Batterer Intervention Program Evaluation: A Portland, Oregon Program Case Study

Julie M. Conner
Portland State University

Follow this and additional works at: https://pdxscholar.library.pdx.edu/honorstheses

Part of the Domestic and Intimate Partner Violence Commons

Let us know how access to this document benefits you.

Recommended Citation

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access. It has been accepted for inclusion in University Honors Theses by an authorized administrator of PDXScholar. Please contact us if we can make this document more accessible: pdxscholar@pdx.edu.
Batterer Intervention Program Evaluation: A Portland, Oregon Program Case Study

by

Julie Conner

An undergraduate honors thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Bachelor of Science in University Honors and Criminology & Criminal Justice

Thesis Adviser

Danielle McGurrin Ph. D.

Portland State University

2022
Introduction

Batterer intervention programming (BIP) has shown up as a source of treatment for men who abuse women since the late nineteen-seventies and have since continued to expand (Cheng et al, 2021). Research has been done to examine how effective these programs are in many different settings at reducing intimate partner violence, but little is known about programs specific to the state of Oregon. BIPs are used as an alternative to incarceration for individuals convicted of domestic violence: existing programs are based on the Duluth Model which posits violence towards women is based on the desire to have power and control and Cognitive Behavioral Theory (CBT) which posits that intimate partner violence is a learned behavior motivated by faulty cognitions (Lawrence et al., 2021). Other modalities have utilized trauma-informed approaches, psychoeducation, holistic modeling, and risks, need, and responsivity (RNR) modeling while offenders gave and received incite and feedback from their peers and the group facilitator. This thesis will compare a literature review of the qualitative components of other known batterer intervention programs and research of what is already being done in the field to the Allies in Change curriculum written by Dr. Chriss Huffine, based out of Portland Oregon.

Literature Review

First, let’s define that qualitative research recognizes the role of individuals and groups in creating a social world. A qualitative researchers’ task is to understand everyday life comprising of customs and routines; norms and values; and roles and responsibilities; that all have meanings attached to them by social actors. This is an interpretative process in which an ‘outsider’ looks to understand the social world empathetically as a research
participant. Qualitative researchers strive to give a voice to those they study which is of particular importance to research involving marginalized groups (Wincup, 2017, p. 4). With this in mind, we will look at what other research has been done in qualitative research done in batterer’s intervention programs and inspect what the Allies in Change curriculum has implemented that may be the same or like other qualitative aspects or if there are unique qualities exclusively to its program.

The historical and empirical reasons for the lack of effectiveness in batterer interventions programs (BIPs) include failure to prevent recidivism, attrition, and lack of support and confidence of the courts; each is examined in this article. (Aaron and Beaulaurier, 2017) key findings are that the effective BIPs hinges on victim safety, coordinated community response efforts, tracking recidivism and dropout rates, informed interventions on batterer typology and their type of violence, and investment in BIPs is needed to fund research, to pilot programs, and support financially strapped programs to enhance victim safety. This study finds that the state of BIPs can mask their importance, that if we don’t treat the offender, then they will continue finding new victims; and there must be better diagnosis and targeted treatment for their outcomes to improve. This is urgent because there are few viable alternatives; preventing recidivism can be effective with increased incarceration but that is least desirable, especially to victims who just want the violence to stop and have reason for often continuing the relationship and incarceration is costly. Also, there is urgency because parole or release of perpetrators without treatment or incarceration is untenable and public responsibility is abdicated for protecting victims and treating the cause of the violence (Aaron & Beaulaurier, 2017).
Approximately 97% of batterers are served group-based interventions through community organizations in the US and Canada. Group-based treatment research shows that this helps the perpetrator decrease feelings of isolation, encourage sharing, openness, and help-seeking behaviors over individual or couple-based programs. The problems with group-based interventions are not addressing individual needs, peer contagion effect, and have shown the impact of reducing abusive behavior have been negligible. Some qualitative factors hindering the pathways to engagement could include age variety (average being 41.2); level of education; employment status; marital status; whether court-mandated or voluntary; if there is substance usage; and if there are prior arrests or a criminal history of domestic violence (Bouchard & Wong, 2021).

Problematic pornography usage (PPU) and physical and sexual intimate partner violence (IPV) show a relationship in common confounding variables in one study method: antisociality, depression, posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), relationship dissatisfaction, and substance use problems. Men that self-report higher levels of excessive, compulsive, uncontrollable use of pornography perpetrated physical and sexual IPV more frequently than men with lower levels of porn use. Pornography use increases exposure to sexual scripts that often portray violence towards women and women's' response to violence pleasurably. Accessibility and normalization to content that is misogynistic and violent may have implications for its consumers’ romantic relationships, the broader cultural perception of violence toward women, and IPV perpetration. Future research in this domain will be an important endeavor with violent and nonviolent populations to continue investigating PPU (Brem et al., 2021).
Claxton’s and Richards’s study showed that differentiated batterer intervention treatment models could assist in positive outcomes of reducing violence in IPV based on criminogenic needs regarding first time offenders or “as usual” offenders. Their study assessed that BIP offenders are rarely specialized in IPV but often engage in a variety of other crimes. Their comparison included one treatment model for first time offenders called Abuse Intervention Program (AIP) consisting of 20, two-hour group treatment sessions. The other comparison was for repeat low-risk offenders called Healthy Relationship Program (HRP) and comprised of 4, two-hour sessions. They found that treatment assignment should rely on the breadth of criminogenic risks and criminal histories (Claxton & Richards, 2021).

