

My Work in Domestic Violence...

I am committed to recognising and working with current and previous domestic violence (overt and covert) in all of my counselling, training and supervisory work. This means I am pro-active in asking specific and respectful questions about the use or abuse of power, or the lack of power, that my clients experience in their lives. It also means I strongly challenge my supervisees to be equally vigilant.

This thoroughness comes not from an angry, reactive stance, but rather I seek to encourage all of those I work with to recognise issues of power and control, and to work with those issues with skill, compassion and sensitivity. I use feminist-informed approaches, together with narrative and trauma therapies, attachment theory and psycho-education, CBT etc.

My experience over 15 years includes the following:

Counselling:

- I frequently see women who are in a violent relationship, have recently left one, or experienced DV in their family of origin. Many have not previously identified their experience as DV. My goals are to help them take the next step towards keeping safe and having a voice.
- I work with children, or a group of siblings, who have experienced or are experiencing DV. Healing and resolution with empowerment in my goal.
- I work with couples to help them identify and work with DV in the relationship. This usually means I see them separately for most sessions. Family safety is the goal.
- I work with men who have used or are using violence against others. My goal is firstly to respectfully help them recognise the damage done, and to take responsibility for keeping their family safe. Once that is fully resolved, we may begin to address root causes of reactivity and blame, educating the man to identify and fully experience a range of emotions rather than the avoidance patterns he has used in the past.

DV Groups I have led:

- Managing Anger, 4 weeks (*Relationships Australia*)
- Children's Group, 8 weeks (*LifeCare*)
- Group for Women, 8 weeks (*Relationships Australia*)
- Taking Responsibility, 20 weeks' duration (*Relationships Australia*) 4 times

Assertiveness Groups for women:

- *Women's Health Centre, Penrith*
- *The Women's Cottage Richmond*
- *Interrelate*

I have supervised/supervise:

- GROUPS:
 - anger Management group,
 - group for children affected by DV,
 - group for women who have experienced DV
- workers from *Staying Home Leaving Violence* program etc
- workers from several local NFPs who specialise in DV work
- counsellors who work with a range of clients impacted by DV, many of whom have needed upskilling in this area. (currently 9 counsellors) Two counsellors are now working with men who use violence to increase their skills as a result of my supervisory influence.
- group supervision for a women's refuge (Sydney city)
- Brighter Futures and EIPP workers (currently 7 of these)
- Managers of early intervention/women's programs

DV Training I have given:

- *Introduction to Domestic Violence* workshop, *Lifeline* counsellors
- *Salvation Army* Officer's Training in Childhood Sexual Abuse prevention and processes for reporting
- *Penrith City Council DV Project*
 - One day training in "Vicarious Trauma in DV Work"
 - One Day training in "Supervising DV workers"

Other:

- Regional Co-Ordinator of *LifeCare*, specialist DV agency
- Systems Advocacy for women impacted by DV, campaign for Victim's Compensation legislation
- Updated *Taking Responsibility* Manual for use with local Aboriginal men in consultation with local Aboriginal workers.
- Participation in White Ribbon Day community events, *Penrith City Council*.