

Institution: Coventry University
Unit of Assessment: 4
Title of case study: Combating Interpersonal Violence
<p>1. Summary of the impact</p> <p>Research on combating interpersonal violence carried out by Dr Erica Bowen (Reader in the Psychology of Intimate Partner Violence) has resulted in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impact on Public Policy and Services (UK): a literature review commissioned by the Ministry of Justice has been used to develop a new prison and community domestic violence offender rehabilitation policy. In addition, Wiltshire Probation Trust funded the development of an innovative sentencing framework incorporating assessment and intervention packages for violent offenders which are now being rolled out across Wiltshire and Dorset. Beneficiaries: Ministry of Justice, National Offender Management Service (NOMS), Wiltshire Probation Trust, offenders and associated staff, and victims. • Impact on Public Policy and Services (Europe): a research-based serious-game intervention has changed attitudes towards both violence in adolescent relationships and the use of serious-game technology in education across Europe. Beneficiaries: Adolescents, Secondary School and College Teachers, Youth Services, Local Government Agencies, European and UN Policy Leaders, and Community Safety Organisations.
<p>2. Underpinning research</p> <p>The underpinning research was motivated by a keen awareness of the societal impact of interpersonal aggression, and a desire to reduce this burden on society and the public purse. Bowen's evaluation of a rehabilitation programme for domestic violence perpetrators led to a number of publications in international journals, practitioner reports and, since her employment at Coventry University in 2006, the development of an international reputation in this field [1-4]. Bowen was the first to empirically test and validate the association between therapeutic climate within treatment programmes and post programme change [4]; an assumption which prior to her work was purely theoretical in relation to domestic violence offender interventions. In addition, Bowen was also the first to examine clinically significant psychological change and its association with reoffending [1]. From this Bowen identified that no significant change was needed for a proportion of offenders, and for others no reliable change was achieved, regardless of group-level change. This form of analysis has subsequently been adopted as an approved methodology for evaluating treatment outcomes for domestic violence perpetrator programmes by the National Offender Management Service.</p> <p>On the basis of research conducted for her book [5] and her combined domestic violence and evaluation expertise, Bowen was approached and funded by Wiltshire Probation Trust in 2009 to undertake an evaluation of a brief intervention for domestic violence perpetrators. This research identified that only limited psychological change was achieved in programme completers and, more importantly, that there were substantial mis-referrals of offenders who would better suit a more in-depth intervention. The findings of this work led to further funding to review the provision of short offending behaviour packages aimed at targeting domestic violence, general violence, alcohol use and female offending. Bowen concluded that there was considerable overlap in the nature and content of the packages and that ultimately the issues being targeted were concerned with violent and aggressive behaviours either within or outside intimate relationships. Additional evidence of poor understanding among probation staff of referral criteria indicated that a more holistic approach to assessment was required.</p> <p>In 2011 Bowen led an international team (with partners in University of the West, Sweden, University of Erlangen, Germany, and Limbourg Catholic University College, Belgium) in an EC Daphne III funded project (€434,586), 'Changing Attitudes to Dating Violence in Adolescents' (CAVA) (www.cavaproject.eu). The project developed a research-based serious game intervention for classroom use to raise awareness of, and challenge, attitudes towards violence in adolescent dating relationships. Bowen developed the initial funding bid, specifying all work stream allocations. Preliminary research identified that, on average, 20% of girls and 23% of boys report</p>

physical victimisation; 48% and 44% psychological victimisation respectively and 20% and 12% sexual victimisation respectively [6]. Evidence also shows that the economic cost of domestic violence, of which dating violence is often a precursor, is more than €130 billion per year across England, Spain, Finland and the Netherlands.

Research, via focus groups with adolescents in each of the four project partner countries, was conducted to determine attitudes towards dating violence. It was found that although adolescents generally viewed violence in relationships as wrong, they also identified a range of situations in which violence was viewed as completely acceptable. This included: when it was used by girls; in retaliation for being cheated on; in the context of a joke; and, if the violence was a one off and left no injury. The findings are summarised in the first ever European comparative study of adolescent attitudes towards dating violence in adolescence [7].

