

Masterclass: November 2018

# About Language and Violence

“The problem of  
violence is inextricably  
linked to the problem  
of **representation**”



## Participant Feedback

### What has informed this presentation?

This masterclass draws directly from the work of Dr Linda Coates and Dr Allan Wade:

[The Interactional and Discursive View of Violence and Resistance Interaction. 2007](#) and work of the wider team from the Centre of Response-Based Practice team.

Related resources are drawn from the DVSM Sightlines initiative Insight Exchange developed in collaboration with Dr Linda Coates and Dr Allan Wade: [www.insightexchange.net](http://www.insightexchange.net)

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Any community, network, organisation (formal or informal)				
Informal, Semi-formal and Formal Service Responses to Domestic and Family Violence				
UNIVERSAL SERVICES	EARLY RESPONDERS	HEALTH, GOVT. & HUMAN SERVICES	DFV SPECIFIC RESPONDERS	STATUTORY SERVICES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commonwealth Bank of Australia</li> <li>• MySafeSpace™</li> <li>• Northern Pictures</li> <li>• RMIT University   Melbourne   Australia</li> <li>• Seventh Day Adventist</li> <li>• Sydney Uni Faculty of Law</li> <li>• TabCorp</li> <li>• UNSW</li> <li>• UTS - School of Architecture, Faculty of Design, Architecture &amp; Building</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adsafe - Survivor Services - Seventh Day Adventist</li> <li>• Converge International (EAP)</li> <li>• Dress for Success, Sydney</li> <li>• Relate Counselling Hawkes Bay NZ</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AbSec (Aboriginal Child, Family and Community Care State Secretariat)</li> <li>• Australian General Practice Accreditation Limited</li> <li>• Barnardos</li> <li>• Bay of Plenty - District Health Board - NZ</li> <li>• Department of Family and Community Services   Women NSW</li> <li>• NSW Department of Family and Community Services</li> <li>• NSW Health Education Centre Against Violence</li> <li>• Office of the Advocate for Children and Young People</li> <li>• People with Disabilities Australia</li> <li>• Women's Health NSW</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BaptistCare Counselling and Family Services Level</li> <li>• Catholic Care - Men's Behaviour Change Network</li> <li>• Women's Council for Domestic and Family Violence Services (WA)</li> <li>• DV NSW</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Corrections NSW</li> <li>• Department of Justice - Diversity Services</li> <li>• Department of Justice - Domestic Violence Death Review Team</li> <li>• NSW Department of Justice - Investment and Priority Initiatives - Justice Strategy and Policy</li> <li>• NSW Police</li> </ul>

Note: People can be accessing many parts of the system simultaneously and in a non-linear way. Organisations, sectors and communities may be providing services, programs or be part of collaborations anywhere along this response continuum. This list of responders is not exclusive or exhaustive.

## Today's masterclass on Language and Violence means this to me and my context...

“Disappearing the victim by not asking about how they respond will mutualise the violence and will force people to make assumptions which will ultimately impact the victim negatively.

Perpetrators respond to resistance with violence or violent/controlling behaviours, its evident when victims are asked about the violence and their responses”

Today's masterclass on Language and Violence means this to me and my context...

“Recognises the barriers Aboriginal people have faced since colonisations. Barriers such as beliefs that...

*“Domestic Violence is in Aboriginal Culture”*

*“It is just their (Aboriginal) culture to rape woman or child”*

Changing non-Aboriginal peoples concepts assists us Aboriginal people in changing that language and thinking”

# NSW Police – Domestic Violence Liaison Officer

Today's masterclass on Language and Violence means this to me and my context...

“I will reflect on opportunities I can utilise within my role to impact on victims lives in a positive way.

Highlights the power I have, could have, to make a difference either positive or negative and the significance of words that I wouldn't think twice about or remember saying but that can stay with the victims and impact their experiences and responses to violence.”

**Today's masterclass on Language and Violence means this to me and my context...**

“I work with women who are very often both victims and perpetrators. I am working toward building language and ways to help them establish strong foundations around dignity and navigate this complex violent landscape they live within.”

# Victim of Domestic and Family Violence

Today's masterclass on Language and Violence means this to me and my context...

“Validation of my lived experience.”

# NSW Health Education Centre Against Violence (ECAV) Educator Men's DFV Interventions

Today's masterclass on Language and Violence means this to me and my context...

“This masterclass provides a framework to analyse the language around domestic violence perpetration and victimisation that makes perpetrators visible.

The framework has potential to use in my own work context.”



# NSW Health Education Centre Against Violence (ECAV) Domestic and Family Violence Educator

Today's masterclass on Language and Violence means this to me and my context...

“I can add to our workplace conversations about language and the power of language. I can improve my language in training and with colleagues so that I/we do not mutualise violence and we hold the responsibility with the perpetrator.

I/we can have the conversation about being active social responders.”

**Today's masterclass on Language and Violence means this to me and my context...**

“As a law student I see harmful language frameworks and tools perpetrated and utilised on a daily basis. I would love to see the legal profession treat victims/complainants with compassion and dignity, and start to portray the reality of violence.”