Research shows that current BIPs are minimally effective in design for immigrant subgroups despite the fact that global migration is rising and there are high percentage of immigrant batterers in BIPs (Emezue et al., 2021). Culturally adapted programming has been attempted for some BIPs to increase treatment effectiveness using culture-blending, hybridized curricula that integrates cognitive behavior therapy (CBT), patriarchal-feminist models (Duluth), and new psychodynamic-psychotherapeutic models. Improving personal responsibility, participant willingness to change, negotiating cultural schemas of masculinity (machismo), changing gender roles, family preservation and positive fathering/parenting were most programs focus for study participants. Non-immigrant batterers were less likely to complete BIPs than immigrant male batterers (IMB). This is often due to language barriers to understand the program content, inability to leave work and family responsibilities, and inability to pay required program fees. Culture and
language specific IMB groups had considerably higher completion rates compared to IMB in mainstream, English-language groups (Emezue et al., 2021).

In an exploratory study from men in solution-focused voluntary batterer program participants were asked to write a “letter from your future” imagining that is 5 years from the current moment. Forty-five responses were used of the men writing what they would tell themselves about how life has been if they could send it back to themselves in the past. These letters could afford insight into the way the participants understood how they have lived and how they see their future. The letters were divided into 4 typologies: IPV-sustaining, transformative, neutral, and split examples. The letters that are transformative show signs of accepting an emergent self-conception ideology. This means that the men show signs of envisioning themselves as someone who once was abusive towards their partner but has grown in recovery as a non-abusive domestic partner. The neutral and the split examples are attempting to embrace the emergent version yet retain elements of their formerly dominant and gendered ideology. Examples of IPV-sustaining labels responded to the challenge of emergent ideology by defending fiercely their formerly dominant position which could still point to evidence that the men are on the same journey towards accountability and change. The conclusion to this content analysis supports prior studies on IPV with indications that perpetuation and justification are strongly connected from constructs of foundational gender roles and agency. Future studies would benefit by broadening the sample beyond a single BIP. Conducting pre- and posttest evaluations to measure change, or by seeking within a wider range of text types for evidence of ideological conflict (Kilgore et al., 2019).
In the research done by Morrison, George, Cluss, Miller, Hawker, Fleming, Bicehouse, Burke, and Chang the hopes for the implement training of BIP facilitators and help with future research to tailor BIP approaches to maximize client engagement is suggested. Positive themes identify are the opportunity to learn from others, holding each other accountable, feeling less alone, seeing other members make progress, helping others, having a place to talk about their problems, gaining insight from different perspectives, and group bonding. A small number of participants expressed indifference or saw no benefit from working or interacting with other men in the group. This study contributes research presenting clients perspectives on group work in BIPs by highlighting positives and negatives to continue to identify specific strategies and approaches these groups use to buy in and foster engagement, emphasizing when approaches fall short and how to tailor and expand them (Morrison et al., 2019).

As part of a 2-year ethnographic study on 36 individual semi structured interviews with BIP professionals’ researchers located challenges that BIPs encounter working with clients and how those challenges present barriers to behavior change at interventions. Six themes were identified related to challenges in men who perpetrate violence to promote behavioral change: hypermasculine attitudes, social acceptance of IPV, emotional problems, exposure to violence in childhood, comorbid issues with mental health, and denial, minimization, and blame. Professionals who work with two BIPs either directly with or in close proximity to BIPs and IPV male perpetrators report a range of challenges and how the present barriers to the BIP process. Professionals perceive issues at the individual, interpersonal, and societal level that impede offenders’ ability to recognize and accept responsibility for their behaviors, engage in the process and enact behavioral change.
Conclusions applied to theme challenges present those issues can’t and shouldn’t be resolved by one agency but apply efforts to promote an integrated and coordinated community response to reducing IPV perpetration (Morrison et al., 2021).

This study was a 2-year ethnography conducted by 36 individual semi structured interviews with professionals working with BIPs. Five themes were identified related to program-level challenges for BIPs: safety issues, information barriers, facilitator retention and training, the need for monitoring, and funding constraints. Conclusions from the study show that work needs to continue being done at state and local levels in coordination with community judicial, mental health, human services, and other agencies to help support BIPs and provide resources for effective work being sustained and safe for victims of IPV and facilitators running the programs. Operational challenges from this study showed barriers to information that for facilitators about batterers which could ultimately affect their approach. Facilitators understood that batterers records were confidential such as mental health information but could be helpful to adequately tailor intervention methods to client needs. Facilitators also hinted at integration and information lacked sharing between BIPs and court systems which begs to question how to improve communication across entities that are responsible for batterers and victim safety but have limited resources for record keeping and obligations for strict privacy protections (Morrison et al., 2019).

Richards, Jenning, and Murphy found that dropouts of BIPs were more likely to have a history of property crimes and general violence that completers, but not no-shows. No-shows were less likely be employed, on probation, or have a high school diploma or GED,
and more likely to report mental health issues or histories of drug crimes than completers, but not dropouts. Recognitions of these distinctions can inform red flags for early treatment disengagement, improve intake procedures, and engagement strategies. Examined factors in this research aimed to identify differences among treatment completers, dropouts, and no shows related to pre-and in-treatment attrition. Findings indicate that focusing on different target areas may be required to retain dropouts and engage no-shows relative to treatment completer in BIPs (Richards et al., 2021).

