

About Language and Violence

A resource kit
for social and
service
responders

A hand-drawn sign with a white background and a grey border, featuring the text "WE ALL HAVE AN INTEREST IN UNDERSTANDING VIOLENCE..." in a mix of uppercase and lowercase letters, with "UNDERSTANDING" and "VIOLENCE" in a larger, bold font.

WE ALL HAVE AN INTEREST IN
UNDERSTANDING
VIOLENCE...

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

What has informed this Resource Kit?

This Resource Kit 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.

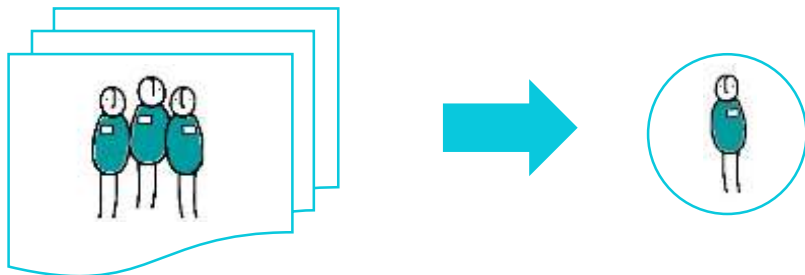
Related resources are drawn from the DVSM Sightlines initiative Insight Exchange developed in collaboration with Dr Linda Coates and Dr Allan Wade: www.insightexchange.net

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Why is this Resource Kit important?



“Key institutions (e.g., education, medicine, law enforcement, criminal justice, military, corporate, electoral) publicise their ideologies, policies, and objectives as guidelines for social practice.”

“However, it is individuals in specific positions within institutions who must realise these abstract concepts locally through discursive actions in writing and face-to-face conversation.

These individuals are not mindless automatons or puppets of the state, but social agents whose discursive actions variously reflect or depart from institutional policies.

Individuals must freshly justify their use of institutional power in each case by linking their actions to institutional ideologies, policies, or objectives.”

“I am an active social agent in representing violence.”

Contents:

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The politics and power of representation

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Understanding and upholding dignity through Response-Based Practice.

Section 3: Analysis Examples

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Use of language in this Resource Kit:

Perpetrator | Victim

“...we use the terms victim and perpetrator to refer to individuals’ actions in specific interactions, not as identity terms or as totalising descriptions. That is, the extent to which an individual can be described as a victim or perpetrator depends entirely on the nature of their conduct in specific instances.

An individual who is a victim of violence in one instance can be a perpetrator of violence in another. While we reject the use of the terms victim and perpetrator as totalising identity terms, we believe it is imperative to maintain this distinction.



The word victim refers to a person who has been wrongly harmed.



Perpetrators often try to conceal or avoid responsibility for their actions by obscuring the distinction between victim and perpetrator, for instance, by portraying their unilateral, violent actions as mutual.”

Section 1

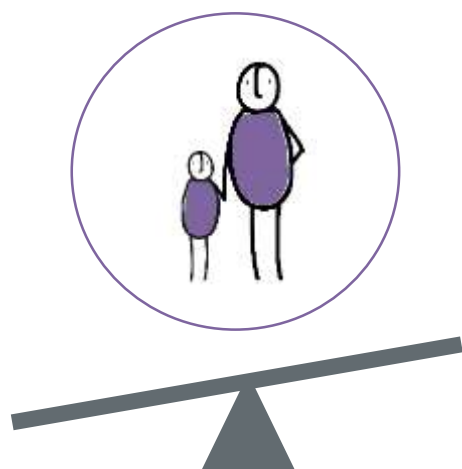
Foundation:

The politics and power of representation

Representation relies on the ability to speak.

“The ability of any group to advance its interests hinges in part on the group’s ability to publicise its perspectives as more truthful or reasonable than others...

...Access to the means of publication, such as the broadcast media, academic journals or talk at meetings is distributed unequally.”

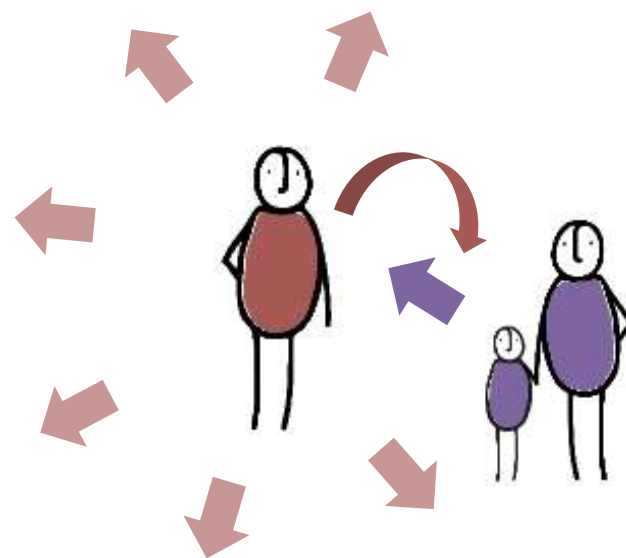


Representation relies on the power to be heard.

“Speech may be ‘free’ but the power to obtain a legitimate hearing is uncertain and distributed unequally.”

“Both perpetrators and victims tend to misrepresent themselves at least some of the time, though for very different reasons.”

(Scott, 1990).

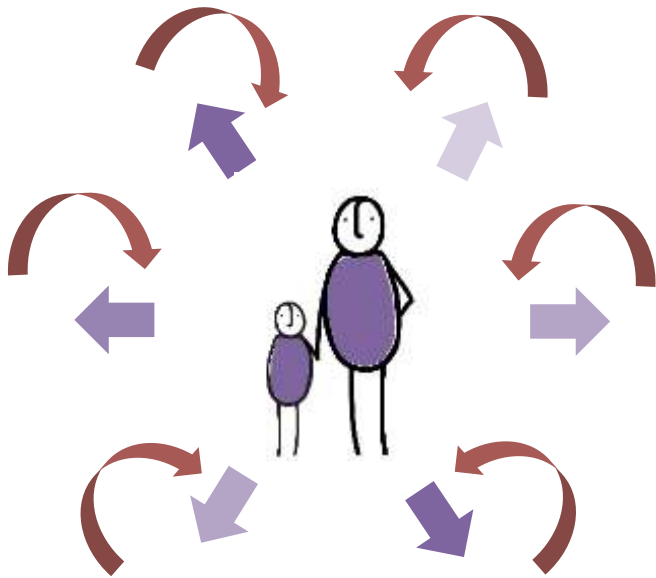


Perpetrators use language strategically for power

“Perpetrators use language strategically in combination with physical or authority-based power to manipulate public appearances, promote their accounts as accurate, entrap victims, conceal violence, and avoid responsibility.

These strategies undermine and reduce the safety of victims. Thus, extreme violence can continue undetected for many years while the perpetrator builds a reputation as a model citizen.

Where this occurs, professionals and others can unknowingly base their interventions on misinformation and unwittingly side with the perpetrator.”



Victims use language strategically for safety

“Faced with these circumstances, victims use language tactically to escape or reduce violence, conceal all or part of their ongoing resistance, retain maximum control of their circumstances, and avoid condemnation, and social pressure from third parties.

In short, victims use misrepresentation to resist violence and increase their safety.”

“...the question of how victims and perpetrators are represented by third parties is of crucial importance...”

Section 2

Zoom In: Dignity

Understanding and upholding dignity through Response-Based Practice.

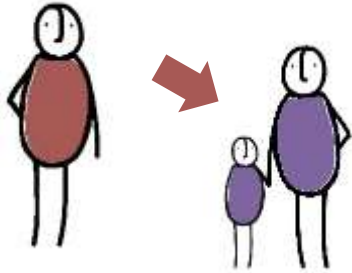
The Interactional and Discursive View of Violence and Resistance (Response-Based Practice) is a framework for critical analysis and research, prevention and intervention that takes into account the conditions that enable personalised violence, the actions of perpetrators and victims, and the language used in representing those actions.

Section 2 explores two components of the framework;

- Interaction
- Social Discourse

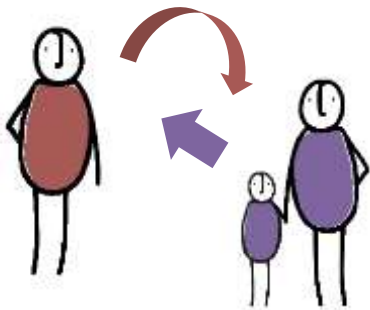
Interaction

1. Violence is social and unilateral:



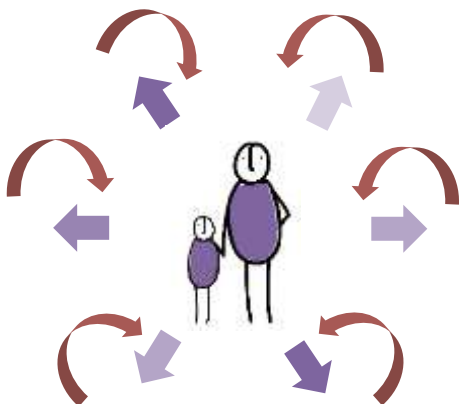
Violent behaviour is both social, in that it occurs in specific interactions comprised of at least two people, and unilateral, in that it entails actions by one individual against the will and wellbeing of another.

2. Violence is deliberate:

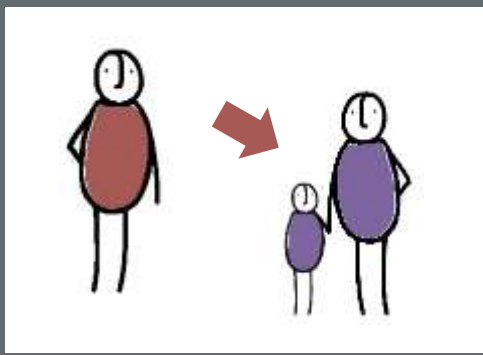


The perpetrators of violence anticipate resistance from their victims and take specific steps to suppress and conceal it. Virtually all forms of violence and systems of oppression entail strategies designed specifically for the suppression of overt and covert resistance.

