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Preventing Violence Against Women: Engaging the Fathers of Today and Tomorrow

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Although fathers play a key role in helping their children develop ideas about gender relations and close relationships, they have been largely overlooked as a resource to help prevent violence against women. This paper explores some of the reasons why fathers have not been successfully engaged in violence prevention. Engaging fathers to promote wider definitions of masculinity for themselves and their children is presented as a major mechanism by which fathers could help prevent violence against women. The information-motivation-behavior model of change, developed for preventing high-risk sexual behavior, is applied to the area to provide structure for understanding previous and current attempts to engage fathers. Examples of innovative programs are used to highlight the application of this model.

Violence against women continues to be a serious problem in our society. Nearly one third of American women (31%) report being physically or sexually abused by a male partner at some point in their lives (Collins et al., 1999), and women are 7 to 14 times more likely than men to report suffering severe physical assaults from an intimate partner (Tjaden & Thoennes, 1998). Adolescent girls are also at substantial risk for assault; approximately one in five female high school students reports being physically and/or sexually assaulted by a dating partner (Silverman, Raj, Mucci, & Hathaway, 2001). In addition to the devastating emotional toll of woman abuse, the health-related costs of these assaults are astounding. It is estimated that they approach $5.8 billion each year in the U.S., of which $4.1 billion are for direct medical and mental health services (Centers for Disease Control, 2003). Given these rates of victimization and the associated societal costs, there is great interest in understanding and preventing violence against women.

A feminist framework for understanding violence against women posits that societal norms about gender equality and the acceptability of violence are major contributors to violence against women. Implicit within this framework is the need to counter these prevailing attitudes and beliefs to successfully prevent violence. There is consensus that prevention is critical, and more likely to result in widespread behavior change than identifying and intervening with individual perpetrators of violence (Centers for Disease Control, 2002; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2001; World Health Organization, 2004). Programs to counter violence and negative attitudes towards women have sprung up at school and community levels (Jaffe, Wolfe, Crooks, Hughes, & Baker, 2004). In contrast, the role of parents, and fathers in particular, in preventing violence against women has been almost completely overlooked. Given that fathers and father-figures play a large role in helping both male and female children and adolescents develop their understanding of masculinity, and that conceptualizations of masculinity are closely linked to violence perpetration, this oversight in engaging fathers represents a major gap in our violence prevention efforts.

The purpose of this paper is to offer a road map to help professionals and social change advocates engage fathers in preventing violence against women. We have chosen to define "engaging fathers" as helping them make a personal commitment to stopping violence against women both as individuals, and by influencing their children through their parenting role. This commitment inherently requires taking some sort of action. We start by exploring some of the forces that limit men's involvement in violence prevention. We then expand our discussion to include

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Continuing Education Quiz located on p.117.

socially constructed notions of masculinity and the effects that masculinity has on the relationships of fathers with their children, as well as the more general connection between masculinity and violence. Throughout the discussion we focus on elements of change that occur at the individual level, as well as those elements that occur at the broader social level. In proposing a road map for engaging fathers in developing (and helping their children develop) these more egalitarian notions of masculinity, we show how a theoretical framework based on social learning theory can be applied to increase the likelihood of success. Specifically, we demonstrate how the information-motivation-behavior model, which was developed to reduce high-risk sexual behavior (Fisher, Fisher, Bryan, & Misovich, 2002), can be fitted to the challenge of engaging fathers in preventing violence against women. Numerous examples of innovative programs are used throughout to illustrate these concepts.

In examining ways to involve fathers in violence prevention initiatives, a conundrum emerges. On one hand, many fathers would indicate that they renounce violence against women, but on the other hand, they are not actively engaging in promoting violence prevention. Thus, it is passivity, rather than an overt behavior, that we are attempting to change. This passivity is not an explicit symptom but rather a *lack of proactivity*—a condition that is not included in the *DSM-IV* or in any criminal code; therefore, noninvolvement must be assessed not as a pathology but rather as a missed opportunity. It is our hope that this paper will provide ideas for working with individual fathers or families, as well as with broader social initiatives.

As a final introductory note, it is important to extend our notions of fatherhood beyond biological-, adoptive- and step-fathers when discussing the development of masculinity. Other male figures may be more important than biological fathers, depending on the makeup of the family. In his work with high school, college, and professional athletes, Messner (1990) found that the sources of inspiration and influence about masculinity were related to socioeconomic status and family composition. Men who had grown up in relatively traditional families identified their fathers or stepfathers as key influences in developing ideas of masculinity. Men with lower SES backgrounds, many of whom did not have one or two identifiable “fathers,” indicated that coaches, mentors, and other men played critical roles in developing their ideas about masculinity and what it means to be a man. Thus, to focus exclusively on biological or stepfathers is a middle-class bias that overlooks the reality of the many boys who are being coached into manhood by alternate father figures.

Violence Prevention—Where Are the Fathers?

