

# **Temper Domestic Violence**

**Registered Charity 1081139**

## **Origins and failures of “Respect accredited” projects to engage with and work with men**

**Early and effective intervention is what is needed with domestic abusers.** It is needed for both men and women because for a child, both those child’s parents matter, and the child’s development can be hindered just as much by his or her mother’s abusive behaviours as by their father’s.

Men and women of the UK largely “understood” what domestic Violence was. In America they called it “battering”. Most people in the UK do not have much idea about the sheer range of **domestic abuses**. In private law cases in the Family Courts, some allegations of abuse may be real, some may have been construed, and others will be “not construed as abuse” by one party or the other; each is individual, until they are suddenly “found” by the judge in the family court on the basis of “the balance of probability”. “Found” does not mean “guilty of”, (which would be **BEYOND REASONABLE DOUBT** but it is very largely treated as having been “**found guilty of.**”

Dramatically improving the ways one lives with an intimate partner must be the primary goals of any “intervention.” Until very recently, and still persisting in some minds, the ideas of the charity RESPECT and Cafcass, **INTERVENTION** meant **coming between and separating. (for as long a period as possible, preferably forever).** The cases got (and still get) taken into the amphitheatres of the Family Court where solicitors and barristers are appointed and paid to support “victims”, mainly female victims, in processes which allegedly support the interests of children, who must be separated from contact with their abusive father. Both parents bear the extreme stress of those appearances in court, which will impact on children of the family, and, as per Prof M P Johnson’s 2002 research below, that raises the levels of so-called “intimate terrorism” exponentially, as both sides fight it out - often tooth and nail and sometimes, on very rare occasions, to the death! - in the arena.

## **Temper’s involvement with male and female intimate partner abusers compared with aspects of the decommissioned RESPECT “accredited programmes”.**

Our project and the “Heart of England Model Course” emerged from a background of Relate couple counselling. From September 1994, we researched and wrote up the content of the original course, delivering it for the first time in December 1995.

Initially it was based on so-called “anger management”. We very quickly realised the regulation of other emotions was also required, and to this end, by the end of 1996, we had developed what we call the emotional wheel, which provides a curiosity-arousing explanation to help individuals understand the workings of their own emotions, those of their partner and of course of any children of the family. Based originally in Northampton, Luton and then Coventry we called it the Heart of England Programme. “Emotions” at that time were (and to some extent still are) seen as “matters of the heart”. A copy of our “emotional wheel” [is linked here](#) and within the document is also a copy of Prof Plutchik’s emotional diagram. We have found that “working around” this wheel really helps people to develop a much greater understanding of themselves and their own emotions and the emotions of others, leading to a much greater understanding of “regulating themselves” and also understanding the emotional switches and “flips” which go on in other people. Research in neuroscience, particularly over the last 20 years, has established the needs, as expressed by Prof Dan

Siegel for emotions to be “Named and Tamed.” A feminist version of that would be that the men needed to be “Named and Shamed” and the use of the phrase “toxic masculinity.”

We had also recognised from couple-counselling experiences, and a requirement at that time for “equal opportunities”, that work also needed to be available for female abusers. We were and are prepared to engage with both partners but never on the same course together. Over the years we have completed 36 hours of therapeutically informed work with more than 1300 men, and more than 120 women. Reliable research suggests that just under 60% of domestic abuse is “bi-directional”. Prof M P Johnson’s statistics of 2002 scored “intimate terrorists” at 7 per 1000 men and 5 per 1000 women, prior to separation. But check out what happens post separation!

We also recognised that in the vast majority of cases what was required was the individual’s greater self-control, and we did not, as suggested by the Duluth Abuser Intervention Project, DAIP, focus on the alleged male desire to achieve power and control over the female partner. The late Ellen Pence, the co-creator of the Duluth abuser programme, recognised in the book she edited and contributed to in 1999 that “power and control” did not figure in the motivation of many of the men she had worked with. I read the following passage from her book to the assembled Respect meeting in Bristol in 2009. [Linked here](#). They took no notice and misrepresented the passage in their “minutes”. They were also busy “accrediting” the programme for which most of their team had worked and which had been strongly criticised in 1998 and for which Ms Jo Todd and Ms Kate Iwi revised the programme. By 2007 the “revised” DVIP programme was losing more than 75% of the men who even engaged with them, of the 220 that contacted them. Ms Todd was elected CEO of Respect, Ms Iwi trained the programme the two women had developed. It succeeded in more than halving the number of completions which had already been strongly criticised.

In 2004 we had applied to Respect for membership, five years prior to their establishment of the “standards”. Their response was that we should extend our programme to “their length” and not work with female abusers in groups with men. Our experiences contradicted all those requirements.