3. Resistance is ubiquitous:



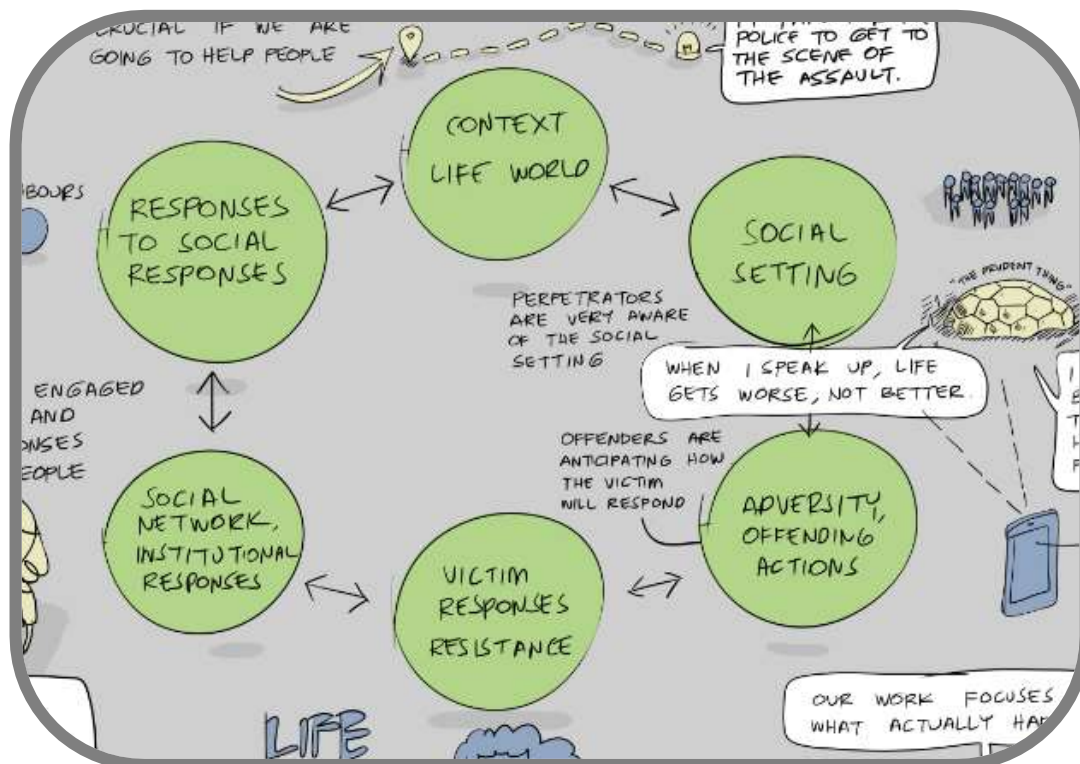
Whenever individuals are subjected to violence, they resist. Along side each history of violence, there runs a parallel history of resistance. Victims of violence face the threat of further violence, from mild censure to extreme brutality, for any act of open defiance. Consequently, open defiance is the least common form of resistance (Scott 1990).



1. Violence is social and unilateral:

Violent behaviour is both social, in that it occurs in specific interactions comprised of at least two people, and unilateral, in that it entails actions by one individual against the will and wellbeing of another.

...“violent behavior is most accurately understood when it is **examined in context**, that is, when we consider both the offender’s actions and the victim’s immediate responses to those actions. It then becomes apparent that perpetrators anticipate certain responses by victims and modify their actions as those or other responses do or do not occur (Wade 2000).”



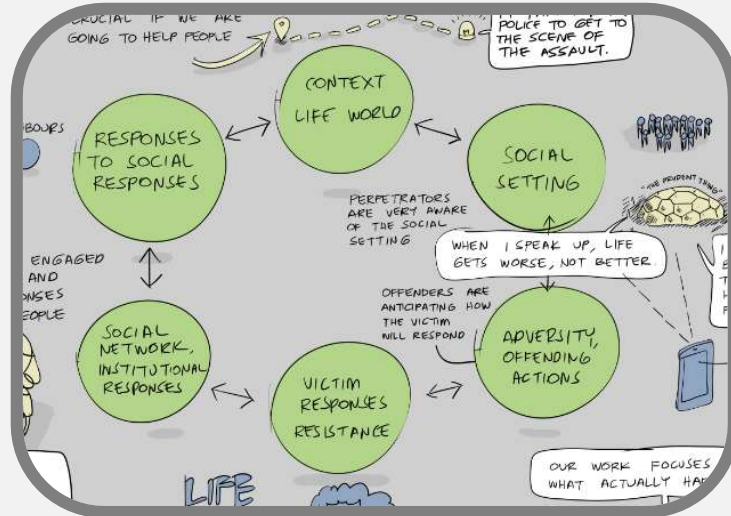
“**Contextual analysis** also shows that while violent behaviour is inherently social, it is unilateral rather than mutual in that it entails actions by one individual against the will and wellbeing of another (Coates 2000b; 2001, 2002a, b, 2004; Coates and Wade 2004; West and Coates 2004).”

“**Language that mutualises** violent behaviour implies that the victim is at least partly to blame and inevitably **conceals the fact that violent behaviour is unilateral** and solely the responsibility of the offender.”

“Also, when we examine the details of perpetrators’ actions in context it becomes apparent that victims invariably find ways to oppose or **resist the violence**.”

Contextual Analysis

Watch the 12min Video of 'Contextual Analysis' on <http://www.insightexchange.net/keep-attuned/>



ENGAGE | THINK | TALK

“It’s important to stress that everyone in this room is in these bubbles. We are all there – some of us in multiple bubbles...in this kind of a map we all have a place, we all have a role, we all have a part. Whether we want to take it up consciously or not.”

Dr Allan Wade

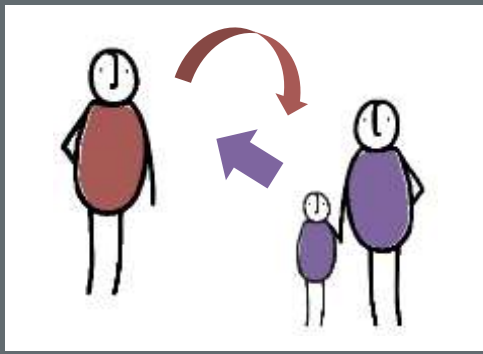
“So that’s kind of great news, especially in the area of violence. Often people have this idea – ‘How do we stop a perpetrator of violence when we are not even there?’ Whereas what we are actually saying is ‘It doesn’t matter where you are in these bubbles, we all have a role, we can all do something, we can all do something in fact to make things substantially better.’”

Dr Linda Coates

“All of us, all the time, are engaged in seeking and providing responses to other people. That’s just inherent in life. Within the first 48hrs of birth infants and mothers are taking turns – we are learning reciprocity right away...We are always engaged with one another giving one another meaning. In other words, the suffering of human beings is always mediated through the responses of others. It is never individual.”

Dr Allan Wade

View video via www.insightexchange.net

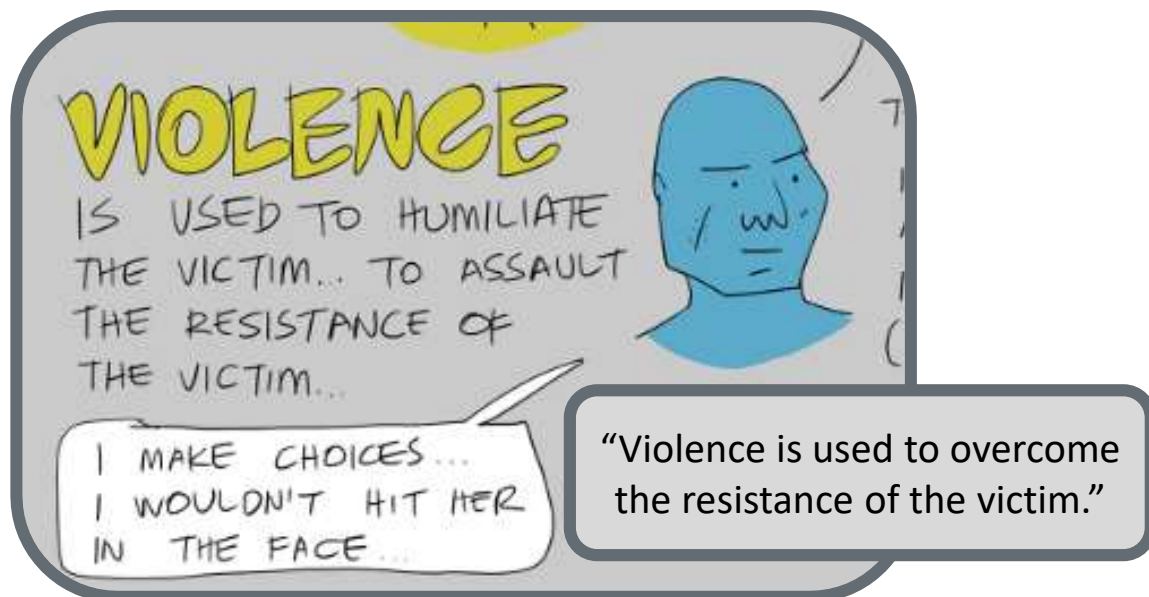


2. Violence is deliberate:

The perpetrators of violence anticipate resistance from their victims and take specific steps to suppress and conceal it. Virtually all forms of violence and systems of oppression entail strategies designed specifically for the suppression of overt and covert resistance.

“...The perpetrators of diverse forms of personalised violence (e.g., sexualised violence, wife-assault, physical assault, and workplace harassment) employ a number of strategies

- **before** (e.g., isolation of the victim, ingratiating behaviour, lies),
- **during** (e.g., physical violence, threats, interrogation, humiliation), and
- **after** assaults (e.g., concealing or denying the violence, minimising the victim’s injuries, blaming the victim, refusing to accept responsibility) to suppress or overpower the victim’s resistance....

