



WWP EN **Annual Conference 2023**

Critical Cases

Understanding & responding to
high-risk domestic violence
perpetrators



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WWP EN ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2023

Critical cases

Understanding & responding to high-risk domestic violence perpetrators

11 & 12 October, online

MODERATION: Isotta Rossoni

Isotta Rossoni is a criminologist focusing on sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) and sexual exploitation in migration and displacement. In the past 7 years, she has worked with various NGOs supporting victims of crime, as well as running perpetrator programmes for perpetrators of domestic and sexualised violence. She is on the UN Women's Roster of Consultants for Ending Violence against Women and a Research Consultant for the Council of Europe. She regularly collaborates with various NGOs and INGOs - including Save the Children Italy and WWP EN - primarily on issues related to trafficking and sexual abuse/exploitation.

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11 OCTOBER: 9:30-15:30 CET

9:30 Welcome and Overview of Programme

Isotta Rossoni

9:40 Opening Remarks

Prof Dr Dean Ajdukovic, Chair of the WWP EN Board

9:45 Institutional Greetings

Frances Fitzgerald (Member of the European Parliament)

Anna Esquerrà Roqueta (Confederation of European Probation)

9:55 Keynote Speech: Unpacking what we mean when we say ‘high risk’ – Do we need new tools or a framework for thinking?

Dr Chris Newman (PAI Family Safety Assessments, UK)

10:30 Presentation: Understanding the changing landscape of responding to and preventing sexual abuse in Europe

Prof Kieran McCartan (University of the West of England, UK)

11:00 Break

11:20 Plenary session on trauma-informed perpetrator work

Marius Råkil (Alternative to Violence, Norway)

12:35 Lunch Break

13:45 Workshops 1-4 ([More information](#))

In Zoom rooms (link & passcodes sent via e-mail)

15:15 Virtual social networking

12 OCTOBER: 9:30-16:00 CET

9:30 Introduction to day two

Isotta Rossoni

9:40 Welcoming Words

Dr Alessandra Pauncz, WWP EN Executive Director

9:45 Keynote Speech: High risk and prevention. Learning from European femicide research

Prof Dr Monika Schröttle (University of Applied Sciences Ravensburg-Weingarten, Germany)

10:20 Presentation: Mapping survivor-safety-oriented perpetrator work among WWP EN members

Ola Kurowicka (WWP EN)

10:40 Break

11:00 MARAC: Multi-agency response to highest-risk domestic abuse – An example from Scotland

SafeLives (Scotland, UK)

12:45 Lunch Break

14:00 Workshops 5-8 [\(More information\)](#)

In Zoom rooms (link & passcodes sent via e-mail)

15:30 Joint feedback session

15:45 Closing



Speakers & Workshops



Keynote Speech: Unpacking what we mean when we say ‘high risk’ – Do we need new tools or a framework for thinking?

This first keynote speech will address questions such as: What do we mean when we talk about "high risk" perpetrators of domestic violence? What is the purpose of classifying people in that way? How can we take into account the impact of coercive control on adult victims and the cumulative harms to children from living with an abusive parent? The speech will also focus on what information we need from our professional network to assess risk and work safely with perpetrators of domestic abuse and how important the victim's perspective is to our assessments. The audience will learn about advantages and shortcomings of some of the established risk assessment tools, and how we can move from risk assessment to risk management in cooperation with our professional networks.

Speaker bio

Chris Newman is director of PAI Family Safety Assessments, an organisation in London that provides specialist assessments for the family court in cases where domestic abuse is a child protection concern. He has 25 years of experience delivering individual work and group work with men addressing their violence and abuse to partners, in community and criminal justice settings. He has been involved in developing and delivering risk assessment and risk management interventions in family cases for over 20 years and is an acknowledged expert in this area. He provides consultation and supervision to a range of organisations working with violence in the family and has long experience of training professionals in the field. He has recently written a practice guidance for social workers dealing with cases where domestic violence is a child protection concern.

