

Development and testing of the **DV & DADS SMALL STEPS** workshop

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Introduction

The two day SMALL STEPS workshop was devised by Lyn Stoker and Richard Fletcher as a skills-based learning unit to complement the Masters of Family Studies courses in Family Violence and Working with Vulnerable Fathers. It was also designed for upskilling practitioners who work with families to encourage early intervention to prevent family violence.

Practitioners from services around Sydney were invited to attend the workshop over two days to try out the exercises and discussions and to give feedback. Those who responded to the notices advertising the workshop were sent the following invitation.

THE INVITATION

SMALL STEPS for stopping violence early in families that you see

(even when Domestic Violence is not in your job description)

Dear participant

Thank you for interest in being part of the Small Steps workshop. We are very pleased to have input from a range of practitioners.

Background:

This workshop has arisen from our experience in the domestic violence area and working with fathers across the community. We both teach in the Master of Family Studies postgraduate course and we aim to provide in-depth learning on how to effectively work with the whole family to increase family well-being and eliminate violence. This workshop is designed as stand-alone professional development for a broad range of professionals who work with families but do not specialise in domestic violence and is also an adjunct to the Master of Family Studies.

Workshop format:

The workshop is skills-based so that most of the time is taken up with activities and discussion. The exercises that we will be using are drawn from our previous experience in running educational workshops and courses for practitioners across the human services. We are inviting practitioners, service planners and managers from a wide range of settings because we wish to create multiple contact points for mothers and fathers to be respectfully asked "How is it going at home?" We also wish to see practitioners become more confident to discuss possible family violence as part of their work.

We will be making sure that we run the activities and discussions at a pace that allows for feedback on all elements and we will be asking participants to complete written and verbal feedback on workshop.

Registration:

Because we expect to have the workshop oversubscribed (and there is no charge) we will be trying to make sure that those who register are able to participate in both days of workshop. We will be texting you the week before to confirm your attendance.

Looking forward to our two days together

Lyn & Richard

SMALLSTEP WORKSHOP

THE WORKSHOP. April 4 & 5. University of Newcastle, Sydney Campus.

A total of 24 participants attended the two days and gave feedback.

Occupations of those attending

Child and Family Practitioner –Male Inclusion

Social worker

Research Assistant

Youth Worker

Director, Child Care Centre

Program Manager

Family worker

Regional Practice Leader

Team Leader/Early Educator

Team Leader, Family Support Project

Team Leader – Youth Development

Clinical Consultant

Intensive Family Support Caseworker

Family Worker

Family Support worker

Family Worker

Social Worker/Student

Parenting co-ordinator

Social Work and Family Practitioner

Learning and Wellbeing Officer

Senior Policy Officer Government

Family Therapist

Clinical Psychologist

Clinical Consultant

General Practitioner

Manager of Education and Care

GP and specialist in addiction medicine

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Best aspects of this segment were:

- Practising the talking to men re DV.
- Information, presentation and the interactive role plays.
- Learning how to have conversations with fathers /DV perpetrators.
- Practice skills.
- Communication with mum and dad, like (M.I.)
- Learning different platforms of engaging with perpetrators (accusatory, collusive, neutral, etc) and practising not being accusatory.
- Raising awareness of those viewpoints to avoid accusatory practices.
- Role playing.
- Networking, building skill sets/toolbox. Gold fish bowl good. Interesting conversations. Great pace. Had more understanding of purpose today.
- The morning session was excellent.
- The glass bowl example was useful for those that seen MI.
- Group work.
- Role play.
- Expertise of facilitators.
- Although out of my comfort zone, I found the interactive group opportunity very good.
- This was best session. Made you think, observe – great.
- Putting into practice – role play.
- Clarifying the approach for conversations with men and practicing communication strategies.
- The role plays – mixing it up with others.
- Fish bowl
- Letting us experience our own different conversations.
- Creating a safe space for different conversations.
- Goldfish bowl – see the ‘stances we take’ in action – these became clear.
- Enjoyed the role plays.
- The discussion around the 3 different types of ways working with perpetrators e.g. colluding etc.
- Role play and role play by facilitators.
- Being challenged to really consider how difficult discussions can be addressed and that this is actually possible (rather than putting it off!!)
- Day two very skills based.

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How would this workshop fit into my workplace as staff training/development?

