



WWP // EUROPEAN NETWORK

WWP EN Online Study Visit 2021 22-23 June

“Early prevention of intimate partner
violence – How to effectively engage and
work with young perpetrators?”

Report



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Introduction

This year's study visit was dedicated to a topic that has become increasingly important to WWP EN – working with young perpetrators of domestic violence.

Themed **“Early prevention of intimate partner violence – How to effectively engage and work with young perpetrators?”**, the study visit took place online on 22-23 June 2021.

There are strong advantages for addressing abuse in early relationships, as harmful attitudes and behaviours can be rooted out before they become entrenched. However, interventions to challenge abusive behaviour are usually focused on adults.

Moreover, addressing child or adolescent violence towards a parent can help prevent gender-based abuse in intimate partnerships during adulthood. In many cases, working on early abusive behaviour means breaking the cycle of violence in families with a history of domestic abuse.

The study visit aimed to provide participants with an insight into some of the ways that WWP EN members are already working with this target group and to start an exchange on good practice and the particular challenges. Where possible, presenters gave a short virtual tour of their facilities to allow participants to get a feel of their work environment.

Four representatives of WWP EN member organisation presented their practice:

- Carla Morris from Respect (UK)
- Daniel Antunović from U.Z.O.R. (Croatia)
- Hanne Eriksen from Alternative to Violence (Norway)
- Fatjon Taipi & Suad Arilla from the Office for Men and Boys – ZDB (Albania)

The participants of the WWP EN Study Visit this year were:

- Jade Levell (University of Bristol, UK)
- Kate Iwi (Tower Hamlets, UK)
- Zofia Szapuova (Alliance of Women in Slovakia, Slovakia)
- Lynn Groves (EVE, UK)
- Monica Dotti (LDV Modena, Italy)
- Agustina Zaka (L'Istrice A.P.S., Italy)
- Aliko Economides (Association for the Prevention and Handling of Violence in the Family, Cyprus)
- Carles Dordella Cayuelas (Conexus, Spain)

- Gordon Ashley Smith (Rise Mutual, UK)
- Luanne Foley (Splitz Wiltshire, UK)
- Davide Parma (White Dove, Italy)
- Alison Partington (Wish Centre, UK)
- Dianne Thom (Caledonian System/ Community Justice Scotland, Scotland)

WWP EN staff:

- Sandra Jovanović Belotić
- Antonia Montanus



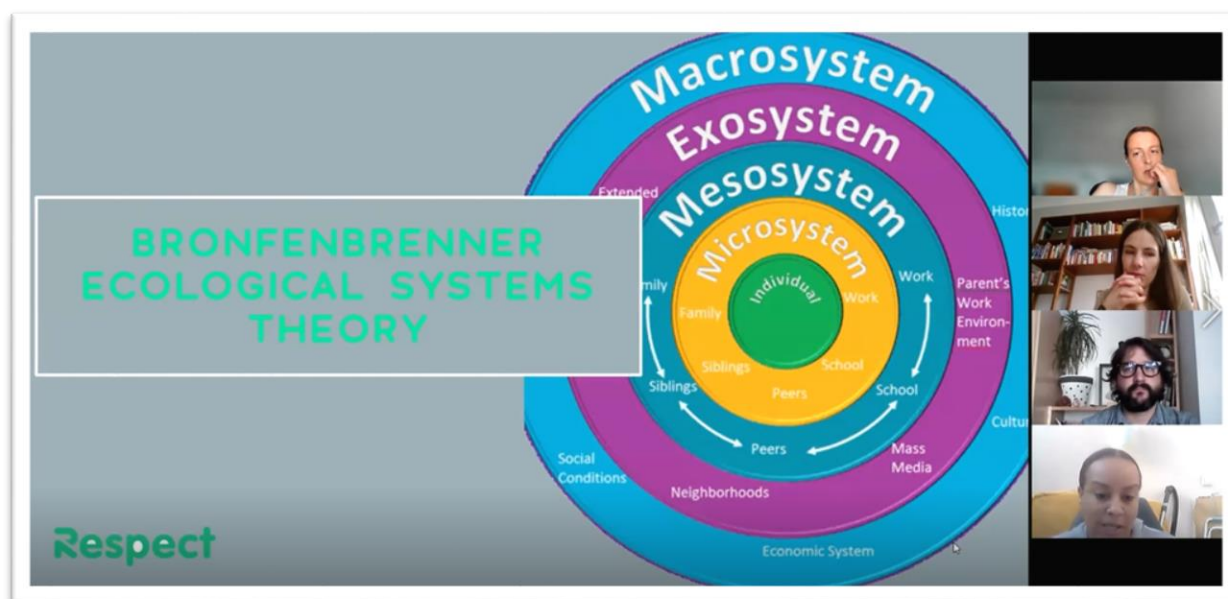
Presentations

In addition to the presentations, the four experts prepared case examples to better illustrate how their practical work. These were discussed in small and large group sessions following each presentation.