Domestic violence rates in military families have shown dramatic increases in the last decade and this study uses a multivariate comparison of veteran and non-veteran court-mandated offenders in attendance of a BIP. Intake data were analyzed to examine if having a military background affects a BIP client’s criminal thinking patterns and does criminal thinking differ between the two groups? The Criminal Thinking Scale (CTS) was utilized to understand if veteran and civilian DV offenders varied on the subscales of power orientation, justification, cold heartedness, personal irresponsibility, criminal rationalization, and entitlement. Statistical significance between the groups was not indicative in descriptive analysis, yet multivariant analyses suggest that military status had association with higher levels of criminal thinking, which might be true for one measure, criminal rationalization. A difference between veteran and civilian recognized was fewer arrested that might contribute to criminal rationalization. Research is limited in this area but investigation around demographics, personal characteristics, and experiences influence offenders’ paths to habilitation and crime desistance (Stacer & Solinas-Saunders, 2018).
Identifying evidence that the mechanisms which contribute to successful outcomes in BIPs is the goal of this realist review. Focusing on outcomes that directly link strategies used in standard BIPs are reviewed: changes in attitude about gender, power inequities, and the acceptability of violence in relationships; the acceptance of responsibility to the abuse that was perpetuated; the development of empathy for one’s partner; the development and use of skills that can be used to interrupt or prevent violence and/or improve communication; and indications of motivation to lead a nonviolent life and cease using abusive behaviors. Outcomes of the study shows that individuals who gained insight into these mechanisms from BIPs must be carefully looked at to understand who, why, and how these programs effect their lives in the long run. Researchers urge policy makers, judicial officials, and others to not settle for programs and evaluations that provide simple answers to complex questions (Velonis et al., 2020).

This review current statuses of BIPs in the US and the focus is on predominant intervention modalities and their underlying theories. The article reviews research on trauma of intimate partner violence perpetrators to explain the link between trauma, aggression, and violent behaviors. Framework upon trauma principles is used to improve the effectiveness of men with IPV histories and better address their needs. The article addresses that ACE scoring has shown that violent men often have cumulative scores and with high aces scores it is likely that reactions to stress can be boosted and sense of danger can be triggered to result in an overblown situation. This means that incorporating Trauma Informed Practices (TIP) into treatment curricula for BIP programing could hold positive outcomes in treating violent men. Policy suggestions include standards on TIPs and
revision of state legislation to receive funding incentivized by TIPs and trauma intervention (Voith et al., 2020).

Wong and Bouchard’s study examines the literature on guidelines in IPV interventions in the use of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) in 10 IPV intervention programs in British Columbia. Data collection was preformed to develop a thorough understanding of the curricula and frameworks of these ten programs. Factoring for coding the presence and emphasis of CBT curricula was supplied by what specific material was covered in each week of each program in Microsoft Excel. In literature review, researchers identified four core CBT factors, which each include 14 components. This study argues that decision-makers should consider whether a program is a CBT intervention with these given set of components. Through this study it is believed that there are inconsistencies between program labels and curricula content and if more concrete definitions were adopted then increased ability to establish evidence-based reduction and prevention of partner abuse and violence could be accomplished (Wong & Bouchard, 2021).

Zosky’s study finds restorative justice can be used in domestic violence rather than retributive because it seeks to amend the present and the future by repairing the harm and restoring equality in the parties involved rather than focusing on the punishment and separation from the community. It is mentioned that restorative justice is more sensitive in addressing minority populations needs. Peacemaking circles used in the Navajo community is built on horizontal justice to teach alternatives to conflict rather than punishment. For Black offenders there is a reluctant to involve the justice system and curricula emanating patriarchy for explanation to domestic violence may not resonant so well for the Black
community. Results from a survey in this study of responses to closed-ended questions indicated the goals of the victim panel were realized; most perpetrators never considered the impact on their victims of DV; most said the panel increased their awareness of the impact of DV on adult victims and children witnesses; and a majority felt their attendance was beneficial.

This was a study based out of the Pacific Northwest about victim impact panels impact on Justice-Involved Individuals (JII) enrolled in BIPs and mandated by their programs. This is a restorative justice approach to BIPs and are an additional therapeutic approach to the BIP treatment model. The article examines the methods and approach of how a victims panel looks; number of survivor speakers and what they talked about and for how long; the JIIIs that attended and how their perceptions may have changed about their behaviors or their reactions to what they heard survivor explain; and the engagement of parole or probation officers in showcasing the panel of survivors. Research shows that these panels increase JIIIs understanding of the impact of IPV and that it gave survivors a sense of empowerment and healing. An eye-opening aspect of these panels is they shift the imbalance of power or IPV survivors and JIIIs and implement a re-envision of interaction and communication to process and reframe the experience of abuse into understanding and healing (Kerrigan & Mankowski, 2021).

A qualitative study examining the perceptions and experiences of participants in a diverse group of males in the same BIP grouped to help reveal factors that contribute to positive change. Changes within participants shows results through a reciprocal process via the facilitation of group context. In this study, men described how taking accountability,
psychoeducation, and acknowledging consequences of their abusive behaviors facilitated change. Focusing on the role of group diversity among men currently in community based BIPs was the point of this study by building of previous research including experiences of Latino immigrant men who participated in culturally informed BIPs and another report that used participant and facilitator to study the process of change that took place among men who successfully completed a BIP. The role of the group process was emphasized by both facilitator and participants as an important factor for change, particularly receiving both support and confrontation from other group members and facilitators. This study contributes to existing literature by highlighting intervention processes for facilitating the engagement and retention of BIPs and for informing the continued implementation and adaptation to BIP interventions (Holtrop et al., 2017).