Keynote Speech: High risk and prevention. Learning from European femicide research

The lecture will present the results of European femicide research in recent years, with a specific focus on identifying high-risk cases and preventing femicides. The outcome of the project *FEM-UnitED to prevent femicide in Europe* will be reflected, containing empirical results as well as recommendations for improved prevention by states and institutions.

Speaker bio

Prof Dr Monika Schröttle has been researching on violence against women and ways of effectively preventing violence for 30 years. She is Professor of Participation and Social Work at the Faculty of Social Work, Health and Nursing at the Ravensburg-Weingarten University of Applied Sciences and also heads the research department "Gender, Violence and Human Rights" at the Institute for Empirical Sociology (IfeS) at the Friedrich-Alexander University Erlangen-Nuremberg. At the international level, she coordinates the European Observatory on Femicide (EOF) and the European Network on Gender and Violence (ENGv), which unites around 500 scientists.

Presentation: Understanding the changing landscape of responding to and preventing sexual abuse in Europe

This talk will focus on current European research and policy debates regarding sexual abuse and its links to gender-based violence. It will discuss current research and policy from the Council of Europe, the European Union, and related 3rd sector organisations. The presentation will indicate that current thinking around sexual abuse prevention is rooted in public health, preventive, collaborative interventions that involve all parts of the socio-ecological landscape.

Speaker bio

Dr Kieran McCartan is a Professor of Criminology at the University of the West of England in Bristol, an Adjunct Professor at the Queensland University of Technology in Brisbane, and a Visiting Research Fellow at the University of Huddersfield. He has a track record of public, academic, and professional engagement on criminological issues, including the origins and causes of sex offending and societal responses to sex offenders. He has developed a wide-ranging, multi-disciplinary network around sex offender management and reintegration. He has conducted research for funders, including the UK Ministry of Justice and the UK Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC). He is the Chair of the sexual offenses working group of the Confederation of European Probation (CEP) and has co-led a nationally based ESRC-funded Knowledge Exchange Network on the limited disclosure of sex offender information (2012).

Professor McCartan has a degree in Psychology from the Queens University of Belfast (2001), an MSc in Criminology at the Scarman Centre (2002), and a PhD in the Department of Psychology (2008).

Among other roles, Professor McCartan is the international representative on the Association for the Treatment of Sexual Abusers board, Research chair of Circles Europe, and has advised the Council of Europe and the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, Australia.

Plenary workshop: Trauma-informed work with adults who use violence in intimate relationships

The early history of programs working with men using interpersonal violence (IPV) focused mainly on violence being driven by men's patriarchal attitudes.

Today, we know that IPV represents a complex problem, also reflecting issues connected to trauma, attachment and emotion regulation difficulties. In this plenary workshop Mr. Rakil will present some case vignettes and reflect on the presence of trauma experiences in the life history of adults using IPV, and implications for work on change.

Speaker bio

Marius Råkil is the executive director of Alternativ til Vold (ATV) ("Alternative to Violence") in Norway. He is educated and trained as a specialist in clinical psychology with his degree from the University of Oslo. Raakil has 25 years of experience with treating men battering their partners. He also works as lecturer and speaker both nationally and internationally. He has published articles and book chapters in Sweden, Italy, England and USA, and edited a Norwegian textbook on men's violence against women. He has worked as a researcher and been member of governmental committees on men, equality and violence.

MARAC: Multi-agency response to highest-risk domestic abuse – An example from Scotland

SafeLives will present the risk-led response model MARAC (multi-agency risk assessment conference), which is a process for safe and effective intervention in highest-risk domestic abuse situations. SafeLives will introduce the multi-agency response model used in Scotland and the rest of the UK - including a video of a simulated meeting to provide a real-life experience. SafeLives will facilitate a live activity where conference participants will get to develop their very own MARAC action plan. SafeLives presenters, Gill McKinna (Caledonian System) and Fionna McMullen (ASSIST) will then answer audience questions.

