

Public Health Practice Evaluation Scheme

Addressing the challenges faced by 'front line' practitioners

Domestic Violence and Abuse Perpetrator Programme: An Evaluation

Introduction

- Foundation for Change is an 8 week structured programme for perpetrators of domestic violence and abuse (DVA) in Doncaster.
- DVA is a pressing public health issue, with a weak evidence base to inform interventions for perpetrators.
- To date, there has only been one rigorous, multi-site, evaluation of DVA perpetrator programme for voluntary participants in the UK (Kelly and Westmarland, 2015). There is a need for more theory-driven evaluations of community-based interventions for DVA perpetrators

Aims

The study aimed to:

- Develop and test the programme logic, including its key in-built assumptions.
- Describe and evaluate the programme implementation.
- Explore contextual factors that influence the: (i) change mechanisms; and/or (ii) implementation processes; and (iii) outcomes of the programme.
- Describe any differential access, experiences and outcomes of the programme by gender, socioeconomic and ethnic group
- Identify strengths, weaknesses and transferable lessons.
- Describe the costs and benefits (including wider social returns) associated with delivering the programme.

Findings

- **Goals and objectives of various DVA services are focused on outcomes for specific individuals rather than addressing wider relationship contexts.**

Victims' services, Children's services and programmes to rehabilitate perpetrators can have good integration and communication channels, on some levels. However, the goals of these agencies can be incompatible.

- **Dynamic motivations of voluntary clients can determine a window of engagement, which requires rapid intervention.**

Motivations for volunteering for the programme are complex and can involve elements of coercion from other agencies, this motivation can rapidly diminish. Motivations to attend the programme are also influenced by chaotic lifestyles and changes in legal status as a result of court hearings and police involvement.

- **Commissioners of voluntary perpetrator services should consider staff support and retention as part of the commissioning process.**

Short-term contracts and personal challenges of working within this environment can lead to difficulties in retaining high quality case workers. These issues can have a detrimental effect on service delivery.

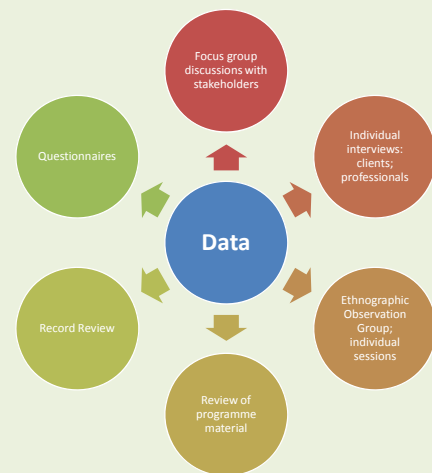
Methods

Study Design: A mixed-method, theory-driven evaluation incorporating Social Return on Investment (SROI) analysis (SROI Network, 2012).

- A mixed methods approach using a collaborative model with a wide range of stakeholders (including service commissioners, clients, providers and researchers) was undertaken.

Setting and population: DVA perpetrators (male or female aged 16+ years) who reside in the Doncaster area and who voluntarily access the Foundation for Change programme, plus their intimate partners and family members.

Data Collection:



Conclusions

- Ongoing communication between the programme and referral agencies can help shape engagement with clients
- Services should be prepared for assessment to occur throughout the programme, as it is reliant on developing trust between caseworkers and clients
- A person-centred approach of service-providers is important to encourage ongoing engagement of clients
- Integration of multi-agency approaches can be improved by considering alignment of the goals of the various stakeholders
- Ongoing research is important to explore the complex contextual factors that influence client's continued engagement with the programme

References

- Davies, R. (2013). Planning Evaluability Assessments: A Synthesis of the Literature with Recommendations. Report of a Study Commissioned by the Department for International Development.
- Kelly, L., & Westmarland, N. (2015). Domestic violence perpetrator programmes: Steps towards change. Project Mirabal final report.
- Network, S. R. O. I. (2012). A guide to Social Return on Investment. Liverpool. UK. www.sroi-uk.org.

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