Engaging men perpetrating domestic and family violence in the alcohol and other drug treatment context

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Background:
While domestic and family violence (DFV) comes in many forms and can be used and experienced by any gender, research has shown that men are by far the most common perpetrators of DFV, and cause the most harm1 2. International studies suggest that 30–40 per cent of men participating in AOD interventions are perpetrators of DFV. DFV is a significant issue impacting all communities across Australia, and it can be challenging for AOD workers to address. Therefore, enhanced responses and a greater awareness is needed to better equip the AOD workforce to engage with men who perpetrate DFV 3. As a result the Network of Alcohol and other Drug Agencies (NADA), consulted with its members as part of a workshop on DFV facilitated by Rodney Vlais (a subject matter expert) and it was identified that the sector would benefit from a resource focused on working alongside men who perpetrate violence and are accessing AOD treatment.

Description of Model of Care/Intervention:
NADA’s Engaging men who perpetrate domestic and family violence resource aims to support AOD practitioners to work safely and effectively with clients who perpetrate DFV and to become familiar with suitable pathways for specialist support. The practice resource provides starting points on how to:
• have safe and non-collusive conversations with clients who cause DFV
• minimise collusion with the attitudes, belief systems and narratives that perpetrators adopt to justify and give themselves permission to use DFV
• discuss referrals to appropriate, specialised DFV services

Effectiveness/Acceptability/Implementation:
The practice resource was developed and implemented across stages:
1. Development of a practical resource which is freely available on the NADA website
2. Facilitation of training to bring the resource “to life” with role plays to demonstrate best practice approaches
3. Delivery of a recorded webinar that acts as a companion to the resource – demonstrating via role plays best-practice approaches

Conclusion and Next Steps:
Evaluations and feedback about the resource and webinars have overall been positive. Further training to build workforce capacity in this area is being planned and face to face workshops to compliment the practice resource will be facilitated in the future.

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