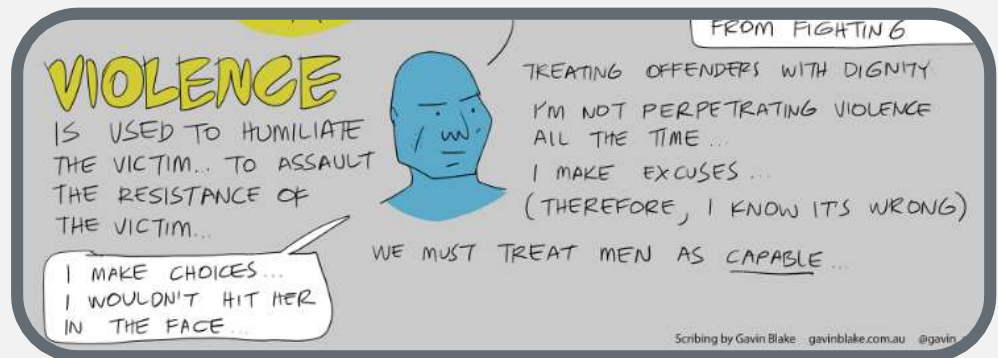


...These strategies cannot be explained reasonably by the notion that perpetrators lack control of their behaviour or awareness of its consequences.

The very existence of these strategies, and the precise manner in which they are enacted, shows that **violent behaviour is with rare exceptions best conceptualised as deliberate.**”

Upholding Dignity For All

Watch the 3:55min Video of 'Upholding Dignity For All' on <http://www.insightexchange.net/keep-attuned/>



ENGAGE | THINK | TALK

“Many people who perpetrate violence are more than aware of the power of humiliation. So.... that’s important, to look upon it as an assault on the dignity of the person because it then helps you see how the person attempted to preserve and re-assert their dignity in the moment.”

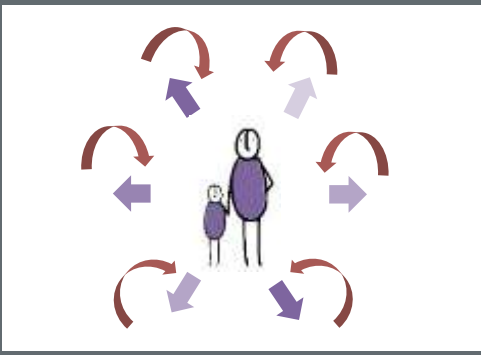
“And the other thing is that when you’re working with people who’ve perpetrated violence it’s extremely important that they also are treated with the utmost dignity...”

“Part of treating offenders with dignity ... is that with very rare exceptions, we see violence as deliberate, and people who perpetrate violence as already possessing all the skills and awareness and ability to be completely respectful and non-violent before you ever meet them.”

“People who perpetrate violence are not perpetrating violence all the time... If we begin to look at that then what we’re saying is, firmly, ‘your actions are deliberate and you are responsible for them. And we know that you’re completely capable of behaving differently and we can find out that you’re capable of behaving differently by looking at your excuses, your justifications, your denials.’ Because people would not bother to deny they’ve been violent if they didn’t already know it was wrong.”

“It’s much more dignified to treat men as capable, competent, social actors than as people who are just stupid, hapless, are driven by forces they don’t understand and need us to tell them how to behave. From our point of view that’s humiliating and you don’t get people to be responsible in that way. So we treat men as capable.”

View video via www.insightexchange.net



3. Resistance is ubiquitous:

Whenever individuals are subjected to violence, they resist. Along side each history of violence, there runs a parallel history of resistance. Victims of violence face the threat of further violence, from mild censure to extreme brutality, for any act of open defiance. Consequently, open defiance is the least common form of resistance (Scott 1990).

...” Contextual analysis also reveals that victims invariably resist violence and other forms of abuse (Burstow and Weitz 1988; Coates et al. 2003; Haig-Brown 1988). That is, **alongside each history of violence there runs a parallel history of prudent, determined, and often creative resistance** (Wade 1997).

The manner in which victims resist depends on the **unique combination of dangers and opportunities present** in their particular circumstances.

Victims typically take into account that perpetrators will become even more violent for any act of defiance.

Consequently, **open defiance by victims is the least common form of resistance** (Burstow and Weitz 1988; Kelly 1988; Scott 1990).

In extreme circumstances the only possibility for resistance may be in the privacy afforded by the mind.



Too frequently (e.g., Coates 2004), victims’ resistance is seen as significant only when it is successful in stopping or preventing the violence. This is an entirely inappropriate criterion.

Victims resist in a myriad of ways that are not successful in stopping the violence but are profoundly important as expressions of dignity and self-respect and efforts to protect others.

Identifying and Honouring Resistance

Watch the 5:23min Video of 'Identifying and Honouring Resistance' on <http://www.insightexchange.net/keep-attuned/>



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"...because the perpetrators history is the history of violence. Victims do not have histories of violence they have histories of responding to and resisting violence..."

The perpetrator's history is the *history of violence*, the victims history is the *history of resistance*."

"Where do you get the spirit to fight back in so many extraordinary ways?"

"How about you journal all the ways you responded to the violence you endured... and she did so exploring all of her myriad, multiple, extraordinary, dignified, painful, awful, beautiful forms of resistance..."

Dr Allan Wade

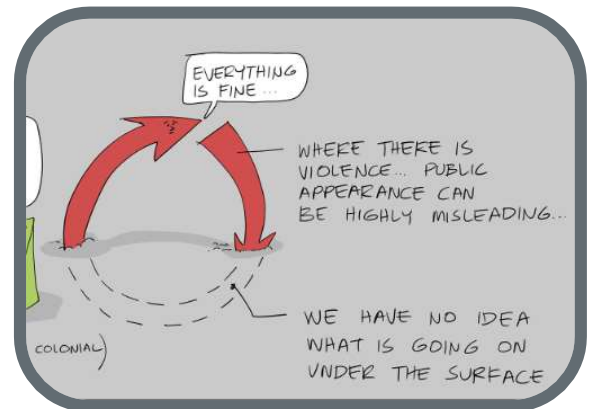
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Social Discourse

4. Misrepresentation:

Misrepresentation is an ever-present feature of asymmetrical power relations (Scott 1990) and personalised violence.

In cases of violence, public appearances are often highly misleading and the risk of inadvertent collusion with the offender is high.



5. Fitting words to deeds:

There are no impartial accounts. All accounts of violence influence the perception and treatment of victims and offenders. Where there is violence, the question of which words are fitted to which deeds is crucial (Source of Term 'Fitting words to deeds' - Danet 1980, p. 189).



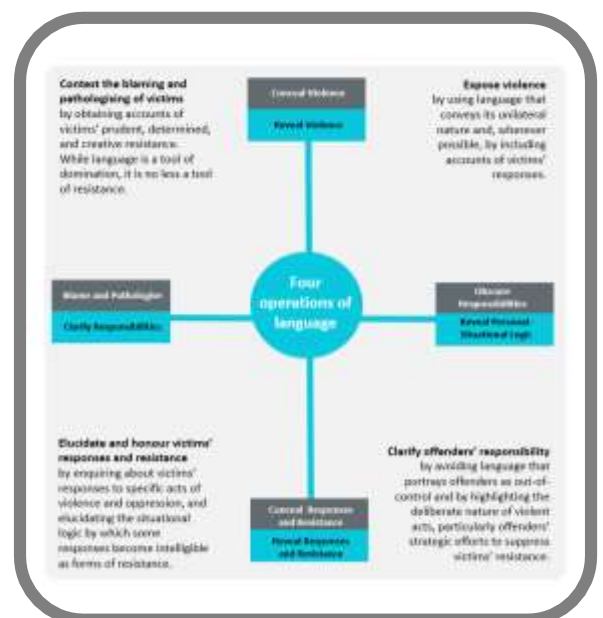
6. Four discursive operations:

Language can be used to:

- conceal violence,
- obscure and mitigate offenders' responsibility,
- conceal victims' resistance, and
- blame and pathologise victims.

Alternatively, language can be used to:

- expose violence,
- clarify offenders' responsibility,
- elucidate and honour victims' resistance, and
- contest the blaming and pathologising of victims.





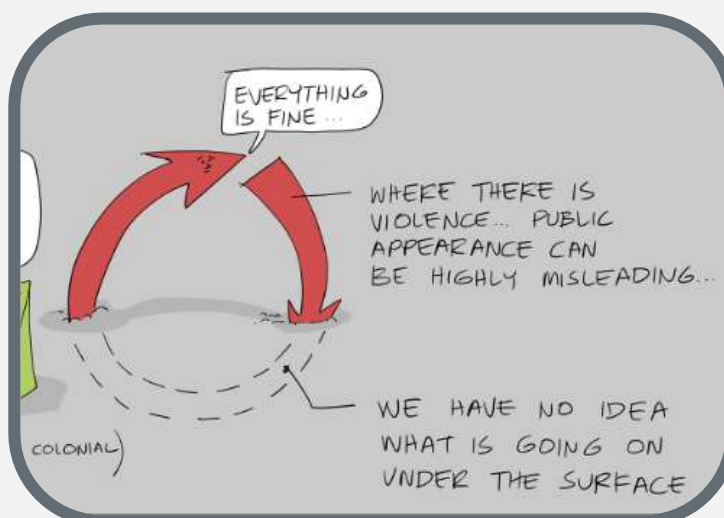
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Misrepresentation is an ever-present feature of asymmetrical power relations (Scott 1990) and personalised violence.

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Context of Violence

Watch the 6:05min Video of 'Context of Violence' on <http://www.insightexchange.net/keep-attuned/>



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“Where there is violence a great deal of the interaction is underground. You don’t see it, you don’t know what is happening, you’ll never know... you might hear things, you might hear important things, but there is a great deal you won’t hear from most people.

If you ever think you are getting the full load of facts you are kidding yourself... there is always so much happening, it’s always more complex than you think it is, so keeping open to that possibility is a very important part of the practice.”

Dr Allan Wade

View video via www.insightexchange.net



5. Fitting words to deeds:

There are no impartial accounts. All accounts of violence influence the perception and treatment of victims and offenders. Where there is violence, the question of which words are fitted to which deeds is crucial (Source of Term 'Fitting words to deeds' - Danet 1980, p. 189).