Carla Morris (Respect, UK)

Carla presented Respect's "Young persons intervention", a 12-week model of intervention that is delivered on an individual (one-to-one) basis. The programme seeks to reduce factors that are associated with later abusive behaviour, such as poor emotional regulation, low empathy, or poor conflict resolution skills. The intervention uses motivational interviewing and is conceptually based on Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory, a concept also used in the work with adult perpetrators of domestic abuse. Carla outlined some of the

techniques that are being used, such as the Ecogram exercise that explores the support systems available to the young person. She also emphasized the impact of technology on abuse among young persons.



Daniel Antunović (U.Z.O.R., Croatia)

After providing an introduction to U.Z.O.R.'s fields of activity, Daniel outlined the legal framework around juvenile delinquency in Croatia. This provided the basis for explaining how young persons enter their domestic abuse treatment programme. The programme for adult perpetrators includes persons over 18 who are mainly referred by misdemeanour courts. The 6-month programme involves 16 psychosocial treatment meetings aimed at stopping violent behaviour.

Perpetrators under the age of 18 are treated separately, with experts from the domestic abuse perpetrator programme being included for advice. In cases of adolescent to parent/mother violence, the parent is usually included in the treatment of the adolescent but is also offered separate victim counselling.

U.Z.O.R. works in close cooperation with other institutions, especially the social services, the local office of the public prosecutor, misdemeanour courts and schools.



Work with perpetrators of domestic violence

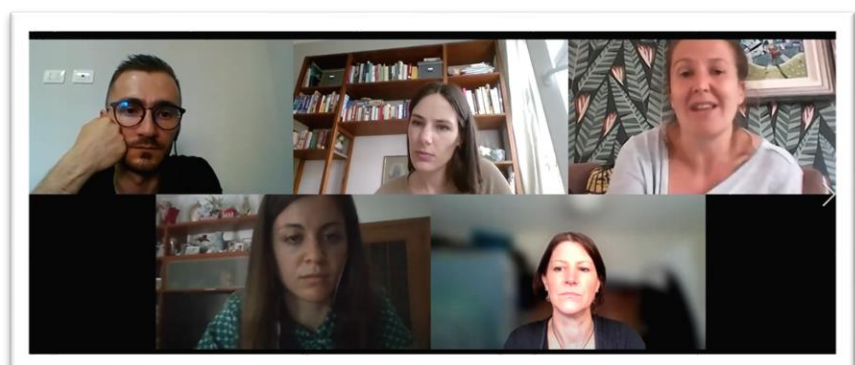
OBLIGATORY MEASURE

- 99% from a misdemeanor court, for anyone older than 18 (75% M, 25 % F)
- 6 months
- individual or group
- 3-4 intake procedure meetings
- 16 psychosocial treatment meetings, aimed at stopping violence



Hanne Eriksen (ATV, Norway)

ATV has a specialised programme for youth (target group: age 16-23) who have become violent towards their parent(s), partner or who have been violent in public places. The approach sees violence as a psychological problem and offers treatment along a clinical approach based on attachment theory, trauma theory, developmental psychology and cognitive-behavioural theory. Along these concepts, Hanne described some of the topics/methods used during the treatment, specifically emotional self-regulation, discussing gender roles and doing role plays. Finding the root causes of anger in their young clients plays a central role in the programme but it also involves many practical exercises to learn to differentiate feelings. In the first stages of the programme, there is a greater focus on the clients' own benefits for changing their behaviour. Talking about the impact on the victim is only addressed later, as experience has shown that otherwise young clients drop out more easily. Joint use of the Whiteboard for



drawing and reconstructing specific situations has proven useful in getting young clients to get into a conversation.

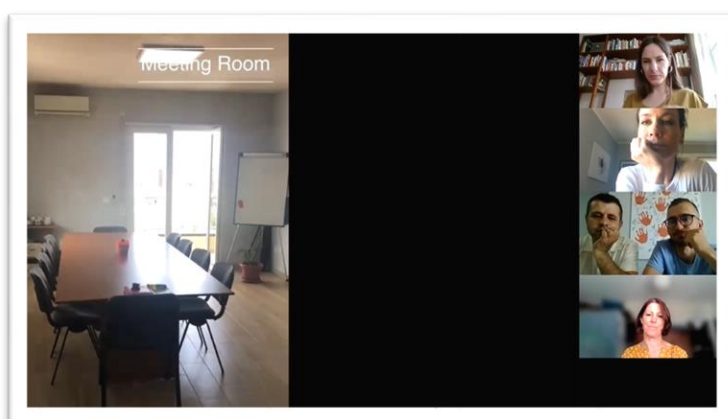
1. From Our clinical experience: what does work? Affect theory (Silvan Tomkins)

- Learning about emotions
- Emotional self- regulation
- How to express these emotions in a intimate relationship
- What is your own emotinal struggle
- How to tolerate our feelings- what is «allowed» **for boys to feel**, challenge these gender spesific roles, how to expersess feelings without losing face etc.
- How to contain our own emotions, tolerate them, and express then in a healthy way. Also when we are angry



Fatjon Taipi & Suad Arilla (ZDB, Albania)