### **Our involvement with Respect.**

**That Respect requirements had no evidence for either of those two requirements, and our own experiences, over more than 6 years at that time, were that our methods had produced very good results, evidenced by a clinical psychologist’s report in 2004 on a client “before and after”: [linked here](#). On the “length of the programme issue” I now observe two recently “Respect accredited programmes” delivering just 16 sessions.**

**We have simply gone on and delivered the work over the last 29 years, improving it as we have gone along, and steadily adjusting it to new research emerging from “the decade of the brain” and the developments in neuroscience. These have been well received by clients. Dr Joseph Ledoux, Dr Louise Dixon, Dr Dr Alan Schore, Dr Dan Siegel, Dr Steven Porges, Dr Lisa Feldman-Barret and many others, plus psychiatrists Ian McGilchrist and Tonia Nicholls and researcher Dr Jennifer Langhinrichsen-Rohling, and many more, have all contributed to our understanding of how work needs to be carried out and revised over time.**

**Initially there was case-by-case funding support from Social Services and the Family courts but that funding has been largely strangled out of existence. We currently have to make charges and have pitched the new cost at £580 per place, which is about 1/3 of a business sustaining “commercial rate”.**

**Cafcass, Respect and DAPPs, and the so-called accredited programmes for domestic abusers.**

- 1) Firstly the simple background to Cafcass and the Charity RESPECT, the current position with the DAPP's, their history and short-comings as has been pointed out to the Cafcass management starting in 2010.
- 2) Secondly the position with the content of our work versus the content of a DAPP
- 3) More details of the content of our work.

Since about 2010 RESPECT, which was formed into a charity in 2000, has had a leadership which emerged from the Domestic Violence Intervention Project (DVIP) based in London, latterly a "division of The Richmond Fellowship. RESPECT has "accredited" domestic abuser programmes since 2009. The "approved programmes" have been very largely based on DVIP's model, which was, not surprisingly, the first programme to be accredited by RESPECT. DVIP's work was very largely based on the "Duluth model", DAIP, conceived of in America in the early 1980s by the late Ellen Pence and Michael Paymar. Highly critical research of DVIP in 1998, [linked here](#), resulted in the revision of the DVIP programme. The revision was co-re-written by the later **elected** CEO of RESPECT, Ms Jo Todd, of DVIP. Where the previous Joseph Rowntree Research highlighted the extreme lack of completions, the revised model even managed to halve those completions, according to the DVIP charity commission depositions of 2007, [linked here](#).

Cafcass, via the MOJ, effectively "outsourced" their accreditation process to RESPECT for the last 12 years. The "pathway" to those "accredited programmes" was decommissioned at the end of June 2022.

Cafcass Officers as a whole are only going to be familiar with the "accredited programmes" which they will have taken on "organisational trust". It is very unlikely that their officers will have any overview of the failings of those "accredited programmes" and similarly they are even less likely to have any overview of the content of TEMPER's work. Their experience will have been of programmes which did not work, consequently they will have little if any experience of what will or might work.

The likely reasons for the accredited programmes being decommissioned are that they have nearly totally failed to engage with the men they purported to work with. Historically this has been their big problem, recognised in the 1998 research of the DVIP, now a division of the charity, The Richmond Fellowship, and most recently very heavily underscored by the failure of "MyTime", also a division of The Richmond Fellowship, to whom 1076 men were referred and just 24 men completed the programme in three years at a cost to the West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner's office of £1,050m. The research paper headline [is here](#). I have the full paper.

In addition to this, of course, Respect has been ideologically opposed to there being work available for female abusers. Our model has coped, not only with women, apparently without difficulty, but with very, very small numbers of both lesbian and gay men, 3 of the former and 2 of the latter.

A Cafcass officer is likely to have only a sketchy idea about the work undertaken by the accredited DAPPs. He or she might never have seen a completed outcome. An individual officer will consequently be largely unaware of their problems and their failings. He or she will probably have very little to no knowledge of the work carried out by this organisation. Aspects of our work are therefore laid out in much greater detail below, enabling a court to make its own, better informed decisions. As an example of the effectiveness of our work is [linked here](#), an anonymised report by a clinical psychology team, 2004, engaged by Social Services. The couple's first four children had been taken into care. Their next 3 children were all placed with them.