“...However, in previous analyses of legal judgments and media articles, we found sexualised violence and spousal assaults were frequently represented as mutual even though Canadian law defines sexual assault as inherently violent (Bavelas and Coates 2001; Coates 2004; Coates et al. 1994; Coates and Wade 2004; West and Coates 2004).

For example, in descriptions of sexualised assault, an offender forcing his tongue into the victim’s mouth was reformulated as “they [had] French kissed,” rape was reformulated as “intercourse” or “unwanted sex,” and violating physical contact was reformulated as “fondling.” In spousal assault, verbal abuse was reformulated as “a disagreement,” rape was reformulated as a “turbulent relationship,” and the physical assault of and self defence by the victim were reformulated as “exchanging blows.”

None of these accounts reflect the unilateral nature of violent acts or the victim’s experience of those acts (Bavelas and Coates 2001; Coates 2002b, 2004; Coates and Johnson 2001; Coates and Wade 2004; West and Coates 2004).”

Language and Example

Watch 2x7min Videos 'Language' & 'Language – A Case Study' on <http://www.insightexchange.net/keep-attuned/>



ENGAGE | THINK | TALK

“Language is inseparable from ourselves, as a community of human beings with a separate form and character, a specific history, a specific relationship to the world.”

Dr Allan Wade

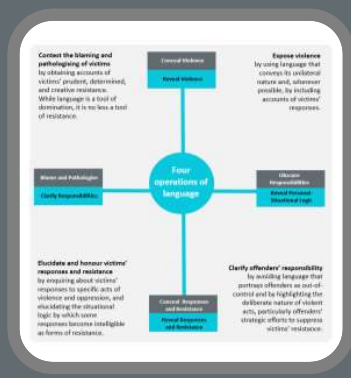
“Violence, of course necessarily involves the application of force against the will and wellbeing of another person.”

Dr Linda Coates

“We need to spend a little bit of time working out what is a mutual social interaction and what is a unilateral social interaction... violence is a unilateral action.”

Dr Linda Coates

View video via www.insightexchange.net



6. Four discursive operations:

Language can be used to conceal violence, obscure and mitigate offenders' responsibility, conceal victims' resistance, and blame and pathologise victims.

Alternatively, language can be used to expose violence, clarify offenders' responsibility, elucidate and honour victims' resistance, and contest the blaming and pathologising of victims.

“...Moreover, our research reveals that the linguistic devices that accomplish the four-discursive-operations are used selectively in a manner that reverses the positions of victim and offender.”

“...the misrepresentations we identified invariably benefit perpetrators and disadvantage victims.”

“Neologisms such as “friendly fire” and “collateral damage” are sometimes used to conceal the nature and extent of violent acts. Typically, however, the linguistic devices used to accomplish the four-discursive-operations are highly conventional and used daily without apparent problems. That is, the most harmful and abhorrent acts of violence are represented in the most ordinary and benign terms. The conventionality of these terms endows violent acts with an air of acceptability and obscures their real nature from the victim’s point of view.”

Contest the blaming and pathologising of victims
by obtaining accounts of victims' prudent, determined, and creative resistance. While language is a tool of domination, it is no less a tool of resistance.

Conceal Violence

Reveal Violence

Expose violence
by using language that conveys its unilateral nature and, wherever possible, by including accounts of victims' responses.

Blame and Pathologise

Clarify Responsibilities

Four
operations of
language

Obscure
Responsibilities

Reveal Personal-
Situational Logic

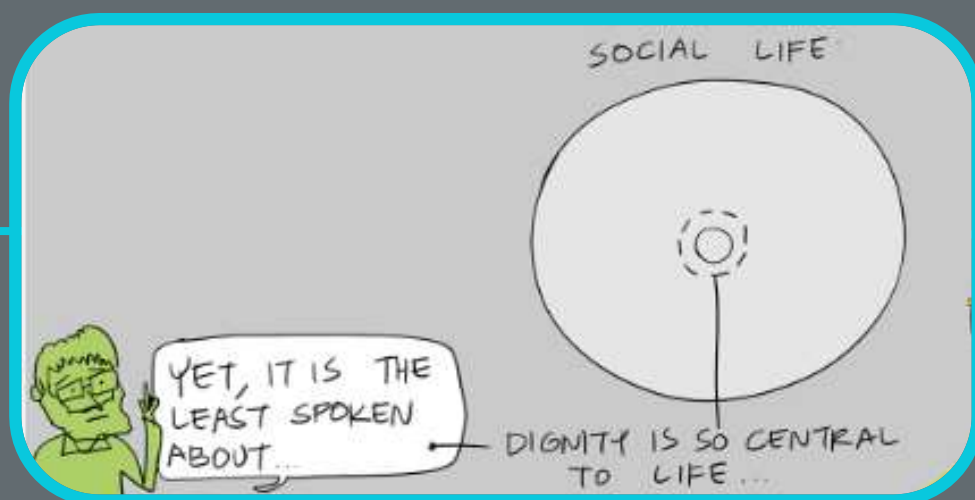
Elucidate and honour victims' responses and resistance
by enquiring about victims' responses to specific acts of violence and oppression, and elucidating the situational logic by which some responses become intelligible as forms of resistance.

Conceal Responses
and Resistance

Reveal Responses
and Resistance

Clarify offenders' responsibility
by avoiding language that portrays offenders as out-of-control and by highlighting the deliberate nature of violent acts, particularly offenders' strategic efforts to suppress victims' resistance.

“Our view is that the discursive practices in question are traditional in the sense that they are so fully integrated into everyday talk that they appear unproblematic until examined in detail and compared to the actions they are presumed to represent.”



Section 3

Analysis Examples: Five accounts

Account 1:
A Perpetrator's Account

Account 2:
A Psychiatrist's Account

Account 3:
A Judge's Account

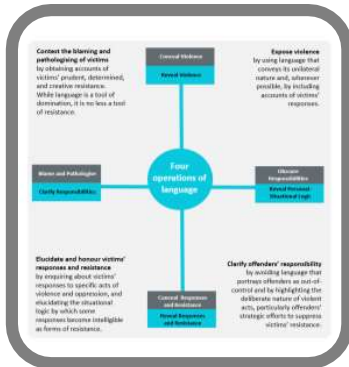
Account 4:
A Politician's Statement

Account 5:
A Therapist's Statement

“The passages show how the four discursive operations are functionally linked.”

Account 1: A Perpetrator's Account

The following is noted jazz musician, Miles Davis' account of the first time he assaulted his wife, Frances (Davis and Troupe 1990).



I loved Frances so much that for the first time in my life I found myself jealous. I remember I hit her once when she came home and told me some shit about Quincy Jones being handsome. Before I realised what had happened, I had knocked her down... I told her not to ever mention Quincy Jones' name to me again, and she never did... Every time I hit her, I felt bad because a lot of it really wasn't her fault but had to do with me being temperamental and jealous.

I mean, I never thought I was jealous until I was with Frances. Before, I didn't care what a woman did; it didn't matter to me because I was so into my music. Now it did and it was something that was new for me, hard for me to understand (p. 228).

Obscure Responsibilities

Reveal Personal-Situational Logic

Clarify offenders' responsibility by avoiding language that portrays offenders as out-of-control and by highlighting the deliberate nature of violent acts, particularly offenders' strategic efforts to suppress victims' resistance.

Obscures offenders' responsibility

In this passage, Davis mitigates his responsibility by attributing his violent behaviour to overwhelming emotions that were "new" for him and "hard... to understand." He presents his violence as "jealousy" and "temperamental" behaviour that arose from and reflected his love ("I loved Frances so much that...").

Davis denies any deliberation or intent to commit violence by stating that he "found" himself jealous thereby omitting from the account his decisions to respond to Frances' comments by being "jealous" and attacking her. He also obfuscates any intent to harm Frances when he states that he "knocked her down" before he was aware of his actions ("before [he] realised what had happened").

Conceal Violence

Reveal Violence

Expose violence by using language that conveys its unilateral nature and, wherever possible, by including accounts of victims' responses.

Conceals offenders' violence

Davis' account also conceals the extent of his violence against Frances. The word "hit" and the phrase "knocked her down" lack sufficient detail to accurately convey the degree of force exerted in his attack. How did he hit her and knock her down? The phrase "what had happened," an agentless and existential construction, obscures exactly what did happen and who did what to whom.

The phrase “every time I hit her, I felt bad” emphasises Davis’ powerful emotions, in this case the arguably appropriate emotion of remorse, but displaces consideration of Frances’ physical and emotional wellbeing and safety. An alternative description, such as “every time I hit her, she felt fear and terrible pain,” would more adequately convey the extent and harmfulness of his violent actions.

Blame and Pathologise

Clarify Responsibilities

Contest the blaming and pathologising of victims by obtaining accounts of victims’ prudent, determined, and creative resistance. While language is a tool of domination, it is no less a tool of resistance.

Offender Blames and Pathologises

Davis also blames and implicitly pathologises Frances. The phrase “a lot of it really wasn’t her fault” suggests that some of Davis’ violence was Francis’ fault. Presumably, Davis would have readers believe that Frances provoked him when she “told [him] some shit about Quincy Jones being handsome.”

The phrase “I never thought I was jealous until I was with Frances” suggests that Frances herself was the unique element, the catalyst that caused his violence.

Conceal Responses
and Resistance

Reveal Responses
and Resistance

Elucidate and honour victims’ responses and resistance by enquiring about victims’ responses to specific acts of violence and oppression, and elucidating the situational logic by which some responses become intelligible as forms of resistance.

Conceals Responses and Resistance

Finally, Davis conceals Frances’ resistance. A woman in Frances’ position might resist in part by expressing the fear and emotional pain she feels. But, as mentioned, Davis displaces any consideration of Frances’ feelings and responses by describing his own. In fact, he does not mention how Frances responded to his violent behaviour except to suggest that she obeyed his command by “never” mentioning Quincy Jones’ name again. However, far from obedience, not mentioning Quincy Jones’ name might well have been one way in which Frances denied Davis a pretext for further violence.