3. References to the research

- [1] Bowen, E., Gilchrist, E. & Beech, A.R. (2008). Change in treatment has no relationship with subsequent re-offending in U.K. domestic violence sample: A preliminary study. *International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology*, 52 (5), 598 – 614. (IF: 1.04 Citation 4)
- [2] Bowen, E., Gilchrist, E.A., & Beech, A.R. (2005). An examination of the impact of community-based rehabilitation on the offending behaviour of male domestic violence offenders and the characteristics associated with recidivism. *Legal and Criminological Psychology*, 10 (2), 189 – 209. (IF: 1.70; Citation 11)
- [3] Bowen, E., & Gilchrist, E. (2006). Predicting dropout of court-mandated treatment in a British sample of domestic violence offenders. *Psychology, Crime and Law*, 12 (5), 573-587 (IF: 1.30 Citation 8)
- [4] Bowen, E. (2010). Therapeutic environment and outcomes in a U.K domestic violence perpetrator program. *Small Group Research*, 41 (2), 198 – 220 (IF: 1.16 Citation 1)
- [5] Bowen, E. (2011). *The rehabilitation of partner-violent men*. Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell.
- [6] Leen, E., Sorbring, E., Mawer, M., Holdsworth, E., Helsing, B., & Bowen, E. (2013). Prevalence, dynamic risk factors and the efficacy of primary interventions for adolescent dating violence: An international review. *Aggression and Violent Behavior*, 18 (1), 159 174 (IF: 2.13)
- [7] Bowen, E., Holdsworth, E., Leen, E., Sorbring, E., Helsing, B., Jaans, S., & Awouters, V. (2013). Northern European adolescent attitudes toward dating violence. *Violence and Victims*, 28 (4): 619-634 (IF: 0.98)

Key funding

- **Bowen** and 3 European Universities, Daphne III Transnational Action Grant JUST/2009/DAP3/AG/1068– 30-CE-0386806/00-15. Feb 2011-Jan 2013 (€434,586).
- **Bowen** was funded by four separate contracts for Wiltshire Probation Trust between 2009 and 2013 to research, evaluate and re-design their brief interventions (£52,966).
- **Bowen** was funded by the Ministry of Justice grant to research and write a literature review on approaches to intervening in domestic violence in 2011 (£13,500).

4. Details of the impact

Impact on Public Policy and Services (UK)

Bowen's research on domestic and interpersonal violence has delivered impact by changing the policy, practitioner training and offender interventions and the practice and methodology for evaluating programmes. This is at a national level with the Ministry of Justice and the National Offender Management Service (NOMS), and with a specific set of packages developed for Wiltshire Probation Service that has changed the way perpetrators of domestic and interpersonal violence are dealt with. This programme is now being rolled out across Wiltshire and Dorset. In addition, the quality, accessibility, acceptability or cost-effectiveness of rehabilitating domestic violence perpetrators has been improved.

The Research-to-Impact Process and Associated Dates: **Bowen's** publications in practitioner and academic journals, along with her book, are widely known and used by practitioners working in

domestic violence. In 2011 **Bowen** won a competitive tender from the Ministry of Justice to conduct a review of empirical and theoretical research on risk factors, protective factors, desistance and strength-based approaches to intervening in domestic violence. This review, which drew on **Bowen**'s previous research, was used by the Ministry of Justice to inform the design and development of their new domestic violence perpetrator programmes.

In addition, **Bowen** integrated the knowledge gained from this review and research she conducted funded by Wiltshire Probation Trust, to develop four innovative packages [a] that have been introduced throughout Wiltshire Probation Trust, namely: a group-based holistic assessment of risk and need; a group-based solution focused package for individuals who are violent in intimate relationships and a similar package for individuals who are violent outside and within intimate relationships; and a package for women offenders.

Beneficiaries: Ministry of Justice, National Offender Management Service, Wiltshire Probation Trust, offenders and staff associated with these organisations

Nature of the Impact and Evidence

Sinead Bloomfield of the National Offender Service (NOMS) stated that **Bowen**'s literature review provided the Ministry of Justice with a strong theoretical basis for the new nationally accredited 'Building Better Relationships (BBR)' domestic violence perpetrator programme for use in prison and probation. It guided the priorities and design of the programme, which is preferable to previously existing programmes as it takes a broader approach to domestic violence than the traditional feminist approach, whilst also being more individualistic and having the flexibility to be tailored to individual need, which was not possible in the previous 'single standardised' approach [b]. This new approach was required as evidence had shown that the existing programme was not effective. **Bowen**'s review features in the programme manual [c] and has changed the way in which domestic violence perpetrators are rehabilitated throughout England and Wales. When this programme was reviewed by the UK National Corrections Accreditation Panel, it praised the literature review for its 'range and breadth' of content. BBR was piloted between April 2011 and March 2013 in 3 prisons and 5 probation areas. A total of 114 offenders completed the programme. A total of 246 offenders started BBR during this time in the community; a total of 85 offenders started BBR in custody with 77 of these completing it. This represents a completion rate of 90.6% in custody. Feedback from staff and offenders was extremely positive, in particular the individualised and strength-based approach to treatment was praised. Staff found the programme more engaging for offenders.