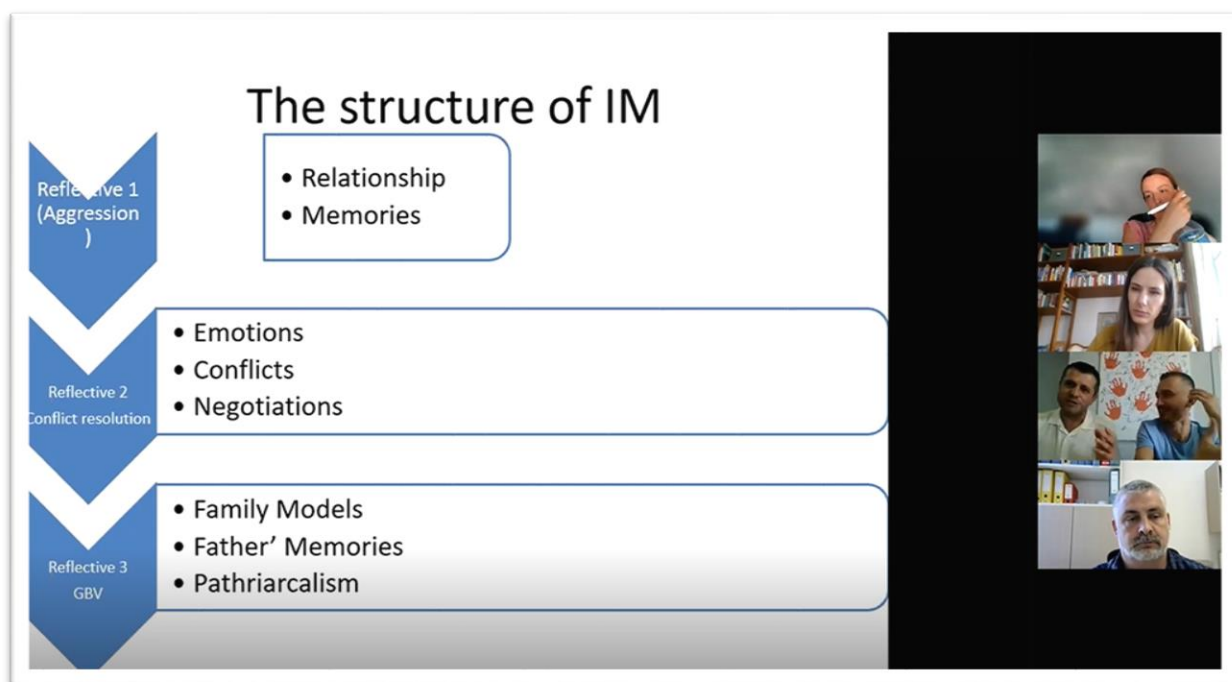
ZDB has developed an integrated model of individual counselling and reflective group sessions with boys who use violence on school premises. Fatjon and Suad provided an interesting overview over Albanian culture and how this impacts the formation of gender identity of boys and young men and the use of violence as a means to achieve one's goals. Albania is a deeply patriarchal society, so gender equality and gender-based violence are



addressed in the preventive workshops they give in schools. Gender-based violence also takes place within families, as it is not uncommon for boys to become physically violent towards their sisters if these behave in a way that is deemed inappropriate for family honour. The integrated model involves three individual sessions, followed by a reflective

group session on a specific topic with other boys who have received individual counselling. This is repeated for different topics (aggression, conflict resolution, and gender-based violence), resulting in 9 individual sessions and 3 group session for each boy. They get referrals from schools, child protection units, community-based organisations working on

domestic abuse, and the probation office. Results after two years show that boys self-report to have a better understanding of violence.



Discussions and conclusions

While each presenter highlighted different aspects of the work, it became clear from the presentations and discussions that working with young perpetrators is generally based on the same principles as working with adults. Coordinating work with other relevant institutions or services in the clients' environment and ensuring victim support is key, although it might be set up slightly differently than in the work with adults.

One of the issues that cut across the discussions of the different models is the link between abusive behaviour exerted within the family and abusive behaviour in relationships. Especially in the work with young persons, these often overlap. Involving the parent in the treatment of the young person as part of a holistic approach to addressing or preventing violence in intimate partnerships differentiates work with adult perpetrators and young persons using violence. Building a relationship with the client is important both with adult and young perpetrators, but the process and ways to access the person can differ. This also applies to motivating young persons to engage with the programme, and shifting from a focus on personal benefits to avoiding harm to others by participating in the programme. The presentations gave very interesting insights into different methods, e.g. a collaborative approach to understanding the views of the young client via joint use of a Whiteboard, or

making links with a country's culture and history with examples of positive masculinity, the use of an Ecogram and animal drawings to understand relationships with different family members, offering leisure activities to support the development of an alternative identity, or making use of the influence of peers through reflective group sessions.

Overall, the study visit provided an interesting overview over the different approaches and methods used, how these address those aspects that differentiate work with young perpetrators to working with adults, and over the work in different contexts (Norway, Albania, Croatia, UK).

All presentations can be accessed by our members through the internal area of our website. For access details, please email Antonia (Antonia.montanus@work-with-perpetrators.eu).

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