Moreover, for Frances, the act of mentioning Quincy Jones’ name in the first place, in the face of Davis’ “jealous” and “temperamental” behaviour, might itself represent a form of resistance.

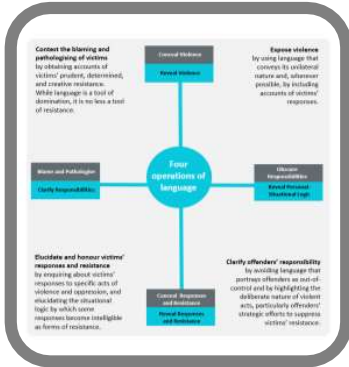
In short, Davis would have us believe that he hit Frances because he was overwhelmed and confused by the powerful love triggered by this unique woman who both provoked him to violence and returned his love by obeying his commands.

This version of events simultaneously mitigates Davis’ responsibility (he is responsible for the emotion of love, not deliberate violence), blames the victim (she provokes him and causes Davis’ experience of overwhelming love), conceals the violence (he commits acts of love, not violence) and conceals any resistance by Frances (she does not need to defend herself against actions of love).

Hence the four-discursive-operations work to construct an account in which the nature of the act, the actions of the perpetrator, the actions of the victim, and the perpetrator’s actions are misrepresented.

Account 2: A Psychiatrist's Account

An acknowledged expert in the field, Dr John Bradford, wrote the following passage about crimes of sexualised violence against children.



The causes [of paedophilia] are vague, but biological abnormalities, generally ascribed to genetics or a brain dysfunction, may play a role. What remains clear is that paedophilia is not a deliberate choice made by an individual: it is the product of a disordered but inescapable sex drive that targets children.

Unlike other psychiatric disorders, paedophiles are typically rational and competent, able to function productively on a day-to-day basis in everything but their compulsive urge to engage sexually with pre-pubescent children (The Globe and Mail, Monday, November 20, 2000, p. A 19; emphasis added).

Obscure
Responsibilities

Reveal Personal-
Situational Logic

Clarify offenders' responsibility by avoiding language that portrays offenders as out-of-control and by highlighting the deliberate nature of violent acts, particularly offenders' strategic efforts to suppress victims' resistance.

Obscure offenders' responsibility

The most striking feature of this passage is the manner in which Bradford mitigates the responsibility of adults who assault children in sexualised ways. The highly qualified tone of the first sentence, in which it is suggested that the causes of paedophilia are “vague” and that biological factors “may play a role,” stands in contrast to the definitive tone of the second sentence, in which paedophilia is characterised emphatically as unintentional (i.e., “not a deliberate choice”). But if the causes are indeed “vague,” how can we be at all sure that it is not deliberate? In the same sentence, responsibility is shifted from the offender to “a disordered but inescapable sex drive.”

Bradford externalises and personifies (Coates and Wade 1997; White 1995; White and Epston 1989) the “inescapable sex drive” and gives it the capacity for volition independent of its possessor: It is the “sex drive”—not the offender—that “targets” children. The concept of “paedophilia” constructs deliberate violence against children as an illness, specifically, a “psychiatric disorder” due possibly to “biological abnormalities” stemming from a “genetic” cause or from a “brain dysfunction.”

Obviously, the perpetrator cannot be held responsible for having an illness or for the symptom (i.e., behaviour) it causes. Indeed, because the offender is in all other respects “rational,” “competent” and “productive,” Bradford suggests that a “paedophile” is not the sort of person who would assault children if he had a choice.

Conceal Violence

Reveal Violence

Expose violence by using language that conveys its unilateral nature and, wherever possible, by including accounts of victims' responses.

Conceals offenders' violence

Bradford conceals the real nature of the violence in at least two ways. First, the idea that the violence stems from a "compulsive urge" obscures the strategic and predatory nature of the behaviour entailed in the entrapment and violation of children (e.g., stalking, isolation, ingratiating behaviours, coercion, threats). Second, Bradford conflates sex with violence. The phrase "engage sexually with... children" clearly implies mutuality and consent.

Blame and Pathologise

Clarify Responsibilities

Contest the blaming and pathologising of victims by obtaining accounts of victims' prudent, determined, and creative resistance. While language is a tool of domination, it is no less a tool of resistance.

Offender Blames and Pathologises

Bradford blames and pathologises victims by representing them in two contradictory ways: They are both passive objects (i.e., "targets") who are unable or unwilling to resist, and simultaneously compliant or willing partners in "disordered" sex with adults.

Conceal Responses and Resistance

Reveal Responses and Resistance

Elucidate and honour victims' responses and resistance by enquiring about victims' responses to specific acts of violence and oppression, and elucidating the situational logic by which some responses become intelligible as forms of resistance.

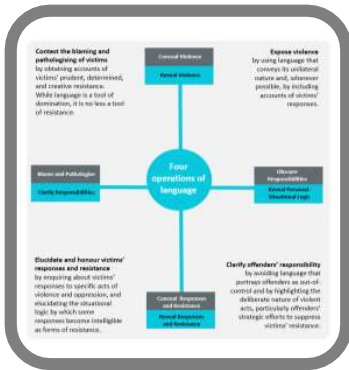
Conceals Responses and Resistance

In conflating sex and violence, Bradford also conceals victims' resistance. If it were true that perpetrators wanted to "engage sexually with" children, they would stop as soon as they encountered resistance. Because the perpetrators did not stop, it is assumed that they encountered no resistance from the children.

Bradford supports this view by omitting any mention of perpetrators' efforts to overwhelm and suppress that resistance.

Thus, Bradford effectively misrepresents severe violence against children through a variety of devices that locally accomplish the four-discursive-operations.

Account 3: A Judge's Account



Previously, we examined how judges in sexual assault trials used psychological attributions to construct the nature and extent of perpetrators' responsibility (Coates 1997; Coates and Wade 1994, 2004).

In one case, the perpetrator had repeatedly assaulted his step-son over a two-and-one-half year period and attacked him twice more between being charged and sentenced. The judge referred to the repeated attacks as an "isolated incident."

Conceal Violence

Reveal Violence

Expose violence by using language that conveys its unilateral nature and, wherever possible, by including accounts of victims' responses.

Conceals offenders' violence

The term "isolated incident" conceals the violence in a number of ways. The nominalisation "incident," rather than "action," obscures the fact that one person took action against another. There are many different incidents in the world, only a few of which entail deliberate action.

The singular form "incident," rather than the plural "incidents," misrepresents the repeated attacks as one. By not using an equally short but far more accurate summary phrase, such as "these violent acts" or "these assaults," the judge concealed the violence inflicted upon the boy for over two years. Later in the judgment, the judge opined that there was "no suggestion of force or brutality" against the young boy.

Obscure Responsibilities

Reveal Personal-Situational Logic

Clarify offenders' responsibility by avoiding language that portrays offenders as out-of-control and by highlighting the deliberate nature of violent acts, particularly offenders' strategic efforts to suppress victims' resistance.

Obscures offenders' responsibility

The same phrase ("an isolated incident") allowed the judge to mitigate the perpetrator's responsibility. If the perpetrator committed "an isolated incident" rather than repeated and deliberate acts of violence, there is very little for which he can be held responsible. The term "isolated" suggests that the perpetrator's actions were atypical and therefore not reflections of his "real" character.

The separation of the offender from deliberate violence was further accomplished by the use of the term “incident” which does not convey deliberateness. In keeping with these discursive reformulations, the judge opined that “there is no suggestion, or very little suggestion, that he is a threat or will continue to be a threat to others.” The plausibility of this conclusion hinges on the judge’s previous representations of the repeated assaults as a non-violent, a non-deliberate, and an atypical incident.

The judge concluded: “I propose on imposing as short of sentences as I think I can.” Although the sentence was not consistent with the facts of the case, it appeared reasonable because it was consistent with the judge’s account of the assaults.

Blame and Pathologise

Clarify Responsibilities

Contest the blaming and pathologising of victims by obtaining accounts of victims’ prudent, determined, and creative resistance. While language is a tool of domination, it is no less a tool of resistance.

Conceal Responses and Resistance

Reveal Responses and Resistance

Elucidate and honour victims’ responses and resistance by enquiring about victims’ responses to specific acts of violence and oppression, and elucidating the situational logic by which some responses become intelligible as forms of resistance.

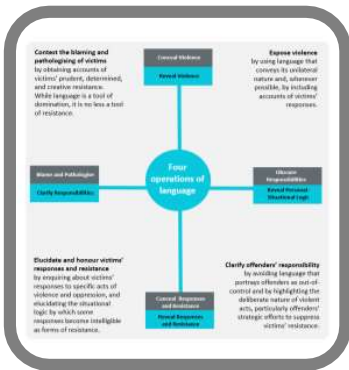
Offender Blames and Pathologises and Conceals Responses and Resistance

The judge did not directly conceal the boy’s resistance or blame him for the assaults. However, the judge’s account implicitly defines a range of appropriate responses by the boy and provides a basis for misinterpreting his actual responses. If the assaults were in fact “isolated,” if the boy was subjected to “no...force or brutality,” if the perpetrator was a man of good character, and if “there [was] no suggestion, or very little suggestion, that [the perpetrator was] a threat,” the boy’s family and teachers might well expect him to “get over” the “incident,” “deal with his anger,” and cooperate with the perpetrator, who is, after all, his step-father.

If the boy refuses, for example, by showing anger and defiance at home and school, he might well be defined as the person with the problem and subjected to various judgments and social controls. To the extent that this occurs, the boy’s resistance to the repeated assaults (and the downplaying of those assaults and the pressure to “get over it”) is concealed and recast as a psychological problem.

By concealing the violence and mitigating the responsibility of the perpetrator, the judge concealed the information necessary to adequately understand the boy’s responses and put in place an official version of events that could be used to blame and pathologise the boy and conceal his resistance. In this manner, the boy became more, rather than less vulnerable to further violence or abuse.