Speaker bios

Elizabeth Hughes is a Multi-Agency Lead for the SafeLives Scotland team. She leads in delivering SafeLives Safer, Sooner programme where the dots are joined for an effective multi-agency response by strengthening coordination and finding ways for survivors to be an active part of the process. The Safer, Sooner programme aim is to ensure that all victims at high risk of serious harm in Scotland, regardless of who or where they are, can access support from their local Marac.

Jess Denniff became Head of SafeLives Scotland in August 2023. She previously worked in the public protection arena as a MARAC (multi-agency risk assessment conferencing) Coordinator in Fife and has a policing background in England. SafeLives are a charitable organisation working to end domestic abuse, for everyone, for good within the UK.

WORKSHOPS: 11 OCTOBER

Workshop 1: Anybody but me! Recognising biases and how they may affect our responses to domestic violence and abuse and skew risk assessment

Antje Joel (University of Central Lancashire, UK)

This workshop invites professionals to recognise their subconscious biases, discussing how they may reflect on their perceptions of domestic violence, victims, and perpetrators. We will investigate what makes these biases resistant to change - even more so, when we perceive ourselves and our organisation as progressive, ultimately skewing our perceptions of risk.

A recent study investigating rape myth acceptance among police officers working on rape and serious sexual assault cases in England and Wales found that over half of these specialised officers subscribe to two of the most prevalent and persistent rape myths: 1) women are lying about rape, and 2) women ask for it. Contrarily, a recent study places the figure of false rape allegations at 3%. Two prevalent and persistent myths regarding domestic abuse are that women fabricate or exaggerate the abuse, e. g. as revenge against a former partner or to gain an advantage in family court proceedings. Many professionals subconsciously hold on to such harmful beliefs that influence how they interact with survivors and perpetrators of violence.

Participants will gain an awareness of shared relevant biases and hear suggestions on how to deal with them to help us and our organisations make better decisions.

Workshop 2: Working with those who harm using Non-Fatal Strangulation

Naomi Gosling (Respect, UK), Vivien Bickham (SafeLives, UK)

The Drive Project (developed by Respect, SafeLives & Social Finance) delivers interventions for high-harm high-risk perpetrators of domestic abuse across England and Wales. Since 2016, we have worked with 4,644 perpetrators of domestic abuse, 5,201 associated victims and 9,359 associated children across 10 Police and Crime Commissioners areas.

This workshop will address high-risk, high-harm perpetrators who use non-fatal strangulation as a means of control, reviewing the legislation and current conviction rates. It will also look at how to support victims/survivors to access appropriate assistance to reduce hidden health risks and the role of Case Managers linking with support services in joint working to manage risk and recovery. The workshop will

illustrate the impact of non-fatal strangulation on victims/survivors, including those who witness such episodes.

The workshop will include case studies and discussions with participants, who will receive a guidance document on Non-Fatal Strangulation.

Workshop 3: Children in high-risk intimate partner violence - Critical issues and actions

Sandra Jovanović Belotić (WWP EN)

Although they face severe and longstanding consequences, children are often invisible victims of intimate partner violence (IPV). When considering responses to high-risk violence perpetration, we must keep children at the centre of our assessment and interventions. This workshop focuses on the following questions:

- How does high-risk and/or high-harm IPV impact children?
- What is the role of perpetrator programmes and collaborating women support services in ensuring the safety of children?
- How can we recognise that perpetrators are using children to enhance control over their (ex)partners, and how can we intervene?
- How to efficiently work with child protection agencies in the country?
- What internal procedures and practices can support perpetrator programmes to protect children and minimise risks?

Workshop 4: Facilitating Victim Perspectives through Virtual Reality in Perpetrator Programmes

Salla Kaikkonen, Simone Gorinelli, Ana Gallego (University of Jyväskylä, Finland)

Immersive Virtual Reality (VR) is a powerful tool to foster perspective-taking to situations that could not be experienced in other ways. We present a study conducted in Finland, in which 22 men of perpetrator programmes and 18 men with no history of intimate partner violence (IPV) took a female victim's perspective to violence in Virtual Reality. In the workshop, we will share preliminary results of the impacts of the experience and general feedback from the perpetrators. We will also view the video of the victim-perspective and prompt discussions considering the potential of VR scenarios in the rehabilitation of perpetrators. The study is part of the VR per GENERE project, which aims to reduce IPV by deploying cost-effective prevention and rehabilitation tools.