The authors of this paper have collectively delivered hundreds of lectures and workshops on violence prevention over the past 15 years. These workshops have targeted educators, front-line service professionals, parents, police, and researchers. For the most part, women have greatly outnumbered men in our audiences (with the exception of presentations to the police). For example, the third author delivers approximately 50 presentations annually on bullying and dating violence prevention to parents at elementary and secondary schools. In his experience, it is exceedingly rare for there to be more than one or two men in the audience, although both mothers and fathers are invited to these events. Although recent attempts to engage male educators and men in the community have resulted in an increased male presence, our audiences continue to be overwhelmingly female. Why have men typically not been part of the violence prevention picture? The feminist community has traditionally identified male privilege as a major barrier to men getting involved in working to end violence. This view has maintained that men do not *want* to become involved because it would require naming and forfeiting male privilege. Although the enjoyment of male privilege may be one part of the answer, identifying reluctance to give up male privilege as the only dynamic that prevents fathers from becoming involved may be an oversimplification of the issue. First of all, men are not uniformly unwilling to get involved, and when asked, identify a number of reasons for their lack of action.

In 2000, the Family Violence Prevention Fund conducted a national study involving over 1,000 men to look at some of these attitudes (Garin, 2000). One of the survey questions related to reasons for not getting actively involved in ending violence against women. One in 5 men (21%) reported that they did not actively support community efforts to stop violence against women because *no one had asked them to get involved*, 16% indicated that they did not have time, and 13% reported that they did not know how to help. An additional 13% of men indicated that their reluctance to get involved stemmed from the perception that they had been vilified and were viewed solely as a problem, rather than approached as an important part of the solution. The fifth most common answer was that domestic violence is a private and personal issue that individuals did not feel comfortable getting involved in. This answer was endorsed by 11% of respondents (Garin, 2000).

The idea of men not being *invited* to participate has emerged in the educational literature in attempts to engage fathers in their children’s early childhood education. One study canvassed educators about efforts that were successful in engaging fathers to be more involved in their children’s education (Green, 2003). The practices that led to more engagement by fathers were deceptively simple: adding the fathers’ names to

correspondence that was sent home, specifically inviting fathers to activities, and sending information to both parents in families where parents did not live together. These efforts all led to increased paternal involvement. The theme underlying each of these minor administrative changes is one of extending fathers an invitation to be more involved. That is, rather than simply addressing information to parents in general, fathers may be more likely to attend if they are specifically and independently invited to participate in activities. The issue of inviting men is complicated by the special intervention needs of men who are violent towards their family members. On one hand, there is a need to invite fathers in general to be more engaged in their children's lives and promote healthy relationships, but on the other hand, we have argued for the need for specialized community and court interventions, and possibly limiting unsupervised involvement for men who have been abusive to their partners and/or children (Jaffe, Crooks, & Poisson, 2003; Scott & Crooks, 2004).

In this paper, we are specifically writing about men who are *not* violent in their primary relationships (i.e., towards partners and children). Men who have perpetrated violence towards their children, or who are considered to be high risk for violent behavior, require specialized abuse-specific intervention. We refer readers to the article by Crooks, Scott, Francis, Reid, and Kelly (2006) in this issue for a discussion of intervention strategies with abusive fathers.

In addition to the missing invitation and the barriers that men experience with respect to engaging in violence prevention, stereotypes about the differential role of fathers and mothers may also contribute to a lack of involvement. The arenas of relationships and emotions are still viewed in many families as mothers' roles, while discipline and achievement may be relegated to fathers. Men are not socialized to have many opportunities to explore emotions and relationships (Pollack, 1998), and may find themselves ill-equipped to tackle these issues with their children. These differences in socialization have been observed in the gender differences of typical communication patterns (Walker, 1994).

While the stereotypes about fathers' roles versus those of mothers can be an impediment to engaging fathers in violence prevention, the father role can also provide a unique opportunity for engagement. In our experience many fathers who have previously dismissed the issues of harassment and violence as feminist propaganda come to see these issues in a very different light once they have teenage daughters who experience harassment in the workplace. Some smaller studies have identified the opportunity to use fatherhood as a way to engage men. For example, an ethnographic study of HIV risk in young Latino fathers has shown how the experience of fathering can positively influence men's willingness to engage in behavior and attitude change. Lesser and colleagues (2001) used interviews and focus groups with 45 young Latino fathers living in an inner city to explore a range of topics related to risk taking, worldviews, and relationships. Their results suggested that some of these young men made profound lifestyle changes after becoming fathers. In addition to changes in risk behaviors, some of the fathers indicated that becoming fathers had changed their attitudes about the importance of relationships based on equality. The authors of this study concluded that accessing young men at risk for HIV *through* their fathering roles increases the likelihood of these men being successful candidates for behavioral change. Similarly, using the transition to fatherhood as a chance to create a dialogue about healthy relationships and counter prevailing notions about masculinity may be an effective window for prevention.

Relationship Between Masculinity and Violence

Consistent with the feminist framework of violence against women is the idea that notions of masculinity play a major role in determining gender equality and violence (Pope & Englar-Carlson, 2001). It is important to recognize that masculinity plays a role at the individual level (i.e., men who perpetrate violence towards women are more likely to have negative attitudes about women), but also at the community or contextual level. In the next section we discuss the relationships among masculinity, violence, and child development with examples from the individual level, followed by a discussion of the link between a culture of masculinity at a broader level and violence, using the examples of high school and gang environments.