Account 4: A Politician's Statement



On June 7, 1998, the Honourable Jane Stewart, then Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development for the Canadian government, held a news conference at which she read a prepared statement titled “Statement of Reconciliation: Learning From the Past.” The purpose of the statement, according to Stewart, was to “deal with the legacies of the past” in order to “move forward in a process of renewal.” The following passages are taken verbatim from the text of the statement.

Sadly, our history with respect to the treatment of Aboriginal people is not something in which we can take pride. Attitudes of racial and cultural superiority led to a suppression of Aboriginal culture and values. As a country, we are burdened by past actions... One aspect of our relationship with Aboriginal people over this period that requires particular attention is the Residential School system.

This system separated many children from their families and communities and prevented them from speaking their languages and from learning about their heritage and culture. In the worst cases, it left legacies of personal pain and distress that continue to reverberate in Aboriginal communities to this day. Tragically, some children were the victims of physical and sexual abuse.

Conceal Violence

Reveal Violence

Expose violence by using language that conveys its unilateral nature and, wherever possible, by including accounts of victims’ responses.

Conceals offenders’ violence

Stewart conceals the extent and nature of state and church sponsored violence against Aboriginal peoples, particularly the children, in several ways. The word “reconciliation” comes from the Latin “reconciliare,” which means, “to restore to wholeness.” This word wrongly embeds the position that a pre-existing wholeness or positive relationship which existed between Europeans and Aboriginal people was shattered by the Residential School system.

Moreover, the term is mutualising in that it proffers the image of two parties who share responsibility for their relationship problem and have therefore come together to make amends. In fact, European violence against Aboriginal people did not stem from a relationship problem, nor did it destroy a previously harmonious relationship. Rather, it entailed the unilateral and deliberate use of force and social power by one party against the will and wellbeing of the other (Coates 1996a, 2000a; Coates and Wade 2004). In cases of unilateral wrongdoing the appropriate response from the offending party is one of reparation or restoration. Stewart’s use of the term reconciliation retroactively defines the violence as relational and shifts a significant portion of responsibility to Aboriginal people.

Similarly, the phrase “learning from the past,” which in the title is linked to the mutualising term reconciliation, suggests that both parties made mistakes and are therefore equally responsible for learning the lessons. The phrase also implies that the oppression of Aboriginal people in Canada is limited to the past, or strictly a matter of history. This neatly denies the Canadian government’s current racist policies toward Aboriginal people as manifested in the Indian Act, in the failure of the federal government to denounce the overtly racist referendum on Aboriginal land claims and self-governance held in British Columbia (a province in Canada), in the insultingly low offers of compensation to individuals who were assaulted (physical and sexualised) in Residential Schools, and in the often abusive legal process (known ironically as “discovery”) which Aboriginal people who bring suit against the government and churches must endure.

The phrases “in the worst cases” and “some children” further conceal the violence by suggesting that only a minority of the children were assaulted. In fact, research suggests that a majority of the over one million children who attended the Residential Schools were subjected to physical or sexualised violence (Chrisjohn and Belleau 1991; Chrisjohn and Young 1993). Moreover, Stewart omits mention of the humiliation of the children, through such practices as racist propaganda, public ridicule, and the forced removal of children from their families—a practice that was the source of so much grief. Finally, the colloquial phrase “to this day” implies that the violence is much further in the past than is the case. The last Residential Schools were closed as recently as the early 1970s: Many survivors and their families still struggle against the violence they endured.

Obscure
Responsibilities

Reveal Personal-
Situational Logic

Clarify offenders’ responsibility by avoiding language that portrays offenders as out-of-control and by highlighting the deliberate nature of violent acts, particularly offenders’ strategic efforts to suppress victims’ resistance.

Obscures offenders’ responsibility

The pronouns “our” (in the first sentence) and “we” (in the first and third sentences) obscure the identities of perpetrator and victim. In the first sentence, “our” and “we” refer only to non-Aboriginals. However, in the third sentence, it is not clear to whom the “we” (in “we are burdened by past actions”) refers. If it refers to non-Aboriginals, the sentence suggests that non-Aboriginal Canadians are burdened by their predecessors’ “past actions.” This co-opts the position of victim, not unlike Davis did when he claimed that he felt bad every time he assaulted Frances. Far from being uniformly burdened by the atrocities against Aboriginals, non-Aboriginal Canadians have benefited handsomely (e.g., by being able to purchase land and natural resources from the government). If, on the other hand, “we” refers to all Canadians, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, the sentence suggests the equally bizarre view that non-Aboriginal Canadians are as burdened by the oppression of Aboriginal people as the Aboriginal people themselves.

In either case the responsibility of the perpetrator is obscured. The phrases “attitudes of racial...,” “this system separated...,” and “it left legacies...” are agentless constructions that further conceal the identity of the perpetrator. According to these accounts, the real perpetrators are “attitudes” and “systems,” not non-Aboriginals who decided to violate and debase Aboriginal people.

Conceal Responses
and Resistance

Reveal Responses
and Resistance

Elucidate and honour victims' responses and resistance by enquiring about victims' responses to specific acts of violence and oppression, and elucidating the situational logic by which some responses become intelligible as forms of resistance.

Offender Blames and Pathologises

Stewart's statement also conceals the resistance of Aboriginal people, including the children who were held captive in Residential Schools. To appreciate how this is accomplished, it is important to remember that Residential Schools were designed precisely to pre-empt the individual and collective resistance that would certainly have ensued had the children been in daily contact with their families. By omitting mention of this resistance, Stewart displaces consideration of the often-brutal methods the churches and successive governments used to suppress it. As in rape trials, the apparent lack of resistance is used as a pretext to suggest that the victim consented and is therefore partly responsible. Without having to mention it, Stewart exploits the common social misconception that serious violence would have incited open resistance. In this account, the omission of any mention of resistance suggests that the violence could not have been widespread or serious (Coates and Wade 2004).

The phrase "prevented them from speaking their languages and from learning about their heritage and culture" acknowledges some of the objectives of the oppression and the losses it wrought. However, it is equally important to recognise that these strategies were far from completely "successful." Many children retained connections to their families, communities, and traditional ways by running away, singing traditional songs, secretly speaking or remembering conversations in their language, playing traditional games, hiding mementos from home, remembering traditional teachings, caring for one another, telling stories, dreaming of home, gathering around newcomers to smell the smoke on their clothes, grieving their separation, and carrying on imaginary conversations with family members, to name but a few examples (Churchill 1993; Graveline 1998; Haig-Brown 1988).

Blame and Pathologise

Clarify Responsibilities

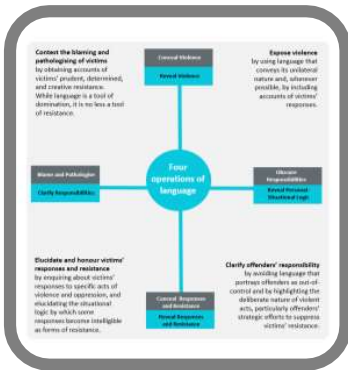
Contest the blaming and pathologising of victims by obtaining accounts of victims' prudent, determined, and creative resistance. While language is a tool of domination, it is no less a tool of resistance.

Conceals Responses and Resistance

Stewart blames Aboriginal people by implying that the oppression reflected a relationship problem for which the parties must share responsibility. Considered as a strategic political document and public performance, the statement enables the government to claim the moral high ground and, through this, to gain leverage in the high stakes negotiations over self-governance and control of land and natural resources. Aboriginal people are supposed to accept this "apology," forgive past abuses, reconcile, and move forward.

Those who refuse are more easily branded as militants or radicals and excluded from the political process. After all, who but an unreasonable or unhealthy person could refuse an offer of reconciliation?

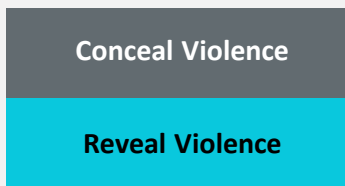
Account 5: A Therapist's Statement



The following passage by Herman (Trauma and Recovery, 1997) is about women who endured sexualised or other forms of violence in childhood.

Almost inevitably, the survivor has great difficulty protecting herself in the context of intimate relationships. Her desperate longing for nurturance and care makes it difficult to establish safe and appropriate boundaries with others. Her tendency to denigrate herself and to idealise those to whom she becomes attracted further clouds her judgment.

Her empathic attunement to the wishes of others and her automatic, often unconscious habits of obedience also make her vulnerable to anyone in a position of power or authority. Her dissociative defensive style makes it difficult for her to form conscious and accurate assessments of danger. And her wish to relive the dangerous situation and make it come out right may lead her into re-enactments of the abuse (p.111).



Expose violence by using language that conveys its unilateral nature and, wherever possible, by including accounts of victims' responses.

Conceals offenders' violence

Herman conceals violence by limiting the mention of violence and minimising its severity. Only once, in line 10, does Herman directly refer to sexualised violence in this passage. The term "abuse" conveys the unilateral nature of the sexualised violence (see Coates and Wade 2004) but does not convey that the acts were not both unilateral and violent (West and Coates 2004). The term "abuse" means misuse, but misuse does not necessarily entail violence. One person can misuse another in a variety of ways, for example, by demanding that they work long hours.

Only a few forms of abuse involve the deliberate administration of force and humiliation by one person against another. Herman's choice of the word "abuse" serves to minimise the severity of violence suffered by the women whose behaviour she purports to be explaining and trying to help. All other references to violence are so oblique that readers are left to infer its presence.

Blame and Pathologise

Clarify Responsibilities

Contest the blaming and pathologising of victims by obtaining accounts of victims' prudent, determined, and creative resistance. While language is a tool of domination, it is no less a tool of resistance.

Offender Blames and Pathologises

Herman blames and pathologises female victims of violence by interpreting their behaviour out of context and proffering a series of psychological inferences that divert attention from the violence to the mind of the victim. The victim is constituted as having "difficulty protecting herself" (line 4), having "clouded judgment" (line 5), habitually and unconsciously obeying authority figures (line 6) and having a "dissociative defensive style" (line 7).

