

## The Re-enactment

### Introduction - Six Key Moments

Three moments are linked to gender based expectations:

1. The moment where his **expectation** of service from his partner is denied/challenged.
2. The moment where his expectation of **authority** over his partner is denied or challenged.
3. The moment of **loss of power** over his partner.

Three moments called decision moments:

4. Decision to **objectify**
5. Decision to **chase**
6. Decision to be **violent**

The stages in the re-enactment

1. **The poster**
2. **The script**
3. **The agreements**
4. **The re-enactment**

**Focus on:**

His thinking right at the moment – help him stay in that moment

- How his body feels
- How he feels – prompt if necessary ‘I imagine that must feel....’

to a point when it is possible to say which key point in the re-enactment it is.

5. **Alternatives**
6. **De-role**
7. **Feedback**

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## The Re-enactment

### Introduction

This particular set of exercises comes from the Manalive programme in San Rafael and were developed by Hamish Sinclair. Re-enactments are used by DVPP in Edinburgh and DVIP London, both projects participated in the re-enactment training with Hamish.

The point of doing a re-enactment is to look in detail at one incident of violence, preferably a fairly recent one or the most violent. By slowing the incident down we try to identify the 'six key moments' which preceded the men's violence to their partners. The point of this is to make visible to the man the group the aspects of their violence which they have learned to ignore, and in particular the decisions that preceded the violence. If the men cannot see and feel their violence then it is impossible for them to have control over behaviours and choose an alternative. Also we are attempting to help the men recognise and feel the expectations he has of women that support his decision to use violence.

Six Key Moments - Three moments are linked to gender based expectations:

1. The moment where his **expectation** of service from his partner is denied/challenged.

Identifying the moment derives from the premise that violence is intentional and about control. The behaviours which the men are attempting to get their partners to do is referred to as service. Often men are unaware of the service they expect from their partners and so find it hard to recognise the intentionality of their actions. In the other re-enactments we aim to identify the service/s they are expecting from their partners. At other stages in the programme we look more closely at the beliefs the men have around gender and their relationships with women that underpin these.

Expectations of service may include childcare, housework and so on but often it's something less tangible. This may include the expectation that she is responsible for his emotional well-being (i.e., that she should monitor his moods and act accordingly), that she should put his needs first or that she should not show anger, criticise him or argue.

2. The moment where his expectation of **authority** over his partner is denied or challenged.

In the re-enactment we aim to identify the man's expectation of authority over his partner. Sometimes this appears as the issuing of an order with the expectation that it must be complied with. This moment may often be seen as a verbal order (i.e. you will... and how dare you....) or it may be seen as a gesture, such as finger pointing.

3. The moment of **loss of power** over his partner.

This is the moment when the man fears he is not going to get what he wants when he tries to exert his perceived authority over his partner. At this point he feels (correctly) that he has lost control over his partner and he is powerless over her. Ordinarily he senses this as a fleeting moment of discomfort that he will quickly try to escape from by moving on to the decisive moments below. (Often this is the moment immediately before the decision to be violent). In

the re-enactment we try to get him to stay in the moment and experience it in more detail. He may not experience the acute sense of loss or emptiness which, although uncomfortable, is not a real threat to his safety. We point out that only thing that is threatened are his expectations of authority and service we pointed out earlier. The only thing lost would be his sense of himself as a man in an unequal power relationship with his partner. Men who use violence towards partners' move away from experiencing any powerlessness into further attempts to control her, including violence

When you are working with a man in this moment it is useful to discuss and what he is thinking and feeling. In our experience, the re-enactments tend to be powerful enough that men are able to tap into at least a fraction of their actual feelings they experience and help them to identify this key moment in their violence.

### Three moments called decision moments:

#### 4. Decision to objectify

This is the process of reducing someone to less than a person. This is important because it enables people to behave in a violent and brutal way to people they say they love and care about. The most obvious signs of objectification are name calling, particularly words like bitch, cunt, slag and cow. This enables him to see her as the enemy rather than his partner. In a more general sense, objectification can occur earlier in argument when he stops seeing her as someone with a history, with feelings and opinions but instead only how they affect him. At this point he stops listening and becomes concerned only with his own point and winning, constructing his own reply before they have finished speaking.

When doing a re-enactment in the group, it can be useful to ask a man what thoughts he is having at that moment in order to identify objectification. You can also ask him how he sees his partner at that moment, particularly if he is struggling with identifying his objectifying thoughts as it is very unlikely that he will be seeing her as beautiful or lovable.

Tip: When explaining the purpose of this moment as part of a violent incident to the group it can be helpful to give an external example of the way in which objectification works, such as propaganda in a war conflict and how the 'enemy' is portrayed.

#### 5. Decision to chase

At its simplest, this is the decision to close the distance with his partner. After all, if he is one place and she is in another then he can't be physically violent to her. Therefore, the decision is to physically get his partner so that he can be violent to her. In a wider sense this is a decision to close in rather than back off, to pursue rather than let go. The purpose of this kind of chase is to stop her getting away. It is a decision to keep an argument going rather than to end it and is about having the last word; to chase verbally.

#### 6. Decision to be **violent**

This is the point at which someone chooses to be violent: what kind of violence and how much. It is important to highlight this in the re-enactment because violence is rarely presented as a choice when it is being discussed in general conversation. It requires little

elaboration but enabling the man to see that his violence is a decision is a key aim in the re-enactment.