Research was conducted on 501 African American men arrested for domestic violence in Pittsburgh. The clinical trial was used to test culturally focused batterer counseling effectiveness against conventional cognitive-behavioral counseling. One group was all African American men with culturally focused counseling; the second group was all African American men in conventional counseling; the third group was racially mixed, conventional counseling. Completion rate was approximately 55% across all three counseling options showing there was no apparent benefit from conventionally focused or culturally focused counseling for African American men. Men in the racially mixed group were half as likely to be re-arrested for DV than the culturally focused, while Black men with high racial identification were more likely to complete culturally focused groups yet re-assault and re-arrest rates were not significantly improved. Drop-out rates significantly associated with re-assault and re-arrest (Gondolf, 2005).
The approach in this article is more about marriage preservation and sustainability in relationships between Black men and Black women. The article addresses some stereotypes that have carried through since enslavement of African American and how this has affected how Black people couple currently. The Black couple’s intervention in this study is called “In Circle” to support development and flourishing of African American couples through policy initiatives to bring attention to the broader, social, political, and economic issues impacting Black couples. Through The African American Healthy Marriage Initiative, with larger future test samples, addressing disparities in income, employment, and wealth is important to sustaining African American marriages and relationships. With policies that provide resources higher standards of living within Black communities could decrease the disparaging statistics affecting Black couple like violence and HIV (Bent- Goodley, 2017).

The feminist approach can be a beginning point of a program to help batterers deal with denial of responsibility; it could then shift to a cognitive-behavioral approach to teach skills to control their violent behavior; and then the program could conclude in handling underlying psychological issues through psychotherapy that contribute to domestic violence. Batterers are also a diverse group that cannot effectively respond to a one-size-fits-all approach and could likely benefit from a specially tailored intervention. Batterer subgroups could include different levels of risk: low-risk, medium-risk, high-risk; different personalities and those with comorbidities: substance abuse, psychological disorders; different racial or ethnic backgrounds and cultural heritage: African-Americans, Hispanic/Latinos, Native Americans, Asian and recent immigrants in contrast to White batterers; people with non-traditional sexual orientation: LGBTQA+ relationships opposed
to heterosexual relationships; and people from disadvantaged socio-economic background; poor, illiterate (Healy et al. 2009).

New trends making ground in batterer intervention programs are taking a specialized approach to cater to specific types of batters. This can include modification of curriculum and treatment modalities to accommodate socio-cultural differences in batterer. Some topics that can be included are what kind of man do I want to be; managing my feelings; how violence effects the victims; listening and communication skills; fatherhood and domestic violence; sexuality, violence, and aggression; aggressiveness, passiveness, and assertiveness; current topics and money; and compromising about difficult issues. Prior evaluations of batterer programs found that the one-size-fits-all approach is not effective and that subgroups of batterer could produce more positive effects if interventions were more tailors (Cox & Rivolta, 2018).

This meta-analysis includes a sample of 17 studies assessing BIP effectiveness in IPV recidivism. Outcome measures included violation of probation in DV-related crimes, convictions to repeat DV, charges related to DV, and/or IPV obtained by the Conflicts Tactics Scales (CTS) or reported by the survivor. The three outcomes’ measures used for this meta-analysis were, Analysis I showed DV recidivism reported by the criminal justice system. Analysis II looked at IPV reported by the survivor. Analysis III analyzed offenses reported by the criminal justice system for general recidivism. Studies treatment models included CBT, psychoeducation, the Duluth model, risk, needs, responsivity (RNR), and some not specified. Researchers found that inconsistencies exist for lack of reporting details on services provided, effect sizes, and standard deviations. Researchers suggest the
need to look towards new approaches like addressing lifestyle (unemployment, substance use) and mental health including trauma and PTSD (Cheng et al., 2021).

Articles about Batterer intervention programs (BIP) in the state of Oregon are very limited. Boal and Mankowski found that there is no evidence that standards for BIPs have been implemented in the U. S. and no information about challenges to comply with efforts have been encountered. A qualitative survey study was conducted over 2 years of BIPs in Oregon to identify barriers to implementation of standards for BIPs. There were nine challenges identified including inadequate funding, finding qualified facilitators, high workloads, difficulty meeting training requirements, trouble creating and maintaining collaborations, inability to accommodate diverse needs of participants, conflict between state standards and requirements of the county, and perceived gaps between standards and evidence-based practices. The findings of the study show controversy surrounding BIP standards and efforts to increase effectiveness of BIPs (Boals & Mankowski, 2014).

**Methods**

The beginning of my research was finding three Oregon Batterer’s Intervention Programs (BIP) to review how they were implementing cultural immersion into their program of violence towards domestic partners. Findings showed very scarce research generally in BIPs and their programming dynamics in the state of Oregon. In the literature review, there was a couple dated articles about BIPs in Oregon and I found Eric Mankowski Ph. D.’s name come up as an Oregon BIP researcher. In further investigation, I discovered that Dr. Mankowski was a professor in the Psychology Department at PSU and that he and a group of students at PSU compiled a directory of all the batterer intervention programs in
Oregon statewide, county to county. The directory had every known BIP known updated in 2021 and was specific about the populations that each program served. The directory contained sections for each county and the name of each organization in the county with their contact information and names of the organization directors.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agency name</th>
<th>Population groups served</th>
<th>Addressed concerns</th>
<th>Reason for not participating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Domestic Abuse Program</td>
<td>Male Spanish-speaking, Women English-speaking</td>
<td>private practice</td>
<td>too much non-revenue time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lifeways</td>
<td>Spanish speaking</td>
<td>needed staff approval</td>
<td>no follow-up staff response</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cedar Counseling Center</td>
<td>Veterans, Spanish speaking</td>
<td>limited time to coordinate communication</td>
<td>no curriculum available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teras Intervention &amp; Counseling</td>
<td>Christian, developmental disability</td>
<td>not enough participants in program</td>
<td>issues with Tri-county mandating authority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crossroads</td>
<td>Native American</td>
<td>no data to contribute to the study</td>
<td>no curriculum available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allies in Change</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>information requested difficult to gather</td>
<td>lack of time and resources to meet request</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Castaneda Counseling</td>
<td>Spanish speaking</td>
<td>not enough to add to the study</td>
<td>lack of time and resources to meet request</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solutions D.V.I.P.</td>
<td>Spanish speaking</td>
<td>lack of time</td>
<td>opted out</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hombres Autoreponsables Por La Prevención Del Abuso</td>
<td>Spanish speaking</td>
<td>no concerns - meeting was scheduled</td>
<td>no curriculum available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OnTrack</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>no concerns - meeting was scheduled</td>
<td>uses the Allies in Change curriculum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BestCare PRM Programa de Recuperacion de Madras</td>
<td>Spanish speaking</td>
<td>coordinating with other staff</td>
<td>lack of communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modus Vivendi</td>
<td>Russian</td>
<td>limited time to coordinate communication</td>
<td>provided curriculum outline, not full curriculum</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Finding this directory led to looking for BIPs that would contribute to my research efforts. I generated an email that would be sent to all agencies in the directory asking for the information in hopes of obtaining. There are 36 counties in all of Oregon with 26 of those counties offering BIPs. Some organization directors oversaw more than one location, and some locations were missing contact information so in total there was 22 emails sent out with the same generated text on November 5, 2021, to each available contact in the directory.