Masculinity (in particular notions of fathers' authority and attitudes about women) is linked to men's perpetration of violence against women. A recent review in *Lancet* of factors predicting perpetration of violence against women identified issues related to male privilege and control as one of the top three major factors (Jewkes, 2002). In this review, male entitlement and stereotypical notions of gender roles, along with poverty and alcohol use, were the most significant predictors of perpetrating violence against women. In a sample of over 600 undergraduate students, subscribing to concepts of traditional masculinity was associated with attitudes accepting violence against women and justifying violence and rape (Caron & Carter, 1997). In the measurement realm, research to develop scales of masculinity has found that traditional notions of masculinity show high convergence with attitudes that accept violence (Ludlow & Mahalik, 2001). These different threads of evidence underscore the relationship between rigidly traditional ideas about masculinity and violence against women at the individual level.

In addition to the relationship between masculinity and violence towards women, research with incestuous fathers and stepfathers has implicated gender identities and masculinity in the perpetration of sexual abuse towards children (Wash & Knudson-Martin, 1994). A study based on intensive interviews with incestuous fathers found that masculine perceptions of entitlement provided the context for family relations in which incest was perpetrated. Furthermore, masculine roles and images of masculinity depicted by the research participants clearly underscored incest perpetrators' exaggerated sense of entitlement within the family (Wash & Knudson-Martin, 1994).

At the contextual level, notions of masculinity can serve as a backdrop for the perpetration of violence and harassment. Much of the research linking masculinity and relationship violence at a collective level has been conducted with adolescents. Developmentally, adolescence is a stage marked by rigidity about gender identification. The high school environment has tightly reinforced, implicit rules about what it means to be male or female. While peer hierarchies have always been a prominent part of high school life, only recently have researchers discovered the extent to which the ranking and formation of these hierarchies is connected to gendered meanings. Being seen by others as sufficiently masculine is central to being a boy in high school (Pascoe, 2003). Indeed, the male ideal is the "Jock," against which all other males are compared and valued (Garbarino & deLara, 2003; Martino, 1999). In her interviews with 20 teenaged boys at two high schools, Pascoe (2003) noted how each boy, in describing his own identity and position in the school hierarchy, referenced his position to that of the Jock. The forms of masculinity that gain the most respect involve hierarchies based on toughness, threat or actual violence, casualness about schoolwork, "compulsory heterosexuality," and the accompanying homophobia. These boundaries of what constitutes adequate masculinity contribute to what many argue are the two distinguishing features of adolescent boys: a worsening record of academic achievement and a propensity for violence (Ferguson, Eyre, & Ashbaker, 2000).

One of the most concerning consequences of rigid gender roles among adolescents is its role in the perpetration of lethal violence. Indeed, homophobic taunting (i.e., the price paid by high school boys who are not sufficiently masculine) has been implicated in some of the most extreme cases of school violence seen over the past 20 years. A review by Kimmel and Mahler (2003) of the school shootings that occurred in the U.S. between 1982 and 2001 highlighted the role of chronic bullying and harassment in these incidents. The boys who committed the shootings were all bullied extensively and culturally marginalized in their schools. Furthermore, the homophobic nature of the harassment was underscored. The researchers quote several classmates who identified the presence of these "queers" in their schools as the only problem—completely overlooking the role that the pervasive and relentless victimization of these youth played in the perpetration of the violence.

Kimmel and Mahler note that most analyses of lethal school-based violence have overlooked the role of gender, instead focusing on the role of the media, family background and bullying. These other analyses make no allowance for the fact that *all* of these perpetrators have been male, and note that, "if the killers in the schools in Littleton, Pearl, Paducah, Springfield and Jonesboro had all been girls, gender would undoubtedly be the only story" (Kimmel & Mahler, 2003, p. 1442). The absence of a gendered analysis suggests that even the experts have bought into the dominant version of masculinity, whereby adolescent boys are *expected* to be violent.

Nowhere is the link between hypermasculinity and violence towards women and those considered feminine more evident than in gang culture. Gangs serve to magnify the negative processes by which rigid notions of masculinity provide a rationalization for violence. In his book *Guys, Gangs, and Girlfriend Abuse,* Mark Totten (2000) traces the link between the experiences of these marginalized male youths and how their subculture encourages them to perpetrate physical, sexual, and emotional violence towards their girlfriends, whom they claim to love. The degree to which gang members endorse a rigid code of male conduct is formidable. Totten notes that many gang members witnessed this code of conduct in their homes and families, where male authority was absolute. Within this context of exaggerated masculinity in gangs, the abuse of females and gay and ethnic minority youths goes unchallenged.

This emerging picture emphasizes the centrality of the concept of masculinity in violence prevention. Understanding the dynamics of gender development and identity during adolescence is critical for fathers (and mothers) to understand what they are facing in trying to help their adolescents develop healthy and egalitarian notions of male-female relationships. At the individual family level, shifting fathers' attitudes about masculine ideals may help prevent individual perpetration against children and intimate partners, but will also support their children in developing healthy gender identity roles that can withstand prevailing societal messages. Fathers who model nonviolence and gender equity, and also attempt to actively engage their children in exploring these topics, will help their children develop into healthy, well-adjusted adolescents

who have some resilience for resisting the destructive gender-based messages propagated by the popular media.