WORKSHOPS: 12 OCTOBER

Workshop 5: Designing evidence-based strategies to address the specific risk factors of IPV perpetrators

Cristina Expósito-Álvarez, Manuel Roldán-Pardo and Marisol Lila (Programa Contexto, University of Valencia, Spain)

Adjusting perpetrator programmes to the specific needs and risks of high-risk perpetrators has shown promising results over standardised programmes. This workshop aims to (1) provide information on the literature that supports the need to implement evidence-based strategies which address the specific needs and risks of high-risk IPV perpetrators and (2) conduct an activity in groups that will consist of reading a real case with information collected at the individual motivational interviewing sessions from one participant attending Programa Contexto, identifying the main risk factor of this participant to be addressed during the intervention and designing an individual homework activity and a group-based activity to be done during group sessions to address this specific risk factors.

In the end, we will share the main risk factor that each group identified and the activities (individual and group-based activities) that each group designed. We will also share with the attendees some of the activities and strategies to address the identified risk factor included in our intervention protocol, which was designed as part of the project titled “Focused intervention protocols: Addressing perpetrators’ risk factors” granted by WWP and funded by the European Union. Finally, we will open a space for reflections and feedback from attendees.

Workshop 6: Suicide Prevention in high-risk, high-harm domestic abuse perpetrators

Luke Kendall (Respect, UK), Vivien Bickham (SafeLives, UK)

The Drive Project delivers interventions for high-harm, high-risk perpetrators of domestic abuse across England and Wales. Since 2016, we have worked with 4.644 perpetrators of domestic abuse. We would like to share learning about the most frequently occurring critical incident: suicide.

The prevalence of suicide among domestic abuse perpetrators is an under-researched phenomenon. Drive and the University of Bristol have embarked on the first study of its kind, exploring suicide rates in the high-harm, high-risk domestic abuse perpetrator cohort.

Within this session, findings of this study will be presented. In response to this issue, Drive has created an evidence-informed suicide prevention practice guidance, which will also be discussed.

Workshop 7: Responding to effective and sustainable culturally sensitive work with male perpetrators of Intimate Partner Violence

Silvia Amazzone (CAM, Italy), Nicholas Spetsidis (UWAH, Greece)

Programmes working with perpetrators with migrant backgrounds must incorporate cultural sensitivity to ensure programme effectiveness and victim/survivor safety.

This workshop proposes a new model of perpetrator work based on the active involvement of professionals from different disciplines, including women's support, frontline services and relevant actors at the local and/or regional levels: The MOVE multiagency collaboration model. It aims to establish a system of collaboration to address gender-based violence with a strong focus on the safety of women and children.

The workshop will focus on the main elements of the culturally sensitive approach to working with migrant male perpetrators and on building the MOVE multiagency collaboration model. Participants will be provided with practical suggestions and templates and can share their challenges and possible solutions for overcoming structural and delivery barriers.

Workshop 8: Child-to-Parent Violence and Abuse (CPVA) - Responding to risk and understanding transitional safeguarding when working with young people aged 16-18

Maria Duah & Viji Rajagopalan (Silenced CIC, UK)

Child-to-Parent Violence and Abuse (CPVA), much like domestic violence, is steeped in shame, denial, social isolation, self-blame and guilt, resulting in under-reporting. "Transitional safeguarding" is an approach that looks at how parents can be supported when their children become adults and how services can reduce/manage risk. Many parents find the ages of 16-18 challenging as their child becomes an adult and starts to fall through the cracks of child services. This workshop will allow professionals to understand what transitional safeguarding means and how the approach can be adopted through a multi-agency approach.