Within Wiltshire Probation Trust the change in policy using **Bowen**'s packages means that all convicted offenders given a community sentence (up to 1,800 offenders who are on the caseload at any one time) are now assessed using the new approach [d]. This facilitates the collation of more in-depth information about risk and need to complement and enhance the standard national OASys offender assessment system. The offenders who do not meet the criteria for nationally endorsed programmes now attend one of the two new programmes developed by **Bowen**. The implementation of this novel assessment framework has increased the accuracy of referrals to sources of help both within and outside the Trust. Moreover, the availability of the new intervention packages has enabled the Trust to fill a gap in their provision by addressing previously unidentified and unmet needs in their offender population. Evaluation shows that a higher proportion of offenders are completing programmes (90% completion rate in contrast to 60% for alternative programmes); persistent offenders are more engaged in and compliant with their orders; staff are positive about delivering the packages; and offenders are positive about the overarching approach to intervention. All staff within the Trust have been briefed on the new packages/approach, and all eligible staff (90% of offender managers and programme tutors) have been trained by **Bowen** and colleagues, who have developed additional training materials to enable the Trust to train its new staff in the future. This work has resulted in the transformation of the philosophy of work with all offenders in the Trust to reflect a collaborative, solution-focused approach. In 2012, this approach was also adopted by Dorset Probation Trust and all relevant staff (12 in total) have been trained on these packages.

Impact on Public Policy and Services (Europe)

Bowen's research on adolescent dating violence has delivered impact by increasing awareness and has initiated a debate among EU directorate, teachers, parents, adolescents and practitioners about how to address the issue. In addition, the development of a research-based serious game

has provided an effective intervention for teachers and curriculum authorities.

The Research-to-Impact Process and Associated Dates

The research highlighted that between 12% and 48% of adolescents experience some form of adolescent dating violence in Europe [5]. The research identified that adolescents in the four partner countries generally viewed violence in relationships as wrong, but also identified a range of situations in which violence was completely acceptable. Help-seeking is likely to involve peers rather than adults, and to be contingent on the perceived seriousness of the incident [6]. These data validated the need to challenge attitudes towards dating violence in adolescence.

A novel computer-based serious game, teacher training materials and an online teacher support package, which is the first ever serious game designed to tackle adolescent dating violence, was developed in 2011/2012 by **Bowen** and colleagues. Pre- and post-measure comparisons of pro-violence attitudes show that the serious game has reduced attitudes supporting such behaviours among adolescents in Europe as well as increasing knowledge about dating violence. Focus groups with young people have revealed that they believe the game to be an effective means of raising awareness and teaching about dating violence. It is also identified as a mode of education which is preferable to standard school lessons on this topic, due to the higher level of privacy it offers. So far the rollout of the project has engaged 900 children who have used the game across the four countries.

Beneficiaries: Adolescents, Secondary School and College Teachers, Youth Services, Local Government Agencies, European and UN Policy Leaders, Community Safety Organisations

Nature of the Impact and Evidence

The 'Changing Attitudes to dating Violence in Adolescents' project has raised awareness of adolescent dating violence and the potential application of serious games for its prevention. It was presented at eight international practitioner events in 2012 and 2013 with a combined audience of 700 social work, psychology and education practitioners and EU policy makers. Two UK events were held in 2012 with delegates attending from education and community safety organisations. In Sweden considerable media attention was given to the project in October 2012 with the project featuring in a 30-minute prime-time national news item. In 2013 the game was integrated within a cross-curriculum information technology platform which is being used by all schools within Belgium. The project has raised awareness in teachers, practitioners and children, and wider society in the UK and Europe and has been commended by Ms Rashida Manjoo, UN Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women at a meeting held in Brussels on June 21st 2011 [e], due to its focus on prevention rather than intervention after violence has occurred. In addition, Mr Sergej Kopadek, advisor to DG Education in the EU, at a meeting held in Brussels on January 30th 2013, praised the project for raising awareness of the issue as well as adopting a highly innovative technological solution to a primary intervention. At the same meeting Ms Collette Dutroy, Director of the EU Observatory on Violence Against Women, also supported the project and particularly its emphasis on prevention which is viewed as critical in combating violence in relationships.

Conclusions

Bowen's innovative research on combating interpersonal violence has had impact on practitioners and policy makers. Her research, in collaboration with NOMS, has changed the way perpetrators of domestic and interpersonal violence are dealt with. Her Europe-wide research on adolescent dating violence has increased awareness of the issues within the EU and led to a novel serious game designed to tackle the problem.

5. Sources to corroborate the impact

- [a] Assessment and Group work Manuals: **Bowen, E., & Holdsworth, E.** (2011). Getting to Know You: Assessment manual. Positive Relationships: Groupwork manual. Keeping Calm: Groupwork manual. Wiltshire Probation Trust
- [b] Email from National Offender Management Service (NOMS)
- [c] Literature review commissioned for National Offender Management Service (NOMS)
- [d] Wiltshire Probation evidence: Email from Director of Operations, Wiltshire Probation Trust
- [e] Commendation from Ms Rashida Manjoo, UN Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women at a meeting held in Brussels on June 21st 2012