Challenging Ideas About Masculinity at the Individual and Community Levels

Given these two levels at which masculinity intersects with violence (i.e., the individual or family level and the social context level), fathers can play a role in challenging dominant concepts of masculinity in both of these domains. At one level, they can talk to their sons and daughters about healthy relationships and model respectful intimate relationships. The other, and possibly more difficult challenge, is for fathers and father figures to take on a more active bystander role and challenge violence and sexism in the larger community. The bullying literature provides a useful analogy in identifying the importance of bystanders. It has long been recognized that teaching individual children not to bully or how to assert themselves in the face of bullying provides limited success in reducing rates of bullying, compared to changing the larger school culture regarding notions of bystander responsibility and mobilizing children who are neither bullies nor victims to become part of the solution (Olweus, Limber, & Mihalic, 1999). Likewise, fathers who are not violent, but also speak out against violence and sexism can help transform our culture into one that expects and rewards respectful behavior towards women.

Engaging fathers as mentors to boys is a natural avenue for challenging dominant theories of masculinity. In an ethnographic study investigating pathways by which young men become involved in gender equity volunteer work, the impact of lessons from fathers, uncles, and coaches emerged as an important avenue for engagement (Coulter, 2003). The opportunity for fathers to profoundly shape their sons' attitudes about violence towards women was exemplified in one young man's account of seeing his father confront his uncle about domestic violence. The young man described overhearing his father raise the issue with his uncle, as well as seeing his whole family attempt to offer support and safety to his aunt. At the individual level, the father may or may not have influenced the uncle to end his abusive behavior. Nonetheless, his behavior sent a powerful message to his son (and presumably any daughters) about collective responsibility to end violence towards women. Challenging the prevailing norms is a difficult task; however, there are some recent initiatives to support fathers in these roles, and to give them awareness and tools for this important job.

One excellent example of an initiative to support fathers in challenging dominant ideologies about violence and relationships is the Family Violence Prevention Fund's "Coaching Boys Into Men Initiative." The multipronged campaign involves a "teach early, teach often" message that underscores the need for adults to explicitly talk to boys about relationships and violence. The campaign has developed a number of public service announcements (PSA) to draw attention to this need. Their PSAs show the importance of engaging fathers on the two levels identified in this paper—both with individual boys in their lives, and in the larger community. Their most recent PSA from the Coaching Boys Into Men campaign shows a series of vignettes of young boys walking up to strangers and male family members and asking for advice on relationships and how to treat women. The narrator underscores the absurdity by noting that boys are never going to approach men with respect to discussing gender equality and relationships, and that men need to initiate these discussions (this PSA can be viewed at www.endabuse.org).

A different PSA in this campaign identifies the conundrum faced by many men who are involved in healthy ways with their son and other children, but face violence and sexism in the larger community. In this advertisement, a father figure (i.e., a father or coach) is having breakfast with two little boys in baseball uniforms at the counter of a diner. They are laughing and rehashing the game and clearly enjoying each other's company. Suddenly, a dispute arises at the table behind them, where a man begins to berate his wife loudly, threatens her, and becomes physically aggressive, eventually dragging her out of the diner. The two little boys become very quiet and the father/coach is clearly overwhelmed and indecisive about whether to say anything about the incident. This PSA captures the need to engage men who are not violent to help counter the acceptance of male violence. Although the father/coach is evidently a healthy force in the lives of the little boys he is with, the PSA shifts responsibility to bystanders and urges them to go beyond personal nonviolence to take a stand and educate sons about the unacceptability of violence towards women.

The Information-Motivation-Behavioral Skills Model of Change

Although understanding the individual and contextual factors that prevent fathers from becoming more involved in violence prevention is an important starting point, an applied framework is required for professionals to challenge and engage men at a tactical level. In this paper we utilize the information-motivation-behavioral skills model (IMB; Fisher et al., 2002) as a tool for understanding the components of behavioral change, but also as a framework for organizing our

discussion of some of the challenges with engaging fathers. Thus, we are not proposing the IMB model as the *only* model that could be applied to engaging fathers, but it shares components with many other behavioral change models and is a useful rubric for identifying central issues.

The IMB model is a useful framework for conceptualizing the gap between having information or knowledge of a problem, knowing what to do, and actually doing it. Initially developed to help conceptualize goal-directed behavior to avoid AIDS transmission, the model posits that "AIDS risk reduction is a function of individuals' information about AIDS transmission and prevention, their motivation to reduce AIDS risk, and their behavioral skills for performing the specific acts involved in risk reduction" (Fisher et al., 2002, p. 178). Although the model was developed to conceptualize sexual risk behavior, the components can be applied to engaging fathers in preventing violence against women. Applied to violence prevention, this model would suggest that fathers need accurate information about the problem of violence against women and the role they could play in preventing this violence. They also require motivation to attempt behavioral change and the behavioral skills necessary to undertake this process. The components of the IMB model as applied to violence prevention with fathers are outlined in Table 1.