Rather than include all the information and communication that I had among programs in Oregon, I have included a table (Figure I) to show information pertaining to the organizations that I received a response from after my initial email. This table shows the names of the agencies that responded to the generated email that I sent, what population groups that the organization serves, concerns that were made on their behalf that may hinder their participation, and the reason(s) that they opted out from participation in the research study.

**Findings**

The findings section will describe aspects of the Allies’ curriculum that match with components that are known to work and found in the literature review. There will also be a section that describes what is in the literature review that the Allie’s curriculum is missing and could be beneficial to implement in chapters that already exist or in an additional chapter to the curriculum. Lastly, will include what the Allies’ curriculum has that is not found in the literature and what is unique about the curriculum.
The Allies in Change curriculum recognizes the qualitative component of “working” within and regarding relationships of the abusive partner. This “working” component involves not just the relationship with your intimate/domestic partnership, but also working with the socialization that has been shown to be expected with masculinity and in turn how an abuser works that process within themselves.

Specific subsections of the curriculum address societal norms, behaviors, expressions, and expectations that work for perceived gender identities in the standard association of the American ideal. These are characteristics that are not just expectations that men have of themselves but what have come to be expected from the perspective of some females, especially those that are involved in a relationship which justifies violence as a form of expression and communication. These norms of masculinity draw men into a box which says that they must have a hard, unbreakable exterior surface. By having this protective layer, they cannot let other’s actions and criticism affect their behaviors and actions. This protective layer is not only their ability to detach emotionally but also show physical strength to overcome obstacles that inhibit them from getting what they want but also the strength to obtain the things they desire. It can be a male’s perception that is what the opposite sex finds appealing of them and in turn what they think they should do to be desirable.

Other societal norms that are expected of men is to be level-headed and grounded no matter what comes along their path. Traditional male norms teach at a young age that boys are not supposed to cry or have intense escalated feelings and emotions. For many men this can hinder their ability to be expressive in healthy ways rather than have keeping
their feeling pent up without a way to “let off steam” or have some release of built-up pressure. This built-up pressure can somehow be managed when they are out in public or their work environment but for numerous reasons come out in violence to their partner or others in their home.

When these pressures do come to surface, it is historically noted that domestic violence occurs behind closed doors and has up until the last couple decades been seen as a family issue and one that others should stay out of. It has been accepted to manage your family or possession to keep them in line. This goes back to when wives were considered property to their husbands and that people can do as they will with their own property. Since the women’s rights movements and liberation from being confined as a housewife and care giver to children, it has been a slow process for behavior change to take for in how men are raised to behave and treat women. There has been a continuance to raise our boys to act like they need to have power over situations and that if they don’t, they can take matters into their own hands.

Other traits that men are taught which keeps them in a box is needing to be strong, a leader, in charge, physically able, having broad knowledge, knowing how to solve problems, fixing what is broken, domineering, rough or rowdy, unmoved/unemotional, provider for the family, protector of the family, course demeanor, independent, and self-reliant. All these factors play into how men envision their role in a relationship and how to take care of their families. It is demonstrated that without these qualities, they do not add up to societies expectations of masculinity and therefore they are not in control and will be perceived as opposing negative qualities.
The Allies curriculum uses concepts that come from the Duluth model originating in Duluth, Minnesota from a program that is based on a community-coordinated approach. The Duluth model is formed around the belief that men are entitled to their demeaning and minimalizing behavior towards women and that violence is a means to manage their significant other and their family unit. The Power and Control wheel was developed from the Duluth model and demonstrates that family violence is not based off the perpetrator having and anger issue but feeling the need or entitlement to have power and control over their spouse or intimate partner. The wheel identifies how violence manifests through physical and sexual abuse and what these kinds of abuse can come up as. In the Allies curriculum each one of these categories on the power and control wheel are discussed and gone into deeper detail in sections of the curriculum.

Threats and coercion are one part of the wheel and Allies arranges this in a way that helps show the difference between forcing someone to do as the other wishes and suggesting or influences the other to go along with someone else’s idea. It helps the abuser determine their approach when they are trying to get their ways and how to do it without trying to control the outcome or what their intimate partner decides. Along with suggesting or influencing what your partner decides it is also discussed how to agree to disagree and that it is good to have differing perspectives. Not only is it good to have differing perspective, but there is not always one right answer and that is ok. In fact sometime agreeing to disagree and accepting your partners opinion and listening can deepen an intimate connection and the growth of the relationship.
Along with male entitlement comes male privilege and that takes up a good portion of the chapter working with the other because this impacts the inability to come to common grounds with your significant other and work together to settle concerns or disagreements without it turning into a competition or violence. When the male acts with entitlement or the privilege that has been bestowed through societal norms it hinders the ability to work through problems and show respect and concern for the other’s opinion or belief about the situation at hand.