# Seventh Day Adventist Church – Women’s Ministry

**Today’s masterclass on Language and Violence means this to me and my context...**

“The simple and clear explanation of what happens is much appreciated. It resonates with me as well of course.”

# Seventh Day Adventist Church – AdSAFE Ltd Survivor Services

**Today’s masterclass on Language and Violence means this to me and my context...**

“I intend to implement the learnings from today into procedure, practice and policy within our church context. Our church is on a cultural change journey and the imperatives I walk away with today will assist with raising awareness in this space.”

# Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT University)

## Researcher – Economic Abuse

**Today's masterclass on Language and Violence means this to me and my context...**

“This is a great framework for the analysis of narratives from both practitioners who work with victims and victims of economic abuse. If we know that physical violence is concealed, economic abuse is even easier to conceal, obscure and blame the victim (e.g. lack of financial literacy)”

# Dress for Success – Career Support Program Coordinator

**Today's masterclass on Language and Violence means this to me and my context...**

“Very thought provoking. Thankyou Linda for being so straight forward, clear, forthright and making what has often said to be ‘too complex and difficult’ easy to understand and explain to others, e.g. sexual consent, impact of language to obscure and hide violence, responsibilities and resilience.

I will ensure to share this all as widely as possibly.”

# Converge International – Employee Assistance Program (EAP) State Operations Manager (NSW, ACT, QLD & NT)

## Today's masterclass on Language and Violence means this to me and my context...

“It provides an opportunity for my own personal practice to be more informed but also to allow for education and growth within my staff through supervision. I have also been writing/re-writing some of our policies and this now provides an opportunity to ensure that this does not reinforce disempowering and victim blaming language.”

## Today's masterclass on Language and Violence means this to me and my context...

“Absolutely love this training.

It is simple in one sense – why did I not think of it in that way?  
Language and the way we use it in all sectors of our society is clearly the way forward and a significant part of major change.”

Today's masterclass on Language and Violence means this to me and my context...

“Respectful unpacking of language to make visible responsibility for violence – what an ongoing challenge in the context of society but so important to do at an individual level and build voices of difference to bring about social change. ”

**Today's masterclass on Language and Violence means this to me and my context...**

“It provides a superstructure for ethical content development to convey to victims of violence, to assist them in understanding what has occurred and what was done to them plus what undue influence they were subjected to.”



# University of Technology Sydney - Design, Architecture & Building - Researcher Women's Refuge Spaces

Today's masterclass on Language and Violence means this to me and my context...

“Collaboration – having the opportunity to meet others working in parallel fields – thank you for this.”

“Confidence – to push back when criticised for naming violence.”

“Ability to learn (and teach) new ways of speaking/writing for all future work at the university.”

# TabCorp – Business Partnership Manager

Today's masterclass on Language and Violence means this to me and my context...

“As a champion/volunteer for DVSM and also a person with lived experience, this has been really beneficial for me in the context that when we initiate the conversations within my company and launch our awareness campaign we create the conversations that help victims to speak comfortably.

I am going to be an ambassador within TabCorp on Domestic Violence all this information will help me”

Today's masterclass on Language and Violence means this to me and my context...

“There is nothing good about violence and every piece of work that unpacks the systemic responsibilities is inspiring.

As a feminist activist I can see how we can change the world – in this case ‘one word at a time’ – count me in”

# BaptistCare Counselling and Family Services

## Men's Behaviour Change and Women's Support Programs

Today's masterclass on Language and Violence means this to me and my context...

“Ensuring that practitioners, workers, group leaders are consciously aware and reminded of the centrality of language to responsibility and therefore change.

So much needs to be done to allow women's voices to be truly heard.”

# Women's Council for Domestic Violence Services - WA

Today's masterclass on Language and Violence means this to me and my context...

“Powerful tool to align with victims and expose the use of violence. I have been involved with bringing out Dr Wade, Dr Coates and Dr Richardson since 2010 and their work has had significant influence in our sector but also government ministers, policy and decisions makers and our Ombudsman death review reports. Love the work.”

# BaptistCare Counselling and Group Facilitator

Today's masterclass on Language and Violence means this to me and my context...

“Raising my awareness around working with perpetrators of domestic violence when it comes to taking/not taking responsibility around their behaviour.

The art of asking questions which puts the responsibility on the perpetrators instead of concealing it. A lot of work still needs to be done around acknowledging Domestic Violence.”

# Domestic Violence NSW (DV NSW) Voices for Change Project Coordinator

Today's masterclass on Language and Violence means this to me and my context...

“A clear and thorough way of critiquing language.

An important resources for checking our practice and ethically interpreting it.

Resources I can share to explain this work better to colleagues and collaborators.”

# Victim of and health professional working in Domestic and Family Violence

## Today's masterclass on Language and Violence means this to me and my context...

As a health professional learning about Response-Based Practice (language and violence) has required a complete rethink/reprogramming of my practice of which I am so grateful for. For me I could never go back. The first RBP I went to left my head spinning and I needed to go back for more. Every session/training I attend I get something out of it. My wish is for all of my health professional colleagues to access to this training.