Information

Accurate information about a problem is an essential building block in supporting individuals' transitions to healthy behavior choices. Fathers need accurate information about the problem of woman abuse, but also about the day-to-day relationship challenges faced by their children. In a focus group that we recently conducted to obtain student feedback about one of our school-based programs, we asked a group of young men whether discussing and role-playing relationship issues in class had triggered any discussions with their parents. One young man responded by saying, "Are you kidding? My Dad and I never talk about this stuff—he only tells me to avoid parties where kids are drinking beer and stay out of the bushes. It's like he needs a pamphlet or something!" Providing fathers with information about the developmental challenges and associated risks faced by their sons is an important step in building a foundation for behavior change.

It is a mistake to think that all information is equal. Although information is commonly conceptualized as a static thing (e.g., a statistic, a pamphlet, a table with numbers), the role of the information-seeker must not be overlooked (Dervin & Nilan, 1986). Information is only effective to the extent that an information-seeker is able to hear the information and reconcile it with his own attitudes and worldviews. Information that is structured in a way that creates hostility or defensiveness is not effective and will go unnoticed or be actively rejected. In the domain of woman abuse, we have argued that there is widespread social inoculation to the facts and figures, and that extra care must be taken to package information in a way to which men will be receptive (Crooks, Goodall, Hughes, Baker, & Jaffe, in press).

One of the key considerations in packaging information is "cognitive authority." According to Wilson (1983), all information is essentially hearsay. The user can either regard or disregard the information based on the perceived level of cognitive authority. Cognitive authority is a function of the worldviews and social values of the intended recipient and their perception of the information's author. For example, a father who believes that the societal problem of violence against women has been greatly exaggerated through feminist hype is unlikely to attribute much cognitive authority to brochures published by women's advocacy groups. Regardless of how many of these brochures this man may stumble across, the information will not result in either attitudinal or behavioral change.

Table 1
Components of the IMB model applied to engaging fathers in violence prevention

IMB stage	Intervention	Key considerations
Information	Awareness-building seminars (e.g., MVP Program) Targeted Public Service Announcements Discussion with children and other fathers	*Cognitive authority*: Information must be structured in a way to which men will be receptive.
Motivation	Public recognition of antiviolence initiatives Group involvement (e.g., Dads and Daughters, Founding Fathers) Reflection upon childhood experiences of fathering Respectful challenging as a therapeutic intervention	*Social learning theory*: Behavior must be positively reinforced through positive outcomes; motivation requires the development of situational awareness and discrepancy.
Behavior	Direct skills instruction in the school setting Role-playing with adolescents (e.g., *Forum Theatre*) Role-playing parent-child discussions in individual or group therapy	*Self-efficacy*: Maintaining motivation involves developing skills so that men feel they can effectively intervene. Opportunities for rehearsal and feedback are critical.

Cognitive authority has been addressed in several programs for educating men and boys about violence against women. Jackson Katz (1995), for example, developed the MVP program that features prominent male athletes from the high school, collegiate, and professional levels speaking to groups about the problem of violence against women. Through the familiar public personas of athletes, boys and men may be more accepting of particular messages that challenge their social norms and expectations. While Katz's MVP program was developed to engage men and boys in general, fathers in particular may need customized messages and messengers. Although we know of no literature pertaining specifically to cognitive authority and fathers, our clinical work suggests that fathers attribute a certain level of cognitive authority to other fathers. It appears to be difficult for many fathers to believe that a woman or childless man could sufficiently understand the challenges of fathering to be able to provide useful input. This concept of cognitive authority is an important element of the IMB model. As we discuss both the motivational and behavioral components of the model, the importance of building authoritative and accessible information sources will become increasingly evident.

Motivation

Accurate information is a necessary but not sufficient condition for engaging fathers in preventing violence. Motivation is another critical piece of the picture. There is no obvious inherent motivation for fathers to become male leaders in violence prevention. Indeed, men and boys who engage in profeminist behavior may be ridiculed or harassed for their lack of conformity with hegemonic culture. As noted in the introduction of this paper, noninvolvement is not considered a pathology; thus, there is no social pressure to engage in violence prevention. In Kehler's study of profeminist young men, individuals described having to read ambiguous clues in different situations about the acceptability of behaving in nontraditional ways and take risks that sometimes lead to rejection or harassment (Kehler, 2000). For example, boys who behave in a more physically affectionate manner than the norm may be targeted for harassment based on perceived sexual orientation. A more severe example of the potential costs of getting involved was relayed in the Coulter study (2003), where a young man described attempting to intervene in an assault perpetrated by a man against his girlfriend, on the street. The outcome was extremely negative for this young man, who was both verbally and physically assaulted. Clearly part of teaching men to take a more active bystander role includes developing skills for knowing when to intervene safely and when to seek help (i.e., contact the police).