The ability to intimidate comes with entitlement to which is discussed in how abusive men will use their physical demeanor and biological ability to have control over their partner. Intimidation does not mean that they must use violence physically to control their partner but just have a presence that suggests that they are not to be challenged or messed with. Intimidation can be happened by radiating intensity that makes the family feel they have to walk on eggshells or yelling to induce fear or not responding with words and responding with neglect or disinterest in the other person.

Minimizing, denying, and blaming is a big factor that Allies curriculum goes into that is outlined on the power and control wheel. A part of the Allies manual recognizes that abusive men tend to act as if the abuse or their actions towards their partner is not as bad as it seems or that their partner is overexaggerating the situation. This is one way that they avoid accountability and make their partner feel as if they are the problem for being overly sensitive. This also adds to the partner feeling as if they are crazy as abusive men often will say to their partner when they bring up how they are feeling.
Denial follows minimizing the situation because it is easier than being accountable to just say that it never happened or that what she said was a lie. Denial can also be easy when there is shame for how the male handled the situation and denial keeps them from having to face their actions and change their behavior. It is also easier to blame the other or someone else in general than to recognize their part in a situation. If their ashamed of the way they have acted, then it can be easier to say that if she hadn’t gotten in my way then my hand wouldn’t have given her a black eye. This kind of thinking again takes away having to admit that the perpetrator was at fault and should not have raised his hand in the first place or enforced his own will over the other's person’s wishes.

Cognitive behavior therapy (CBT) is also brought into many concepts of the Allies curriculum such as learning how to make physiological self-observations. Abusive people are often disconnected from their emotional self and have an all or nothing perspective or feeling emotionally numb or furiously high strung. Through CBT and physiological self-observation, the Allies curriculum brings in an exercise that describes events, emotional descriptions, physical warning, and behavioral warning at a low intensity (1-3), medium intensity (4-6), and high intensity (7-10). Also, part of CBT is teaching self-awareness by having mindful practices throughout the day to connect to where the program participant is on that emotional intensity chart. Part of mindfulness is identifying what emotion is being felt by the participant and taking note of it in a non-judgmental viewpoint. This helps to reduce fear or shame of the situation and approach it with a rational and clear mind without impulsive reactions towards the situation.
Risks, needs, and responsivity (RNR) is also a part of the Allies curriculum by addressing if the program participant is using or abusing substances including drugs or alcohol to escape stressful occurrences present in their life. Although the use of substances does not cause domestic violence or controlling behaviors, it does escalate emotions that are inflamed already. It is considered vital to address substance abuse because it can further the process of denial that the abuser has a problem and hinder their learning ability to receive the full advantage of the BIP treatment. It also decreases the ability to look at and understand their part in the violence that is occurring because the substance use has become a quick and easier means to escape uncomfortable emotions.

Pornography/erotica use was less prevalent as a treatment intervention in the literature review but it part of the curriculum model of Allies. It is discussed that legally consenting adults partaking in the production or use of pornography is not the problem, but rather the effect that it has on having a healthy relationship with your significant other and whether it consists with personal values and moral standpoints. The discussion here lies around the aspect of acting with integrity with consistency in truth to personal views on the use of pornography. If the use of pornography or a certain form of pornography is being viewed, then it can be converted to shame and embarrassment which compromises personal well-being. Like the use of drugs or alcohol, problematic pornography use can have a negative impact on quality of life when too much or inappropriate time is being spent looking at it. Also, it can conflict with sexual agreements when there is an expectation that pornography is not being viewed from the partner. In the case of domestic relationships and promoting healthy communication, honesty is the best policy and misleading or lying to your partner is best to be addressed in this subject matter.
Accountability is a huge concept when it comes to understanding and accepting that a person has been abusive and only, they have themselves to blame for their behavior. Accountability is brought up in the literature in different ways including writing a letter from your future self. The Allies curriculum addresses accountability in several pages of the appendix and includes a lesson and assignment that each program participant must complete. Their accountability statement will be reviewed by the facilitator and shared with the group. Different topics that should be addressed in the accountability statement are what kinds of abuse and to whom they have directed it towards, justification they have used or permission they have given themselves for the abusive behavior, how they plan to remain accountable and monitor themselves, how they have kept their behaviors secret in the past and avoided accountability, what their thoughts and behaviors were before initiating abusive tactics and what actions happen after these thoughts and behaviors, slippery situations that bring chances of abuse occurring, what needs aren’t being meant when abuse and control are being used, and what aspects that you have learned from Allies that will help you remain non-abusive and non-controlling.

What is found to be missing from the Allies curriculum that was part of the literature review is assessing criminogenic status and additional risk assessment in correspondence to victims. It is known that when an abusive relationship has ended, or an abused partner has left the relationship it can be a very dangerous time. The concept of guns in the household is brought up as an increased risk factor for domestic homicide, but this is about as close as it gets to touching on the risk for victims. In the literature about addressing criminogenic levels, it is important to assess what level an offender is at to get them the best treatment for their abusive behavior. Also, in the literature it is noted that
other types of criminal offenses can be indicative of violent behaviors. In the Allies curriculum there is not mention of differences in participants criminogenic risks and there is only brief recognition criminality and its correlation to domestic violence.

