
- Women are less likely than men to move on to another relationship after intervention
- The psychologist's findings show 11 of the 13 women showed improvement in their well-being
- The psychologist's findings show significant improvement in women's self-esteem, which is likely to improve their resilience to withstand future abuse
- The psychologist's findings show that women's well-being and safety improves, regardless of what happens to the partner/ex-partner on the programme
- The women's recovery was not dependent on the man changing. It appears to be about the support she is offered
- Women who were interviewed expressed how it helped them to know that the workers for both men and women were communicating with each other. This enhanced their sense of support and confidence in the

programme

- Women's Support Workers' experience is that most of these women have not previously sought any help to deal with their domestic abuse, hence the men's decision to seek help is also triggering intervention with women
- The psychologist's findings showed an overall improvement in 14 of the 15 girls assessed; and an improvement in two of the five boys assessed
- The intervention workers were all female. This may affect the gender take-up variation between boys and girls. **Learning point:** Workers note that boys seem to rely more on peer support and are less likely - especially as teenagers - to engage with a professional worker
- The majority of young people, both those on the REPAIR programme and those worked with from other referral sources, showed positive changes as a result of the interventions. These are demonstrated through improved relationship with mother; decreased anxiety, stress and anger; improved relationship with siblings and peers; and improved emotional literacy and behaviour at school
- The psychologist's interpretation is that children whose fathers completed the programme did better than children whose fathers did not. This has not been tested statistically due to low numbers
- The needs of children under five years old were not picked up in this work because of the lack of skill and capacity of workers to work with this age group
- Data has been collected on 20 of the 43 children. **Learning point:** It would be useful to know the sex of the remaining 23 children to see the male/female split of support. Future work should ensure that this is recorded.

### Findings on Cost-benefit

- In order to reach the target families, the project had to engage with a much higher number of people, many of whom will undoubtedly have benefited in the process, i.e., there are significant additional savings made through developing this model that are not directly tracked. This meant that a total of 334 men had some contact and engagement with the project; 464 women benefited from the wider Pattern-changing programme; and 165 additional children were supported via referrals from REPAIR, MARAC and women's outreach services. **Learning point:** The original projection of the number of people who would access REPAIR proved to be too ambitious. However,

adjustments to the project did mean that the overall numbers of men and women served by the ISB programme were higher than original targets

- The experience of the overall management and delivery of the REPAIR programme indicates that to cover the three geographical areas would be an annual cost of £186,390 – much cheaper than the original calculation of £257,833. This reduction is primarily from reduced costs associated with supporting children whose fathers are on the perpetrator programme (actual take-up did not require a full-time post per area, as originally expected)
- Learning from the ISB project has enabled the development of an alternative model which can now be applied in future delivery of the REPAIR programme. **Learning point:** If this model had been applied from the beginning of the programme, the net benefit to society would have been £492,525. It also shows that in a future two-year period only 54 families need to be served to save money
- The future plan would be to deliver to 24 families per year across Devon. Using the final cost-benefit figures, the total cost to society to *not work* with these families is £345,280. Comparing this with the new REPAIR costs of £186,390 means the net benefit to society per annum would be £158,890
- The relative underperformance (against original bid targets) does not, of course, detract from the project's value in starting to build a body of data, suggesting lines of enquiry for the future, and/or developing the database system to allow the data to be collected and analysed
- The model assumed 100% effectiveness at averting the costs of domestic violence and abuse in 1,800 cases and treated all parties – including individual children within the same family unit - as cases for costing purposes. **Learning point:** The bar was set too high at the outset in terms of financial benefit
- **Learning point:** The project's staggered recruitment meant that it was only at the end coming into a position to look at 24-month follow-ups; and 48-month follow-ups should be taking place in 2011. Notwithstanding, adva has the beginning of a longitudinal study sample for follow-up that would allow comparison of efficacy figures from other studies and, thus, establishment of more realistic 'success' rates for use in ongoing cost-benefit analysis.

### Conclusions

Overall, the original intentions of the project, as modified by subsequent implementation, have been met.

A comprehensive community-based, multi-agency, whole-family intervention model was successfully established in three areas of Devon.

The majority of men, women and children supported saw improvements. For men, the improvements were a reduction in risk and abusive behaviours. For women, the improvements were an increase in safety, self-esteem and better relationships. Children experienced an improvement in relationships and confidence.

The objectives that were not achievable were those that subsequently were recognised to be unrealistic, i.e., the project was not able to reach very high numbers of children and thus affect their educational achievement, nor was it able to capture reported offending behaviours of the perpetrators because access to police data systems was not gained.

The experience of running a three-year family-based intervention model has raised as many questions as it has answered. We have endeavoured to cover these within this conclusion section as guidance for future development.

Above all, the experience has enabled adva as a partnership to have greater clarity about how it will run a family-based intervention model in the future.

### Men

- Psychological testing showed that the programme resulted in significant changes in risk-level, self-esteem and personal effectiveness. The latter includes factors such as coping with change, stress management, self-efficacy and locus of control. This was related to elements of the programme which concentrated on self-worth, communication and social skills, and taking responsibility for oneself which are key to reducing risk and enhancing family safety
- The entry point onto the programme arises when men refer themselves. There is some evidence that men have blocked work with their partners and children
- Voluntary referrals where men have not followed up on initial contact with the programme means there is no monitoring or follow-through on what happens to them or their risk to society
- There has been an increasing belief in the need to more rigorously assess the variations of need and motivation within men to determine the type of intervention to best suit individuals. Adva's involvement in

the European Union-funded Daphne II programme to prevent violence against women identified some excellent practice in Austria in intensive psychological assessment of men, matching individual needs to varying types of intervention

- As men are the first point of contact in this family-based intervention model, this can give a disproportionate emphasis to work with them rather than more holistic family-based interventions
- The project has shown that it can attract a large number of referrals, but the structure of the programme meant that only a small percentage of family participants completed the full range of intervention. This suggests that a more differentiated approach, with a range of interventions, would better suit society
- Given the intensity of the 42-week programme, follow-up support groups would help to sustain the progress made by men and provide a useful ongoing method of monitoring behaviour.