Given the range of risks associated with speaking out against violence and sexism, how do we motivate fathers to address violence against women and sexist attitudes with their children? Social learning theory posits that individuals are more likely to take actions that they believe will lead to positive outcomes. Furthermore, having a positive experience raises the likelihood that the individual will try the behavior again in the future (Bandura, 1977). Thus, we need to socially construct father involvement in preventing violence against women as a positive experience with opportunities for positive reinforcement. Reinforcement can be extrinsic or intrinsic in nature. The former involves getting an external reward for a behavior in comparison to the latter, where the reward is built into the behavior (Bandura, 1977). In building reinforcement opportunities for fathers and adolescent boys who engage in violence prevention, both types of reinforcement are possible. Our local school board (London, Ontario Canada), for example, hosts an annual violence prevention leadership awards night for high school students who have excelled in the violence prevention and gender equity activities, cosponsored by several community agencies. The leadership awards night, now in its third year, has grown from 50 parents showing up to witness their children win awards to a sold-out crowd of hundreds, with each of the 29 high schools in the district nominating two or three award winners. The awards ceremony provides an important opportunity for the community to come together and publicly thank the youth for their involvement and the award winners take great pride in their accomplishments. Furthermore, this awards ceremony creates a socially constructed opportunity for fathers to recognize and praise their sons' accomplishments in less traditional arenas.

One of the most powerful mechanisms for intrinsic reinforcement opportunities is the creation of groups with a particular identity. Being part of a group is inherently reinforcing (for better or for worse). When groups form with the mandate to address gender-based violence, they provide fathers and young men with a sense of belonging, and some protection against trying to counter the hegemonic culture as individuals. In Coulter's (2003) ethnographic study, some of the young men identified belonging to their schools' gender equity clubs as an important public platform for their engagement. There are two excellent grassroots examples of groups that have formed to provide fathers with an identity and action steps related to ending violence against women: Dads and Daughters and Founding Fathers.

Dads and Daughters is an organization that is committed to helping fathers support their daughters. Their mandate is articulated on their Web site: "DADS inspires fathers to actively and deeply engage in the lives of their daughters and galvanizes fathers and others to transform the pervasive cultural messages that devalue girls and women" (www.dadsanddaughters.org). The organization features an interactive Web site designed to engage fathers in learning more about how to support their daughters, and also to mobilize men to take social action. There is a 30-item quiz designed to assess "DAD-Q," that asks men to rate themselves on constructs such as how well they know their daughters (e.g., goals, best friend's name), their level of involvement with their daughter (e.g., frequency of daughter-father activities, participation in parenting organizations), and the extent to which they engage in violent or sexist behaviors toward their daughters and/or intimate partners (e.g., yell at my daughter's mother, comment on my daughter's weight). The results of this "test" may provide motivation to fathers who do not have healthy father-daughter relationships by helping them conceptualize the current state of their relationship and consider alternate possibilities for how they might relate to their daughters.

The Dads and Daughters Web site is also designed to enable men to take concrete action against the exploitation of girls and women. Specifically, it has numerous campaigns to dispute social policies and laws, protest public decisions, and complain about sexist advertisements. These campaigns encourage and facilitate fathers to send messages to politicians, organizations, or companies through the Web site. For each social action initiative the Web site provides an overview of the issue, background information (including articles from the press), and a sample letter than can be sent from the Dads and Daughters Web site. For example, the Dads and Daughters site mobilizes fathers to object to particularly sexist and degrading images of women in the media. Furthermore, the Web site tracks initiatives and reports back on successes, building the image that fathers *can* make a difference through making their voices heard. This idea of seeking to transform societal norms is also a major theme in the Founding Fathers initiative.

The Founding Fathers campaign began on Father's Day, 2003, when 350 men from across the United States made a public pledge to end violence against women. These men made a commitment to "change the world by creating a new society—one where decency and respect require no special day on the calendar, where boys are taught that violence does not equal strength and where men stand with courage and lead with conviction to stop violence against women and children" (taken from http://founding-fathers.org). The public nature of the pledge took the form of a full-page declaration in the *New York Times*. As an ongoing initiative, fathers are invited to "become" a Founding Father by donating $10 and being registered on a virtual wall, or to become a charter founding father, which requires a bigger monetary contribution and results in name recognition in the annual *New York Times* declaration. The Founding Fathers initiative provides information on their Web site about violence, but more than being an information service, it provides fathers with an identity as a member of a recognizable group that is committed to be part of the solution to the problem of violence. In addition, although female supporters of the Founding Fathers initiative are recognized on the Web site, it is primarily constructed as an initiative by men and for men, which adds to the appeal for many fathers.

Although group identification is an excellent motivator at the community level, it does not help practitioners who are working with individual fathers and families. Developing motivation for individual fathers can be targeted through building awareness and developing discrepancy between real and ideal ways of relating to others. In our intervention with violent fathers, we target motivation by having men reflect on ways that they would like to be the same or different from their fathers, and the way their relationships with their children are versus how they would like them to be (see Crooks et al., 2006, in this issue). Helping men reach this sense of discrepancy between actual and ideal is a useful tool to develop motivation. In the case of the intervention with abusive fathers, many of them had abusive fathers themselves, and the discrepancy may simply be a wish to not terrify or hurt their children in the same manner they experienced as children. Although the nature of the discrepancy may be different for nonviolent men, it is likely that there will be significant ways in which they hope to parent differently from their fathers, if for no other reason than the changing societal norms about fathers. Many adults had fathers who were largely uninvolved in the emotional life of the family, and were viewed primarily as breadwinners and disciplinarians. Helping fathers identify ways that they want to have different relationships with their own children may serve as a platform for discussing notions of masculinity and ways for fathers to foster healthy relationship skills for their children.