Because RESPECT insisted that work had to be offered to a female victim, one negative observation about TEMPER's work is that it does not "take into consideration" the victim partner's view of the abuser's problems. Taken directly from the victim's mouth in many cases this is true; however we will have seen the court paperwork and any findings of fact. (We have always offered work with victims who are not able to engage with main-stream, victim supporting agencies.) Research (by Gondolf 2002) indicated that less than 8% of female victims engaged with perpetrator programmes and that therefore work with female victims **by perpetrator programmes** was not associated with reductions in abuse of women and girls. Family courts often have a great deal of difficulty in sorting out just who and what to believe of the contrasting, often conflictual stories. Allegations against abusers are either found or not found in court. Either side may well be happy, disappointed or outraged by those decisions. Accredited programmes could not accept men that did not accept **all** of the court's findings of facts. Often a man will accept many or most of the findings, but not necessarily all. Non-accepted findings may need to be understood in much greater detail by the individual. If no work is undertaken with the man, those men simply remain stuck in that position, and because of that, their children risk losing contact with their father. Likewise, in presenting themselves to an abuser programme, female partners whose allegations have not been accepted are likely to attempt to maintain those allegations. Such a situation brings a couple's "split" into the organisation and is very likely to undermine feelings of trust in the organisation in either or both parties. Since there is apparently no gain, no overall gain or "numerical benefit" of engaging with both, it would seem to be a largely wasted and distracting effort. The Joseph Rowntree Trust-sponsored research of DVIP (1998) pointed out this very problem amongst several others. In cases where both individuals are abusive, as bi-directional violence research now establishes – at a rate of 57.9% of domestic abuse – it has slowly become recognised that both males and females can be abusive. If needed we have always worked with both individuals in separate groups. In contradiction of attempting much wider work with alleged victims there then remain the other issues of Non molestation and other orders which could mean that an approach by us to a victim may be construed as an infringement of an order!

There are, of course, ramifications in our stance when it comes to research into effectiveness of the programme. Couples are very largely separated by "the intervention." They strongly have all contact with one another forbidden by the court. So following the completion of our work and a question asked of a female partner, has there been any change? Her answer would be based on no contact and no knowledge of what had been undertaken. It would tend to be "no", which might also be in her own best interest.

As the courts will be aware, when children are in public law cases, involving social services, the children's contact with their parents is maintained, by law, it being very probably recognised that not to do this is a potentially highly damaging experience for the child or children involved.

It is therefore a mystery as to why such a practice would be **mainly** apparently prevented in cases which are likely to have been potentially much less damaging to children, whose cases are involved in private law cases, and which are more likely to fall into the category of medium and low risk cases. The most recent Cafcass edict seems to be saying that in cases of domestic abuse, this separation must take place and if the recommendation of the individual social worker does not follow this, then the report must have the approval of the Cafcass manager - all of which sounds as if it undermines the "professional opinion" of the social worker writing the report. [This judge apparently had rather similar thoughts!](#)

**RESPECT accredited domestic abuser programmes, so-called DAPPs Cafcass and the family courts**

The government strategy is the prevention of violence to women and girls. We have no problem with that and have completed 36 hours of therapeutically informed work with more than 1300 men. Subsumed beneath that is the “prevention of violence to all victims” - to which might have been added the words “men and boys” but that would surely have clashed with the sense of “the prevention of violence to women and girls!”

Reliable research has established over the years that violence by women (in the UK) was either misrepresented in the early to mid 1990s when we started the work, or it has dramatically increased from 4.7% of domestic violence in 1994 to 41% in 2021 – this latter figure, according to the West Midlands Police Commissioner’s figures, is about 5-6% more than recent ONS figures.

But from this development it is very clear that **our** original focus of working with both male abusers and female abusers has proven correct. As a result we have also brought the issues of the children unwittingly involved in these families into a sharper focus with the statement that both a child’s parents matter. To this end we have completed 36 hours of therapeutically informed work with more than 120 women.

### **Some potential reasons for that stoppage will be explained below.**

Cafcass officers have worked for the last 10 to 12 years to the background of the “accredited programmes.” There will have been internal pressures on officers to insist they stuck to that policy. Under that regime there was no reason at all for a Cafcass officer to look any further at the underlying problems with the DAPPs, or to find alternatives. However more than 250 of the 1500 plus cases we have worked with over the last 28 + years have been sponsored by social services or, until 2012, the courts. Additionally our recognition would be that our work is much more readily accepted by courts outside the London / Home counties area.

For an individual to be accepted onto an accredited programme he, and the programmes were only for males, a) had to agree to all of the findings of fact, b) not to be involved in any ongoing criminal investigations etc etc. My FOI requests established that Cafcass funded a man’s attendance on a DAPP on a per session basis: however they were unable to quote how many men even completed the accredited programmes in any particular year, despite the spending of £1,2m of tax-payers’ money on 909 of them. They were able to say that 32% of the men got a mid-way report. My research has established that historically less than 25% of men that started an accredited programme actually even completed it.