These personal deficiencies are used to explain why the survivor apparently lacks "safe and appropriate boundaries" (line 3), is "vulnerable to anyone in a position of authority" (line 6–7), and cannot accurately assess danger (line 8). Based upon unwarranted psychological inferences, Herman displaces a contextualised analysis of victim's responses to perpetrators' acts of violence with a decontextualised account that blames and pathologises victims.

Conceal Responses
and Resistance

Reveal Responses
and Resistance

Elucidate and honour victims' responses and resistance by enquiring about victims' responses to specific acts of violence and oppression, and elucidating the situational logic by which some responses become intelligible as forms of resistance.

Conceals Responses and Resistance

Herman conceals resistance by placing victims in a single category and using a singular pronoun: "the survivor." She uses this term to create and underscore shared deficiencies among victims and to put forth her account as one that applies to all of these victims. However, because the social circumstances and precise details of violence varies considerably among victims, it is reasonable to expect that women's behaviours before, during, and after the assaults also vary.

Herman's use of the singular pronoun "the survivor" conceals this variability and with it victims' unique and situationally specific responses and resistance. Far from resisting, Herman proposes that women who have been subjected to violence "wish to relive the dangerous situation" (line 12) and "[re-enact] ...the abuse" (line 15). Here, she casts the "survivors" as responsible for the feat of single-handedly re-enacting the violence that was perpetrated against them even though violent actions require at least two people (the perpetrator and the victim). By constructing victims as members of a homogenous category who seek out violence, Herman negates the possibility of any resistance.

Clarify offenders' responsibility by avoiding language that portrays offenders as out-of-control and by highlighting the deliberate nature of violent acts, particularly offenders' strategic efforts to suppress victims' resistance.

Herman's account completely obfuscates the perpetrator's responsibility. She refers to actual or prospective perpetrators as "others," "those to whom she becomes attracted," and people in positions of "power or authority." While we are given these neutral and even positive formulations of perpetrators of violence, we are not given any information about the precise strategies used by perpetrators to entrap women and suppress their resistance. Consequently, perpetrators are never connected to a description that would indicate the deliberateness and the full extent of the violence perpetrated against these women.

Notably, the question Herman has framed and is answering in her account is not how perpetrators overpower women (Coates 2000a, 2002a; Coates 2003), but why women have "great difficulty protecting" themselves. Through this ill-conceived question, perpetrators are transformed into victims of "the survivors'" psychological deficiencies and dysfunctional behaviour: survivors' unfairly "idealise," excessively obey, and cannot "establish safe and appropriate boundaries" with perpetrators because they are deficient and even pathological.

These deficiencies compel women to recruit perpetrators to violate them so that they can "relive" and re-enact the "abuse." In this way, Herman defines perpetrators and their actions as irrelevant and even normal. Simultaneously, she constructs the women and their actions as deviant and therefore requiring explanation (see also Coates and Johnson 2001; Tavis 1992).

Related Resources



[Contextual Analysis Map](#)

[Deeper dive into Related Videos](#)

[About Insight Exchange](#)

[Excerpt: Voices of Participation](#)

Section 4

Contextual Framework Analysis

Response-Based Contextual Analysis Wade, A., Bonnah, S., Coates, L., Richardson, C. (2014)

Context Life World / Social Material Conditions

What are the conditions in which the person lives? What is the developmental history and current status of family relationships? Consider: Income, occupation, culture, immigration/refugee status, social isolation/connection, spirituality, age, abilities, sexual preference, gender identity.

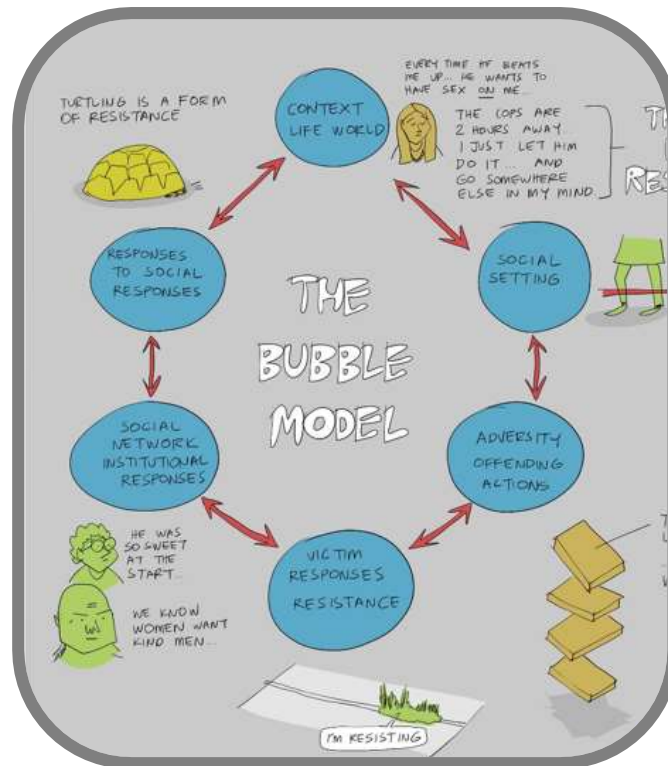
Social Setting / Situation

Interaction

What is the immediate social situation in which the incident occurred? Was the person alone or in isolation? What was the location? Who was present? What did those present know of the person or their circumstances?

Responses to Social Responses

How did/does the person respond to specific social responses? To whom did they disclose or not disclose? Which social responses are helpful? Which social responses are negative or unhelpful? How have they responded to negative or unhelpful social responses?



[Contextual Analysis](#) 12 min Video available on www.insightexchange.net

Adversity Offending Actions

What actions or events did the person experience? Develop clear descriptions of the actions or events of concern to the person.

In cases of violence, describe the actions of the offender(s) and the unilateral nature of the violence.

Social Responses / Social Network Institutional Responses

How do, or did, members of the person's social network and institutional actors respond to the person during/after adverse event? Your work is a social response: How is the person responding to the manner in which you relate to them, to the conversation at hand, to others with whom they have met in similar positions?

Victim Responses Resistance

Explore the social, mental, physical responses of the person from the beginning of the adverse event(s). Try to grasp the 'situational logic' of the person's responses, how the person 'made sense' of events as they occurred, taking into account the context, social situation, and social responses.

Conceal Violence

Reveal Violence

Expose violence

by using language that conveys its unilateral nature and, wherever possible, by including accounts of victims' responses.

Deeper dive

The fact pattern

Watch the 7:13min Video of 'The fact pattern' on <http://www.insightexchange.net/keep-attuned/>



"The use of the word 'victim' and 'perpetrator' is that they are situated action terms not identity terms."

"Violence is social. There are at least two people involved. Which means if we want to understand what is going on we need to look at the actions of both people. Would you agree? Otherwise, it would be like me giving you a book... and only wanting you to read the pages on the left hand side. Pretty soon the pages on the left hand side wouldn't make sense because you would lack the context of the pages right hand side. So, social interaction is like that, we need to see how the actions of one person are connected and related to the other person."

ENGAGE | THINK | TALK

What surprised you? | What did you appreciate about that? | What might you reflect on?

Creating Content

View video via www.insightexchange.net

Photography: Clay Fisher

Consent versus Violence

Watch the 5min Video of 'Consent vs Violence' on <http://www.insightexchange.net/keep-attuned/>



"It's really ironic, really problematic and really troubling, that in other contexts we are so good at understanding when that 'moment by moment' collaboration has been changed, and now it's just a unilateral activity, and yet we pretend that we don't know how to do this when a sexual act gets hijacked and turned to an act of violence. Of course we know. And these are the types of things we have to hold when we are trying to describe the acts in question." Dr Linda Coates

"If you hit someone on the head with a frying pan you don't call it cooking." Dr Allan Wade

ENGAGE | THINK | TALK

What surprised you? | What did you appreciate about that? | What might you reflect on?

Creating Content

View video via www.insightexchange.net

Photography: Clay Fisher

Language and Example

Watch 2x7min Videos 'Language' & 'Language Sample' on <http://www.insightexchange.net/keep-attuned/>



"Language is inseparable from ourselves, as a community of human beings with a separate form and character, a specific history, a specific relationship to the world." Dr Allan Wade

"Violence, of course necessarily involves the application of force against the will and wellbeing of another person." Dr Linda Coates

"We need to spend a little bit of time working out what is a mutual social interaction and what is a unilateral social interaction... violence is a unilateral action." Dr Linda Coates

ENGAGE | THINK | TALK

What surprised you? | What did you appreciate about that? | What might you reflect on?

Creating Content

View video via www.insightexchange.net

Photography: Clay Fisher

Obscure Responsibilities

Reveal Personal-Situational Logic

Clarify offenders' responsibility

by avoiding language that portrays offenders as out-of-control and by highlighting the deliberate nature of violent acts, particularly offenders' strategic efforts to suppress victims' resistance.

Deeper dive

Understanding abusive behaviour

Watch the 2:59min Video of 'Understanding abusive behaviour' on <http://www.insightexchange.net/keep-attuned/>



What surprised you? | What did you appreciate about that? | What might you reflect on?

[View video via www.insightexchange.net](http://www.insightexchange.net)

Upholding Dignity For All

Side A

Watch the 3:55min Video of 'Upholding Dignity For All' on <http://www.insightexchange.net/keep-attuned/>



"Many people use violence so as to maximise the humiliation of the victim... Many people who perpetrate violence are very aware of the power of humiliation."

ENGAGE | THINK | TALK

What surprised you? | What did you appreciate about that? | What might you reflect on?

[View video via www.insightexchange.net](http://www.insightexchange.net)

Violence is Social

Watch the 21min Video of 'Social' on <http://www.insightexchange.net/keep-attuned/>



"The resistance of the victim is part of the 'fact-pattern'. We are not just re-framing and trying to be you know 'positive' here, people do actually resist violence. Resistance to violence is as real as violence." Dr Allan Wade

"It is not at all uncommon that people being raped and beaten, that they respond in a way not only to resist the attacker but to protect other people around them. Tiny children do that." Dr Allan Wade

ENGAGE | THINK | TALK

What surprised you? | What did you appreciate about that? | What might you reflect on?