Another way in which therapists can help fathers counter sexist attitudes is to model respectful challenges of these attitudes when they emerge in therapy. Comments that objectify women or minimize violence are opportunities to ask fathers questions that will help them become more aware of their attitudes about violence and women. Using the father role to understand the impact of these attitudes is also helpful. For example, if a father makes a degrading comment about

women in general, a therapist could challenge the statement and ask the man to consider how his own daughter or son might have felt about hearing it, and what messages he would be conveying to them.

Behavioral Skills

In addition to information and motivation, behavioral skills are required for fathers to intervene with their children in preventing violence against women. A father needs skills and a sense of self-efficacy with respect to tackling these challenging issues. Self-efficacy, or the extent to which an individual believes that he is capable of taking action that will lead to a desired outcome, exerts a powerful influence on an individual's behavior (Bandura, 1977). If a father suspects that his attempts to engage his children or friends in discussing issues of gender equity will be totally unsuccessful (i.e., his self-efficacy is low in this domain), he will be unlikely to make the attempt. Many men want to intervene in a situation that they suspect might be violent, but feel that they lack the requisite skills. The Family Violence Prevention Fund has a series of powerful print ads that encourage men to confront friends who are abusive in their intimate relationships. These ads have pictures of injured women, with slogans such as, "It's hard to confront a friend who abuses his wife… but not nearly as hard as being his wife" and "If the noise coming from next door were loud music you'd do something about it." These ads have a powerful emotional impact, and may be successful at motivating men to take action; however, there may still be a significant skill gap with respect to knowing what action to take. A Canadian public service announcement demonstrates the same tendency to use messages that target motivation without providing the necessary skills. In this PSA, a young couple is shown flirting at a party. Later in the clip, they are in the parking lot and the woman is shown struggling against the male. The narrator identifies the behavior as sexual assault, and admonishes parents to talk to their sons. Yet, the PSA does not equip parents with ideas about how to approach personal topics such as dating and gender relationships, nor does it give parents an idea of what they should encourage their son or daughter *towards*. Teaching men and boys to not commit violence is only the first step in identifying goals consistent with engagement. Fathers also need to increase dialogue with their sons about healthy, equitable, and respectful relationships with women.

Fortunately, campaigns such as Founding Fathers are starting to bridge this gap between exhorting fathers to take action and telling them what type of actions might be successful. The campaign includes an excellent pamphlet, entitled "Tough Talk: What Boys Need to Know About Relationship Abuse" (available at www.founding-fathers.org). This pamphlet is a well-designed resource that addresses the details of how fathers and father-figures might talk to boys and young men about these sensitive topics. It gives specific ideas about how and when to initiate a conversation (with concrete examples of possible openers), as well as suggested responses to possible reactions that might be encountered (e.g., what to do if your son says absolutely nothing, what to do if you discover that your son is perpetrating abuse). One critical point made in the pamphlet is that engaging sons in these discussions is a process rather than a one-time event. It also helps fathers develop reasonable expectations about how their sons might respond, and underscores the need to create an ongoing dialogue, which will increase comfort for both fathers and sons over time.

Other initiatives emphasize working with adolescents. These initiatives may exert a dual positive impact. Effective programs have the potential to prevent both peer and dating violence in the present, but also to prevent a trajectory of violence. Abuse in adolescent dating and peer relationships does not provide a strong foundation for healthy adult relationships. Thus, working with adolescents to prevent dating violence is also an investment in preventing violence with the fathers and husbands of tomorrow. Building skills and capacity with these "fathers of tomorrow" is somewhat easier than working with adults because skill-based instruction and opportunities for practice can be structured into the school setting. The school setting provides an appealing forum to create these opportunities for reinforcement and motivation, given the degree of structure and monitoring that can be implemented (Berkowitz, Jaffe, Peacock, Rosenbluth, & Sousa, 2003). Our own school board, the Thames Valley District School Board (www.tvdsb.on.ca), has several innovative skill-based programs to engage adolescents in violence prevention. One such project currently being evaluated in 26 high schools is the Fourth R (reading, 'riting, 'rithmetic, and *relationships*).

The Fourth R is a comprehensive school-based program to build healthy relationships and prevent risk behaviors (www.thefourthr.ca). The Fourth R includes a 21-lesson skill-based curriculum that promotes healthy relationships and targets violence, high-risk sexual behavior, and substance use in adolescents. In the program, adolescents are provided with accurate information about dating violence and woman abuse, but the majority of the time is spent on skill development. Each unit contains similar themes of value clarification, provision of information, decision-making and an extensive skill development component. Adolescents receive considerable practice role-playing ways to resolve conflict scenarios, both as participants and in the role of bystander. The opportunity to see their peers role-play solutions is an important part of the program, because observing models successfully complete a behavioral response is one of the

most effective ways to increase self-efficacy (Bandura, 1977). There is a also a parent component to the Fourth R, whereby parent newsletters are sent home with developmental information about adolescents, warning signs that adolescents may be involved in high-risk behavior, and numerous skills and suggestions for increasing communication between adolescents and parents. The underlying message in all of the pamphlets is the importance of parent involvement and communication during adolescents.