As a victim/survivor it means so much more. It just makes sense. My story of childhood violence led me on a journey of mental health diagnosis and institutionalisation as a young adult. As a young adult I was also experiencing violence and this treatment led to further entrapment. This had far reaching harmful consequences and made for a very long unnecessarily difficult journey.

In this system my experience of violence/resistance did not exist. I believed I was faulty. My story did not exist and nobody asked. When I was finally free of the mental health system I hid my story.

Because of Response-Based Practice for the first time about a year or two ago I stood up in the very community where I was experiencing violence and told my story.

I firmly believe that without RBP I would have carried an enormous amount of shame and grief for the rest of my life. I feel as if I am finally getting peace from my story from exploring my resistance and responses to violence. I also value what this has now given me as a health professional.

I am still learning and reprogramming. It has been a huge challenge being a survivor and a health professional.



# Relate Counselling Hawkes Bay NZ - Psychotherapist

**Today's masterclass on Language and Violence means this to me and my context...**

“The tools of Response-Based Practice offer a clear and concise way to support people through the distress that violence causes which in turn allows me to respond appropriately and effectively as a psychotherapist and member of my community.”

# Relate Counselling Hawkes Bay NZ - Director/Counsellor

Today's masterclass on Language and Violence means this to me and my context...

“You are on track and please keep going. Offering a different understanding is a difficult task especially when there is such a tide of colonised/psychologised perspective that is accepted as ‘fact’ – which it isn’t – it is in itself just a pedagogy which has established its legitimacy through use of unethical power. Also now that it is the aligned alongside of ‘healthcare’ and the business of capitalism we now face even greater odds of misuse and violation.”

# Department of Justice | Diversity Services NSW

## Community Liaison Officer

**Today's masterclass on Language and Violence means this to me and my context...**

“It makes me think of the language we are using in the legal setting though Dr Linda's use of unilateral and mutual based approach when writing a victim's report.

Also the importance of social responders to map the journey of any DV victim. The first interaction with any DV worker or agency can have a fundamental effect of that journey.”

# Bay of Plenty District Health Board NZ | Coordinator – Child & Youth Mortality Review and Injury Prevention

**Today's masterclass on Language and Violence means this to me and my context...**

“I gather and collate information from key institutions/sources e.g. health, education, social services, justice, police, coronial services etc. and create narratives for children and young people who have died from preventable causes.

Suicide is a common cause of death. Alongside a multidisciplinary group, I identify gaps in systems that have contributed to their demise, and then make local and national recommendations for change and improvement to prevent recurrence of similar deaths in future. It is important their back stories are ‘heard’ in death as this may not have happened in life. I intent to use the four operations of language as a tool to reveal the violence they have experienced, frame up their actions as responses and resistance to violence, clarify offender responsibility and contest the blaming and pathologising of them as victims..”

# CORE Community Services - Multicultural Communities Team

## Integrated Domestic & Family Violence Specialist

### Today's masterclass on Language and Violence means this to me and my context...

“The masterclass was extremely beneficial for me in my role as a domestic violence specialist. It's always great to find new ways we can support our clients who are victims of DV. There were so many things that were mentioned in the masterclass which were extremely eye opening. I have always been a big believer that it's the perpetrator who is responsible for the abuse and it can no way be justified; but I was never conscious about how many people will use mutual language to justify the violence. For instance, my role consists of crisis counselling/support, intensive case management, and community engagement; I liaise with so many different services and representatives for both the client and the perpetrator. Reflecting back to my interactions with these representatives, mutual language is used quite often; especially during the court cases. It's interesting to know whether they are aware of this or if it's a subconscious act. It's definitely something I will be more conscious of.

Another point which really resonated with me was the social responses that victims face. Most of my clients have explained to me, that before they accessed my service, they felt very judged, criticised and blamed for most of the things that happened; they felt mostly judged and questioned by other services (which I found absolutely shocking), and its these comments and behaviour is what prevented them from seeking further help or even from leaving. Displaying positive responses is so important for the client's transition to a healthier and safer environment. It's really important to highlight that note. It's not only about what services they can access for support and assistance, but it's also the behaviour and attitude that is given towards them which is as equally or even more important. It's essential for them to feel like they are being heard and believed.”



**Keep attuned for a PDF copy of the Language and Violence Resource Kit, the resources it links out to and other related resources via:**

**[www.insightexchange.net](http://www.insightexchange.net)**

### **Acknowledgement and Thanks:**

Domestic Violence Service Management - Sightlines Professional Services would like to thank Dr Linda Coates and Dr Allan Wade and their colleagues at the Centre for Response-Based Practice, Canada for their visionary and pioneering work on social responses, resistance, language, and the upholding of dignity. DVSM Sightlines would also like to acknowledge the generosity of Gavin Blake (Digital Facilitation) & Clay Fisher (Videography) as supporters of Insight Exchange.

Most significantly, our thanks goes to all people with lived experience of Domestic and Family Violence who have courageously shared their insights for the benefit of others.