- A great general overview, suitable for everyone to make the idea and conversations of DV not intimidating.
- As an introductory information session.
- I think the topic is useful. I think all male workers (who female workers) turn to, but often the male workers collude inadvertently with the men.
- The important role of “planting the seed” building relationship with families.
- How to get dad involved in conversation.
- Engaging with dads more comfortably and to practice “change” techniques.
- I consider that this workshop allowed me to realise that I need more specific training in DV.
- Yes, would be helpful for staff to think about how to have conversations with men.
- I was considering this during the course – knowing resources I could pass onto my students/other practitioners.
- The role of training for drug and alcohol workers, majority of clients are men, some of whom are dads or will be dads – so creating a course that is engaging for AOD workers. In respectful relationships, early intervention to work with their clients would be great. .
- Perfectly. Our other workers are shy of DV. Everyone needs to be confident. This would be great!
- Would be better received if condensed to one day and follow up homework?
- Very well as there is a pre-existing base of knowledge and skills to springboard from.
- All teachers could benefit from this training.
- Two days is a long time for training. It would be hard for all staff to participate.
- Some aspects would be very useful – where some areas in relation to DV pointed out of anyone’s scope for responsibilities covered in CP training.
- More strategies and information around engaging ‘dads’.
- MI and conversations tool useful skill to have opportunity to practice.
- Probably a place to share about the significance of engaging fathers. Engaging perpetrators is the next level and can utilise the extensive information on MI/change thinking wheel.
- I think the explanation around prevention, early intervention and crisis. I think discussing the three different types of working and ways workers work with fathers.
- Ways to engage fathers would be helpful.
- Not applicable – we have a specific workshop for this.
- Definitely a place for this workshop.
- Awareness of DV, what it looks like, how to address and talk about these issues early on.
- It would fit into my workplace as an educational tool on how to have difficult conversations.

SMALLSTEP WORKSHOP

SMALL STEPS WORKSHOP SEGMENT EVALUATION TOTALS

After each section, morning to lunch then after lunch to close of the day, participants completed an evaluation sheet asking for a rating of the material presented in that segment of the workshop. All participants (24) completed the first three evaluations, all but two completed the last evaluation. The totals for the four evaluations are shown here.

Question 1. Was informative

Strongly Disagree	0	0%	
Disagree	0	0%	
Neither Agree nor Disagree	13/94	14%	
Agree	69/94	73%	86%
Strongly Agree	12/94	13%	
No response	0	0%	

Question 2. Challenged my thinking

Strongly Disagree	0	0%	
Disagree	9/94	9%	
Neither Agree nor Disagree	20/94	20%	
Agree	59/94	62%	72%
Strongly Agree	9/94	9%	
No response	0	0%	

Question 3. Is something that I could use

Strongly Disagree	0	0%	
Disagree	2/94	2%	
Neither Agree nor Disagree	16/94	17%	
Agree	60/94	64%	80%
Strongly Agree	15/94	16%	
No response	1/94	1%	

Question 4. Was positive reinforcement for what I know

Strongly Disagree	0	0%	
Disagree	1/94	1%	
Neither Agree nor Disagree	7/94	8%	
Agree	75/94	80%	89%
Strongly Agree	9/94	9%	
No response	2/94	2%	

Question 5. Stimulated my thinking

Strongly Disagree	0	0%	
Disagree	1/94	1%	
Neither Agree nor Disagree	10/94	11%	
Agree	65/94	69%	86%
Strongly Agree	16/94	17%	
No response	2/94	2%	

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Who should be alerted to this workshop? (other organisations that might find it useful for staff?)

- Teachers, community centres, police and justice.
- Any child and family community health, mental health, psychological service.
- I believe organisations that have direct contact with families.
- Schools
- Child care/early educators.
- Playgroup NSW
- Family Support.
- AOD staff
- GP setting – in conjunction with RACGP.
- Pre-schools
- AOD services
- Have to give this some more thought.
- Men's' Sheds
- Police
- Ambulance Drivers
- Anyone who doesn't often consider DV but who works with families.
- Family Insight
- Organisations focused on child issues rather than family.
- Untrained or unskilled staff.
- Anyone working with families in early intervention.

How relevant is the Masters in Family Studies for your staff?

- Relevant for certain programs such as Holyoake or other youth and family focused areas.
- Unsure
- Very relevant.
- It provides information about the important role of families in children's wellbeing and the crucial role staff has in building trusting relationships with families and the skills and knowledge to support them.
- Very – intensive family support, preservation and restoration – however some content may be "refresher" work as we all are qualified for our roles.
- Not really unless already a special interest.
- Possible
- Only to myself possibly.
- I would say very relevant
- Not much
- Practitioners would benefit from the study
- Not sure as it is very generalised providing lots of information without perhaps extending a focus on developing a certain skill set that can be advanced into different levels.
- Would like to do it, however the timing doesn't work with full time working, so stops me from doing it!
- Unsure – most have Masters in their own disciplines.

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Any other comments?

- Not enough skills training.
- I appreciated the workshop and your time. It was very beneficial for me.
- I enjoyed my 2 days – feels like I have learnt more skills to have those difficult conversations.
- Really an excellent course. Thank you.
- Toolkit is a great idea in particular to assist staff to deal with men (who may or may not be dads).
- Great to be involved in process. I wish the organisers well in the building of this training.
- Thank you. It has been a good couple of days with a knowledgeable, diverse participant group and a very skilled and able pair of presenters.
- Wonderful concept raising lots of issues.
- Loved it!
- Yes I work in early intervention but I do have lots of information about DV/perpetrators. I am still trying to think through whether my goals were achieved. However it was good to network/share/hear stories and do lots of role plays.
- Still needs fine tuning.