This curriculum has no basis for differentiating cultural variation in the ways of intervening abusive behaviors of various populations. In fact, the only time cultural background is mentioned in the curriculum is regarding physical warning signals and that there are signs of when these intensify and can be noticed as muscular tension, abdominal discomfort, and increase in body temperature. This is said to be common no matter what a person’s cultural background and these physical reactions to increases in emotional intensity are the same across borders. This addresses one commonality in human biology but fails to include the social experience that racial minorities deal with differently that a White English-speaking American male. The literature recognizes in one article that the reference of entitlement that is in the Duluth model does not settle well with Black men because they do nice socially have the same feeling of entitlement as a White man. The literature also makes a point that Spanish-speaking men often can’t relate to a White man who works in tech for instance, and they are a migrant worker. Then there are also women who are court ordered to go to batterer interventions and their reasons for being violent rarely have anything to do with power and control but more wanting to protect herself or children or not feel like a doormat and want to stand her ground. Gay men also experience domestic violence and abuse in their relationships, and this can be a difficult treatment inhibitor if they feel ostracized if the rest of the group is heterosexual, hypermasculine, possibly homophobic men. Lesbians are also not immune to violence in their relationship, but it could be borne out of completely different reasons besides power and control,
possibly reasons along personal insecurities or their partner not as sure about the relationship as the other person. The LGBTQIA+ community is afflicted by violence within their romantic relationship and what is needed for treatment in these populations may need quite a different approach than what we commonly expect from the original modality of a batterer intervention program. There was sparse research in how veterans and members of the military are inflicted with family violence, but this is also an important subpopulation affected by domestic violence that gets overlooked or people turn their eyes to. It says in the literature that this group can also be overcome with entitlement and get treated as if they are above the law because of the commitment to the service and achievement within that. This of course does not permit their family to be deserving of inadequate treatment and regard because of their family member's service.

It was learned through correspondence with the curriculum’s author Dr. Huffine that the program has court mandated and self-referred clients. This shows that there is some coordinated response through the courts to give referrals to the Allies in Change program. Beyond this it is not clear if the coordinated response keeps track of the participants attendance, participation, and applying what the program teaches in their personal relationships. This program said that it would be nearly impossible to keep track of recidivism among the program completer and dropouts. Part of the coordinated response in knowing and keeping score of the participants progress or lack of once they have been sent to their intervention and treatment program. This also means knowing the safety level of the victim inflicted with violence and future ones that could surface if the violent behavior is not corrected.
The discussion will shift now to what is in the Allies curriculum that was not in the literature review. There are two different metaphors used in the curriculum; the first metaphor visually helps to illustrate three elements of domestic violence, and this is called the “DV house” (Huffine, 2013, p. 30). The first element of the DV house is the outside, the obvious aspects that like the physical and overt verbal abuse. This could be the smoke coming out of the chimney which can be seen from far away. The second element of the house is the bricks and mortar, the subtle controlling behaviors that the occupants face daily. These are psychological and emotionally abuse behavior and causes misery for the people within the house. Lastly, the third element is the foundation of the house that are the underlying beliefs that produce these behaviors. This visual metaphor is to shed light on the idea that behaviors cannot be changed without starting with a new foundation. A new house cannot hold up if it is built on the old, unstable foundation. Change must start with treating the underlying beliefs and working from the ground up.

The next is the business card metaphor and this is an analogy that helps clients to understand and monitor their egotism (Huffine, 2013, p. 53). This is best demonstrated when a business card is used that is blank on one side. The facilitator asks the men what they see on one side, and they will say it has print but the facilitator will deny what they are seeing because it is actually blank on the side they are looking at. This example is meant to show differing perspective and when the whole lesson is done in its complete form it should help the men to understand that collaborating information and seeking to understand and integrate differing perspectives can provide a more full and accurate combined perspective.
The Allies curriculum also uses the Evans’ power model developed by Patricia Evans (Huffine, 2013, p.54). Patricia Evans released a whole series of books beginning with “The Verbally Abusive Relationship”. The Allies curriculum uses the “Power Over” vs. “Personal Power” which are both different realities that the abuser in a relationship can bounce between. The goal in this model is the teach the abusive participant to live mostly in “Reality II” because this is when they have “Personal Power” and realize that they can only control their own behavior and not dominate the behaviors of others. Abusive people tend to live primarily in “Reality I” when they first walk through the doors of treatment, and this is where they are consistently wanting “Power Over” others and how others behave.

Also brought into the Allies curriculum is a concept developed by Marsha Linehan for Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT) (Huffine, 2013, p. 67). This concept is called Wise mind and it demonstrated by drawing two overlapping circle with the center overlap labeled Wise Mind and the two outer parts of the circles labeled Reasonable Mind and Emotional Mind. The reasonable mind involved problem solving and logic which makes a person seem objective, detached, and impersonal. The emotional mind is people taking what is going on personal and making decisions that only meet their needs. The wise mind in the middle is where intuition occurs and involves a sense of what is truly right. The wise mind is where people can live in the moment without having to control the situation but being present to make sure their basic needs are meant and the people around them are safe and secure in their own decisions.
Analysis

The Allies curriculum uses evidence-based practices and research to inform the development of its curriculum. Not only has its author, Dr. Chris Huffine worked with abusive men since the nineteen-nineties, but he has collaborated the input of other experienced professionals from the same field. These include the Men’s Resource Center, a pro-feminist non-profit that stated in the early seventies in Portland, Oregon and the Women’s Agenda Counseling Center that started a few years later (Huffine, 2013). This curriculum demonstrates well informed principles regarding how to approach treatment and intervention into abusive relationship when males are the perpetrators, and their victims are women.