### Other aims in the re-enactment

a) To increase disclosure

Men reveal more about their violence in re-enactments than is revealed through talking. The process of re-enacting makes it more difficult for someone to maintain an incomplete version of what happened. Doing a re-enactment in a group of perpetrators brings a heightened sense of reality of the men's violence to the room. A man attending the programme may come across as gentle and considered and even when he is talking about his violence he may not communicate much of what he is like when he is violent. This re-enactment enables him to become more visible in the group and can lower collusion.

**b) To give a man in the group more insight into what it might be like to experience violence from a woman's perspective.**

The aim is to increase men's empathy for their partners.

**c) To consider other options of behaving in relationships and in particular around the similar situations to the one enacted in the re-enactment.**

### The stages in a re-enactment

#### 1. The Poster

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The first thing to do is find a volunteer to do his re-enactment. This is a large piece of work for someone to do in a group and requires a greater disclosure of the violence than they may have done before and it's best not to rush someone into volunteering. Sometimes it is useful to have prepared someone to volunteer by motioning it at an earlier point.

The poster is so-called because it is a portrayal of the most intense and violent moment of the violence event; just like a film poster will portray the most intense and the most violent moment of the film. Basically you ask the man to enact the most intense moment of his violence towards his partner and hold that moment in a still pose.

Aims of this exercise - To show the others in the group some reality to men's violence.

#### 2. To help the man get back in touch with the incident you will be re-enacting

If the poster seems muted and minimised ask the man whether he felt he was back into the full intensity of the abuse. If he says 'no' ask him to do the poster again but this time louder and with greater intensity. On the other hand, if the man states that he believes it was realistic, you can turn to the whole group for a vote. Ask each group member whether he thinks that the poster was as intense as the real incident: yes or no. Move around the group for a response and if some of the men have said 'no' you can repeat the exercise while asking them to exaggerate his actions. You may want to tell him that while it feels real for him, it did not seem quite real for everyone. You may also want to remind him that you are aware that this is an artificial setting and that as such he may need to exaggerate his actions.

### 3. The Script

This is based around three brief questions designed to focus the man on his decisions and his violence and to stop story telling.

- How did you begin your violence
- How did you do your violence (we need total disclosure here of all the details of what violence you did)
- How/ why did you stop your violence

Aim to get a clear idea of what he did.

### 4. The Agreements

Ask the man if he wishes to choose someone to play his partner for the re-enactment or would he rather someone volunteered.

*Tip –it's good to let the man choose because he knows who would be best to play the part in his re-enactment.*

Since this involves someone re-enacting an incident of violence, it is important that those involved should make an agreement with each other for safety reasons.

- A- I will not have any physical contact with Y during the course of this re-enactment, I will disclose all my violence, I agree to Y playing the role of my partner for this re-enactment
- B- I agree to have no physical contact with X during this re-enactment. I agree to play the role of X's partner during this re-enactment.

### 5. The Re-enactment

Get the man doing the re-enactment to give the man playing his partner information he needs to play the role. In particular this will include what she says, how she says this and physically what happened.

When this has happened, you'll need to set the scene. Make sure there is enough space to do the re-enactment and move furniture where needed to create the scene.

Get the man to do his re-enactment up to the point reached in the poster. Now it may be an idea to ask him if he has identified any of the key moments and where they occur. Then go through the re-enactment again stopping the process in order that the facilitator can identify the key moments. It may be necessary to run parts of the re-enactment a number of times to get the remaining key moments.

Focus on:

- His thinking right at the moment – help him stay in that moment
- How his body feels
- How he feels- prompt if necessary 'I imagine that must feel...'

Do this until you reach a point where it is possible to say which key point in the re-enactment it is.

## **Powerlessness**

Often this is easier to identify close to the moment he decides to be violent. This is often a fleeting moment which you will need to expand on in the re-enactment – look at what control he is losing and the consequences for him of that happening.

This moment is often experienced by feeling sad, useless, hopeless, and deflated and may express a sense of emptiness or being trapped. This is a feeling from which he has used violence to escape or avoid. Encourage him to remain in that position and to exaggerate the feeling of emptiness, nothingness. At this point in the re-enactment violence has not been used and there are still choices the man could make, but to do so may have meant that he would experience some of these uncomfortable feelings. **6**

## **6. Alternatives**

This is a chance to get the man to consider what non-controlling behaviours he could have used. This is similar to other work on alternatives and should be done once the key moments have been identified and explored. It is at this stage that the other members of the group will become more directly involved with the process as during the actual re-enactments you may not want to involve the tougher group members because this can reduce the intensity for the man involved.

## **7. De-role**

You will need to de-role the men who took part in the re-enactment. This does not include the man whose re-enactment it was as he is not in a 'role' as himself. At DVIP the method used to de-role is asking safe and appropriate personal questions, such as 'what is your favourite room where you live?' and 'what is your favourite pudding?' Try not to repeat the same de-role format as it will allow people to answer in a ritualised manner without realising having to think.

## **8. Feedback**

Get the group to focus on what they could relate to in the re-enactment, what issues it touched upon for them and what they felt. Avoid the other group members giving advice to the man who had just completed the re-enactment as this is often unhelpful.