[View video via www.insightexchange.net](http://www.insightexchange.net)

Conceal Responses
and Resistance

Reveal Responses
and Resistance

Elucidate and honour victims' responses and resistance

by enquiring about victims' responses to specific acts of violence and oppression, and elucidating the situational logic by which some responses become intelligible as forms of resistance.

Deeper dive

Humour in dignity

Watch the 1:45min Video of 'Humour in dignity' on <http://www.insightexchange.net/keep-attuned/>



"She could tell from the way he came up the steps what was going to happen next."

"If I was making a film of that moment would I have seen you do anything that indicated you even noticed that he was there?... she had to be absolutely disciplined... She knew how all of that would work..."

"There is dignity in humour. There is humour in dignity. There is dignity in resistance. And that is what we are trying to support and uphold in our practice."

ENGAGE | THINK | TALK

What surprised you? | What did you appreciate about that? | What might you reflect on?

View video via www.insightexchange.net

Identifying and Honouring Resistance

Watch the 5:23min Video of 'Identifying and Honouring Resistance' on <http://www.insightexchange.net/keep-attuned/>



"...because the perpetrators history is the history of violence.

Victims do not have histories of violence they have histories of responding to and resisting violence... The perpetrators history is the history of violence, the victims history is the history of resistance."

"Where do you get the spirit to fight back in so many extraordinary ways?"

"How about you journal all the ways you responded to the violence you endured... and she did so exploring all of her myriad, multiple, extraordinary, dignified, painful, awful, beautiful forms of resistance..."

ENGAGE | THINK | TALK

What surprised you? | What did you appreciate about that? | What might you reflect on?

View video via www.insightexchange.net

Honouring Children's Resistance to Violence

Watch the 1:41min Video of 'Honouring Children's Resistance to Violence' on <http://www.insightexchange.net/keep-attuned/>



"It's so kind of ordinary and simple and matter of fact but really focused on the context, the interaction, what children are doing and what their purposes are..."

"Honouring children's resistance is a beautiful thing isn't it? Because children always resist violence and protect other people, and work for safety, and try to have a better life, right?"

ENGAGE | THINK | TALK

What surprised you? | What did you appreciate about that? | What might you reflect on?

View video via www.insightexchange.net

Blame and Pathologise

Clarify Responsibilities

Contest the blaming and pathologising of victims

by obtaining accounts of victims' prudent, determined, and creative resistance. While language is a tool of domination, it is no less a tool of resistance.

Deeper dive

Victim Blaming

Watch the 19min Video of 'Victim Blaming' on <http://www.insightexchange.net/keep-attuned/>



ENGAGE | THINK | TALK

The more inaccurate the language used... the more we change from what has happened." Dr Allan Wade

"The problem we have here is transforming the 'perpetrator into a victim' of circumstances of 'forces he cannot understand or control', and transforming the victim into a 'perpetrator of her own misfortunes'..." Dr Allan Wade

"...The problem we have here is as soon as it is made 'mutual' the deliberation of it, and the severity of the action is taken away. Because now what happens very quickly is that the 'argument' is the perpetrator; not the perpetrator... so the 'argument caused the assault', and then when you have done all that, you can start 'mutualising' even further and start talking about this as a 'marital problem'. Because if it's a 'mutual argument', then marriage is also 'mutual' and then you can bolster up the 'mutually' here by calling it a 'marital problem'." Dr Allan Wade & Dr Linda Coates

What surprised you? | What did you appreciate about that? | What might you reflect on?

Creating Conversations

View video via www.insightexchange.net

Illustration: Clay Fisher

Responses to Violence

Watch the 12min Video of 'Responses' on <http://www.insightexchange.net/keep-attuned/>



ENGAGE | THINK | TALK

"It's important when we are trying to understand emotions that we understand them in context and not out of context." Dr Linda Coates

"The perpetrator's history is the history of violence. The victim's history is the history of resistance (not trauma - that's different)." Dr Allan Wade

"Emotion is more like a walk in the park than it is like indignation. The emotions are activities of a person, right? They are not biological events triggered inside of a person - they are relational, they are contextual." Dr Allan Wade

"And so in fact, emotions can be more understood as a moral and ethical response." Dr Linda Coates

What surprised you? | What did you appreciate about that? | What might you reflect on?

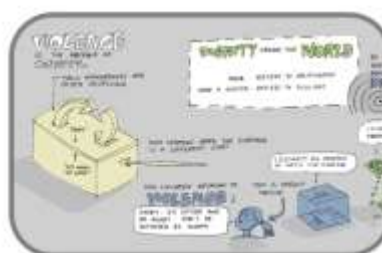
Creating Conversations

View video via www.insightexchange.net

Illustration: Clay Fisher

Dignity

Watch the 10min Video of 'Dignity' on <http://www.insightexchange.net/keep-attuned/>



ENGAGE | THINK | TALK

"All forms of violence are an affront to a person's dignity, and for many people they will say the humiliation is the worst part..." Dr Allan Wade

"Perpetrators know the force of humiliation. So one of the first guiding principles if we ever intervere in cases of violence is how do we uphold the dignity of this person... so that includes offering choice, making safety...etc. Trying to learn what people already know, feel, believe and do... their existing competencies... rather than jumping in with giving advice for example..." Dr Allan Wade

"One of the most common forms of resistance is feigned (pretended) obedience." Dr Allan Wade

What surprised you? | What did you appreciate about that? | What might you reflect on?

Creating Conversations

View video via www.insightexchange.net

Illustration: Clay Fisher

Insight Exchange | Keep Attuned

Insight Exchange is designed to strengthen social responses to Domestic and Family Violence.

The INSIGHT component invites people with lived experiences of Domestic and Family Violence to share their experience through a safe and ethical process that affirms agency and upholds dignity.

The EXCHANGE component shares a person's insights in a de-identified way with individuals, communities and organisations. Fully accurate insights can better inform our awareness, responsibility, and how we all respond to Domestic and Family Violence.

Insight Exchange has been designed by Sightlines Professional Services Division of Domestic Violence Service Management (DVSM), in collaboration with Dr Linda Coates and Dr Allan Wade from Centre for Response-Based Practice Canada.

Why Insight Exchange is important

Currently people with lived experience of Domestic and Family Violence have a range of mechanisms through which to share their experience. Each of these are important however each have limitations in that they do not seek out, explore and give voice to peoples resistance and responses to violence. In addition many of the current mechanisms for sharing lived experience of abuse have no specific link to social change initiatives that inform prevention and improved social, service and system responses.

[HOME](#) [ABOUT](#) [FOLLOW MY LEAD](#) [INSIGHT](#) [KEEP ATTUNED](#) [REFLECTIONS KIT](#) [KEEP IN TOUCH](#)

My Lived Experience

Through INSIGHT EXCHANGE I have the opportunity to share my lived experience of violence in an accurate way, through a safe, ethical supported process.

I am supported to share the contexts of my lived experiences and how I have resisted and responded to violence and other affronts to my dignity.

Insight Exchange

UPHOLDING DIGNITY

My Insight Shared

INSIGHT EXCHANGE shares my lived experience, highlighting my responses and resistance to violence and where 'social responses' were helpful or harmful.

This reveals the role that individuals, communities and organisations play in peoples experience of violence.

Our Social Response

Through INSIGHT EXCHANGE we (all) have the opportunity to strengthen our responses to violence, as individuals, communities and organisations.

Our Social Responsibility

Through INSIGHT EXCHANGE we (all) have the opportunity to gain a more accurate understanding of lived experiences of violence and the role we play as social responders.

Domestic and Family Violence ‘is a shared social issue’

“... We all have a role, we all have a part. Whether we want to take it up consciously or not.” Dr Allan Wade

Creating Conversations Events

Creating Conversations Events are designed to;

- ✓ Provide an opportunity for people and organisations that wouldn't ordinarily intersect or come together.
- ✓ Create the conditions for conversations that enable sharing and learning about each other's contexts, challenges and contributions.
- ✓ Discover the possibilities for individual, organisational and collective responses and pathways for progress.

Related [Resources](#) - Videos | Creating Conversations Kits

Video 07: [Identifying and Honouring Resistance](#) (5:23 mins)



Follow My Lead

[Follow My Lead](#) is an awareness raising resource for social and service responders.



Voices of Resistance

[Voices of Resistance](#) was a project that documented four women's resistance and responses to the violence they experienced. The project participants supported the development and prototyping of the interview process for Insight Exchange through the sharing of their resistance and responses to violence.

[Mishka](#)



[Jan](#)



[The Woman Next Door](#)



[Michele R](#)



Voices of Resistance

Mishka



Jan



The Woman Next Door



Michele R



Voices of Resistance was a project that documented four women's resistance and responses to the violence they experienced. The project participants supported the development and prototyping of the interview process for Insight Exchange through the sharing of their resistance and responses to violence.



Michele R: Being safe is no simple or single decision, or task

I am experienced in anticipating his patterns and tactics of abuse used against me

When he knew I was pregnant he beat me to a pulp and I miscarried twice. Publicly he would be saying to friends that he wanted to have kids.

When I suspected I was pregnant again I hid it from him. I produced the pregnancy test with him and my mum in the same room together. I knew that if the pregnancy was public that he would have to go along with it and this would keep my daughter safe.

Mum took a photo of us with the pregnancy test. It was public. I had managed his violence towards me, not accept it, but manage it.

So for the nine months I was pregnant the physical violence stopped. I did a lot of thinking, knowing that I was about to give birth to this baby and not wanting to expose her to this horrific abuse. This time gave me space and helped me to gain perspective and clarity. Up until this point I had been fighting for my life and I hadn't had time to piece it all together.

When my daughter was born, there was this fresh kind of something that took over me, that said *"you do have the strength, you are going to do this and you are going to do this effectively."* At that point I started thinking about my exit strategy and started to share it with a few people.

An Excerpt

My Reflections

A large, empty rounded rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for writing reflections. The box is positioned to the right of the 'My Reflections' header and occupies most of the page's vertical space.



Keep attuned for a PDF copy of this resource, the resources it links out to and other related resources via:

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.

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