### Women

- Even though the process is triggered by a *man's* referral, the resulting programme can lead to increased safety and support work for their victims, potentially making them safer
- The majority of women supported were new to domestic violence and abuse support services, demonstrating the benefits to another catchment group
- Women require support within a wide range of services, e.g., Women's Safety Workers, outreach, pattern-changing, counselling and drop-in. This means that there are wider benefits for women if programmes for male perpetrators are part of a wider package of services addressing domestic violence and abuse
- It is important that programmes offer ongoing support to women even if a perpetrator drops off the programme. This was not originally built into the project plan and has caused increased demand on Women's Aid. It indicates the importance of an effective project being part of a wider network of support to victims and children.

### Children

- In a model like this, fewer children than perpetrators will be engaged. This is due to the fact that: many of the children associated with men were below the age of five or over 18 years; not all men will have

children; not all women wanted their children to be supported; and some men on the programme no longer had contact with their children. Given the increased vulnerability to serious injury or death for under-fives, work with this age group and their parents has to be a core feature future work

- This work needs to be integrated with wider partnership support work for children and young people (e.g., linking to MARAC or to women supported through outreach work)
- The extent of children's work has been lower than expected and raises the question of whether a family-based intervention model should, perhaps, be generated from the child's perspective, rather than the perpetrator. This would emphasise that in the long-term it is work with children and families as a whole that will change the dynamics of domestic violence and abuse.

### General

- It is hard to generate whole-family-based interventions given the geographic dispersal and the ages of children associated with perpetrators
- This community-based programme attracted referrals from a wide section of the population: vicars, teachers, social workers, postmen, etc. Anecdotal evidence from the Home Office and Probation is that this is a different demographic group from those attending IDAP. This indicates the value of open access community programmes, as it is not just IDAP clients who cause serious violence and homicide
- A conclusion from this work is that it is possible to achieve change in men's behaviour leading to all three elements of the family benefiting. Longitudinal studies comparing this sort of intervention with programmes that only work on men's behaviour would be needed to look at the lasting impact on all those affected by domestic violence and abuse in a family. The findings from this project - where some men stay the 42-week course while others drop off at different stages - raises the question of whether work with perpetrators should have at its heart achieving long-term change in their behaviour or short-term mediation of violence and abuse
- Workers who have supported men, women and children on this programme have highlighted that working together as united, integrated teams has led to improved understanding and communication about the dynamics of domestic violence and abuse in families
- Information-sharing at case management level has been vitally

important in keeping workers abreast of subtle changes in clients' situations and ensuring safety

- The Domestic Violence Panel, run in North Devon, is an ideal multi-agency approach to tackling family dynamics
- Joint and regular supervision has proved to be extremely beneficial for men's, women's and children's workers because it has facilitated the exchange of detailed information about the families
- Recruiting takes up a significant part of the first year. This, in effect, reduces a three-year project to a delivery period of 30 months, at best
- There is a lack of trained staff in most aspects of programmes such as this. This is an issue which needs to be addressed nationally
- The diversity of cultures within organisations affects the implementation and management of projects across large geographical areas. These differences imply a more significant overall project management element is needed. Alongside this are needed more opportunities for staff exchange, contact and communication outside face-to-face work of the programme
- It is vitally important to have a robust case-management database on which to record and share information between workers and to generate outcome reports. It is also important to establish a common level of computer literacy amongst all participating workers to achieve full effectiveness from such a system
- In establishing a three-year programme, it is essential to allow at least nine months set-up time. It is also important to allow for staff turnover and recruitment. Flexibility at the Home Office has enabled us to absorb this by an agreement to extend the funding period into a fourth year to enable us to collect data on a two-and-half-year period
- The geographic variations in the way agencies interact in Devon has had an impact on referrals and operating practices. For example, contracting three different Women's Aid organisations has had an impact on how support to women and children has been delivered, influenced by the cultures of organisations, the skills of workers and the levels of engagement between agencies
- Predicting absolute costs for a project of this scale and complexity over a three-year period proved difficult. Flexibility from funders, as shown by the Home Office, is crucial to enable the redirection of funds under different budget headings
- In trying to secure maximum investment in service delivery, management, evaluation and other infrastructure costs can be given inadequate prominence

- Evaluations of programmes such as this are not widely available, especially in relation to measuring changes in behaviour and attitude. This makes comparisons with national, community-based perpetrator programmes difficult
- The complex nature of the organisations, individuals and geography made it very hard to establish this as one identifiable project across the county
- In order to reach the target families, the project had to engage with a much higher number of people, many of whom will undoubtedly have benefited in the process. As a result, there are significant additional savings made through developing this model that are not directly tracked. 334 men had some contact and engagement with the project; 464 women benefited from the wider Pattern-changing programme; and 165 additional children were supported via referrals from REPAIR, MARAC and women's outreach services.