Another initiative that targets skills building with a wider audience is a form of social action theatre called Forum Theatre (Jaffe et al., 2004). Forum Theatre involves troupes of young actors that travel to different schools and perform plays that have strong themes of violence and harassment. The Forum Theatre approach involves the play being performed start to finish once. After watching the play through the first time, a teacher facilitator tells the audience that they will have the opportunity to change the reality they have just seen unfold in front of them. This time, when the play starts, people in the audience are encouraged to put up their hand and yell "stop" when they see something they find unacceptable (e.g., an episode of violence or harassment). When someone yells stop, the tableau freezes, and the person who has stopped the action is given the opportunity to replace either the victim or the bystander (but not the perpetrator). The scene is then replayed with the person who has intervened having the opportunity to affect a different outcome in the scene. The interactions are very realistic and the perpetrators do not back down simply because they are told to stop. The person who has attempted to intervene has to be creative and persistent to change the course of events. The individuals who have volunteered to intervene have a powerful experience in trying to change the course of the interaction. They also have the opportunity to experience the stress associated with going against the flow of an incident as it unfolds. There is also a clear underlying message that everybody has both the opportunity and the responsibility to stop violence, and without intervention, these scenes play out to distressing conclusions. Students in the audience who may not have the self-efficacy to volunteer to demonstrate a different solution in front of the crowd still benefit from observing their peers attempt to intervene.

Although the school setting provides an excellent structure for role-play and behavioral rehearsal, these same skill-building exercises could be incorporated into individual or family therapy. Therapists could help men identify difficult topics of conversation that they would like to approach with their sons and daughters and role-play some of these scenarios. Behavioral rehearsal of difficult situations helps individuals become more skilled, but also more confident about their ability to handle the situation. Therapists have done this type of role-playing with clients for years (e.g., with clients who are socially anxious, with clients who want to ask their bosses for a raise), and using these tools to develop skills for fathers to discuss issues of relationships and masculinity with their children is an extension of this work. An awareness of the role of masculinity in the perpetration and acceptance of violence is necessary for therapists to prioritize this direction with individual clients. Similar to fathers, therapists require the same building blocks of accurate information, motivation and behavioral skills to be able to engage fathers in violence prevention.

The Challenge of Evaluating Prevention

The success of attempts to engage fathers in preventing violence against women needs to be evaluated with appropriate research methods. Unfortunately, there are many barriers inherent in this outcome evaluation research. First, there are the complexities of community-level prevention initiatives—it is difficult to assess individual "dosage" and the outcome is the absence of a phenomenon, not the presence of one. More complexity is added by the two levels of intersection that have been discussed throughout this paper. Do we expect changing notions of masculinity to have an impact on: (a) the individual father and his children, or (b) on the larger social culture? The former would suggest that a father's involvement in prevention activities would lower his (and presumably his sons') likelihood of perpetrating violence against women. The latter suggests that a father's involvement in prevention activities might lead his son to stand up for students being bullied or harassed at school. If one thinks back to the findings about masculinity and lethal school violence, the argument could be made that changing notions of masculinity would not have met all of the intervention needs of the youth who perpetrated the lethal violence. However, a less toxic and homophobic culture might have prevented the alienation and marginalization of those youth, which ultimately led to the violence.

Evaluation is required at two levels. First, changes in individual ideas about masculinity and perpetration or acceptance of violence can be evaluated. Second, dominant norms about masculinity can be evaluated in the larger cultural context (e.g., school or community), and rates of violence against women can be examined as a function of these norms. Both types of evaluation are essential for decision-making about funding and programming in the growing field of violence prevention. While many of the studies cited herein have addressed particular aspects of these concerns, the lack of a common underlying theoretical framework makes it difficult to

compare findings across studies. It is our sincere hope that the research community adopts a long view on the issue of involving fathers in violence prevention initiatives with appropriate longitudinal research designs.

Summary

To date fathers have been an underutilized resource in the campaign to end violence against women. Due to the major role fathers play in developing their children's notions of masculinity, they constitute a group with potential to make a significant difference. Furthermore, there is some evidence that approaching men to be involved in preventing violence against women by appealing to their roles as fathers may make the area more palatable to men; that is, some men may feel less defensive about getting involved in something they see as a parenting or social justice issue than in something widely viewed as a feminist issue. In approaching fathers, we believe that the Family Violence Prevention Fund's "invite, don't indict" message is critical. Initiatives that provide fathers with accurate information in a manner to which they are receptive, enhance motivation for fathers to be involved, and facilitate skill development are likely to be successful in increasing engagement. Successful grassroots initiatives, such as Founding Fathers and Dads and Daughters, include all three of these elements: they provide information to fathers, create motivation through group membership, and include specific skills coaching to help fathers transform personal commitment into action. As more initiatives begin to capitalize on these strategies the potential of fathers to help prevent violence against women will be more fully realized.

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