It would be beneficial to inform of solutions and approaches to other forms of domestic violence outside of white heterosexual middle-class relationships. We know that life experiences are much different depending on race, religious beliefs, citizenship status, sexual orientation, economic standing, community resources that are available, and other demographic variables that shape an offender’s worldview and life experience. With these many variables known, the Allies curriculum only addresses one specific subpopulation of domestic violence perpetrators.

Limitations

The limitations began with not being able to get more than the Allies curriculum to do the exploratory comparison that I originally intended. Although I did communicate with a Spanish-speaking agency and learned quite a bit about their curriculum and how they are teaching Spanish-speaking men who are abusive to be more self-sufficient and
independent, I was not able to get a full curriculum to entirely do a deep investigation on
difference between two curriculums.

Another organization that catered to Russian-speaking batterers also reached out
and spent time telling me some differences culturally that separates Russian-batterer from
the typical white American male, the owner of the program was only able to share an
outline of their curriculum.

The owner of an agency on a Native American reservation also responded to my
e-mail and wanted to share information about their community-response coordinated team
and their close relationship working with the court system on the reservation. Although the
owner was a retired facilitator of the BIP groups, he was only able to share spare articles
that were used as the coordinated response effort through the courts. He also shared that
he was trained via the Duluth model and that was primarily how the groups were
organized on the reservation.

These contacts are considered limitations because the cooperation was there within
these agencies, but their biggest concern was lack of time to organize enough information
for the study, not infringing on privacy of the program participants, and possibly having a
fully structured curriculum in a cohesive form. Beside the program mentioned above, the
other agencies that returned an email to me also expressed hesitancy to get involved with a
research project, especially due to time constraints, lack of staffing, unorganized or unkept
demographic data, and general inability to put in the extra effort.

Once I tracked down the Allies curriculum for an organization in Rogue Valley that
used it in their program, I found it out was available for purchase at the Allies in Change
headquarters. I had contacted Dr. Chris Huffine, the author of the Allies curriculum in the initial email that was sent at the beginning of the study but was encouraged when I went to the headquarters to reach out again.

After asking if there was information available about demographics such as race, age, education level, and/or economic status he said that as a non-profit they are limited with funding and do not have a lot of time to spare. He did add that the question of demographics is tricky and complicated to answer because they see an over-representation of people of color and working-class people among their court-involved clients and believe that is due largely to racism and classism. Dr. Huffine said that he thinks there is an opposing side among the voluntary clients in the Allies program. He said that may be a reflection that they don’t offer any culturally specific services and that cultural communities may be hesitant to refer to an agency that is not well-known or respected with the particular community.

This admission is discussed in the findings section on what is missing from the Allies curriculum. Dr. Huffine said that the Allies in Change clinicians do receive training in cultural humility and that is the model they use to address and work with cultural differences in program participants. Dr. Huffine said that he was not familiar with the Social Identity Wheel, and this could certainly be beneficial in contributing to training and awareness of the difference in the human social identity and life experiences.

Although Dr. Huffine said he would like to help with the study, would not collaborate further when it came to collecting client specific data on demographics. Dr. Huffine said he talked to the Director of Operations, and it would take numerous hours to
gather the information that was requested and that for confidentiality reasons it would not be a task that the researcher could do either. In conclusion, he added that Allies in Change has about 75 voluntary clients—he believed that was more than any other program in the country and that most programs in the U.S. work almost exclusively with court-involved clients. With this as a limitation, not obtaining client specific demographic data, it was impossible to do a case study of the organization itself, but just of the curriculum developed for the organization by Dr. Huffine.

**Future Research**

A suggestion for future research is following through with the original intended research project of completing a comparative analysis of one or two other batterer intervention programs either locally in the Pacific Northwest or in other parts of the United States depending on what is obtainable. It was the intention in this project to do a culturally specific comparison to understand how agencies structured their program and curriculum to approach culturally specific populations. In the state of Oregon there is a program that is specifically for African American and biracial abusive partners and that would have been a beneficial aspect to contrast with another organization such as several Spanish-speaking agencies that are in different Oregon counties. One important quality about Spanish-speaking populations that I learned in this study research is many members fear accountability in terms of their immigration status—that is whether they are legally able to be in the United States.

Other relevant comparisons could include what a Native American batterer’s intervention is like if it is culturally informed or taken on that approach. This has been
done through substance abuse intervention programs and could be implemented to understand specific components that Native Americans deal with when they are court mandated and how generational trauma has transmitted through in family violence.

Also considering that more members of the LGBTQIA+ community are being court-mandated to domestic violence intervention programs, it would be very informative to learn differences that could be approaches to treat members of this population. Again, there is different challenges here of sexual discrimination, gender identity conflicts among individuals and a lack of understanding in heterosexual specific programs.
Appendix-Email generated to send the Batterer Intervention Programs in Oregon

Subject: PSU Student Researcher

To (Name of Batterer Intervention Program Agency),

My name is Julie Conner, and I am a senior at Portland State University in the Criminology and Criminal Justice Department.

I am in the first stages of developing my research in my honors Thesis Prospectus class and would love to include your violence intervention program in my cultural exploratory analysis of three Batterer Intervention Programs.

I am interested in (Name of the BIP agency) because it is an Oregon-based program, and I would like to do an exploratory comparison of 3 or more different community programs. If you can share with me any data collected on recidivism, program or curriculum characteristics/features, demographic information on age, offense types, prior histories, court mandates/self-referrals, duration of the program and/or reporting mechanism I would be greatly humbled.

Hope and look forward to hearing back!
Works cited


https://doi.org/10.1037/ccp000022


https://doi-org.proxy.lib.pdx.edu/10.1177/1077801218824053