In 2020, Cordis Bright, wrote: **“My Time experienced lower than expected conversion rates from referral to completion; only 23.8% of referrals were assessed as suitable for the programme (256 out of 1,074 referrals), and of those who started (196) only 12.2% went on to complete the programme (24 perpetrators).”** [The appropriate page with highlights is here](#). Notice also the criticisms of “length,” “accessibility” and “format”. These are all a part of the issues which I have been drawing attention to over the last 20 years at least.

**Cafcass policy**, and therefore that of the individual officer, has understandably been only to forward men that fitted into the above criteria, otherwise those men would have been automatically barred from attending.

### **Whistleblowing**

Over the years I have written to Cafcass on 4 occasions, pointing out to them the mistakes that we consider they have made in the ways they have implemented and followed the RESPECT “accredited

programme” regime. [Dr Louise Dixon](#), senior lecturer in forensic psychology, produced a research paper pointing out the implicit mistakes in the appointment of RESPECT as the accreditor and the underlying issues of female abuse. [The Ministry of Justice paper 2014 pointed](#) out the lack of effectiveness from the Duluth style (DAPP) programmes and in 2014 the [Centre for Social Justice paper](#) called for a fresh start with perpetrator programmes “because they are not working.”

My letter 1 to Cafcass [1 6.12.2010](#) . My letter 2 to Mr Volker Buck Cafcass Commissioner 12.4.21 . My [Letter 3 19.5.2021 to Jacky Tiotto](#) . My letter [Letter 4 to Volker Buck Cafcass Commissioner](#)

Each of the above might in itself have been sufficient to cause a reconsideration of the policy but it sounds as if the reconsideration has had to await the arrival of a new CEO of Cafcass, Ms Jacky Tiotto and perhaps the Cordis Bright research indicated above.

### **We now come to the respective content**

<b>Concepts</b>	<b>Temper Domestic Violence</b>	<b>DAPPs</b>
Background	Psychotherapeutic theory	Political / feminist ideology
Underlying theory 1	Attachment theory	(Male) Power and control
Underlying theory 2	Systems theory and support	Supervision and isolation
Underlying theory: 3 emotional regulation	8 primary, declarative emotions	Male entitlement and female victimhood
Facilitator training	Years: In group dynamics, transference, counter transference + ongoing personal development. Risk assessment.	At least 4 days in addition to previous employment experiences and other, personal interests.
Supervision	Independent clinical, course by course	Unknown – by RESPECT?
Target for the work	Emotional regulation – behavioural changes, development of insight and empathy	Attitudes – to behaviours – remorse for behaviours found or of which accused.
Ethos	The Individual in their relationships	Toxic masculinity
Length	Intensive 36 hours, 4 full days with ongoing support available	26-32 2–2.5 hour weekly – 60 hrs.
Ongoing support	Via zoom, weekly.	Hardly anybody completes so no ongoing support.
Group	Closed group, maximum 8 participants	Rolling programme – up to 14?
Facilitation	Male and female – constants	Female and male – if/as available
Modus 1	Significantly experiential - personal	3 <sup>rd</sup> person cameos – impersonal
Modus 2	Group interactions with peer support	Largely didactic -
Lang. / memory target	Episodic	Semantic
Establishment of trust	Available via a closed group	Unavailable – rolling programme
New behaviours	Experienced, built in by practice	Talked about – encouraged
Balance of attention	Previous behaviours <b>and</b> future relationships	Previous bad behaviours, “holding to account”
Talking and listening	In pairs and openly in the group	Avoided
Empathy	Demonstrated by facilitators	Largely ignored by facilitators
Client History	Experiences of own childhood and adolescence, victimhood	Unsought – worried about colluding with “a male victim.”
Client Trauma, particularly childhood	Explored, in case referral is needed to other help?	Ignored – muddying the water
Partner relationship	Coping with a partner’s emotions, coping with difficult situations for them	Viewed as blaming a partner

Positions of children	As above plus – experientially via role-plays	Thinking about a child's position.
Completion	90% plus	< 25%
Ongoing support / contact	Considerable – often going back many years.	Very probably none. Nobody who would know the individual or case.
Strategy for coping in a difficult situation	Mainly: Sit, Listen, feedback.	Mainly: "Time out". – walk away.

2b) More detailed content

### **Goals for short-term, therapeutic interventions with domestic abusers. (Revised at Dec 2021).**

#### **Preamble:**

According to research more than 80% domestic violence is not committed with the object of establishing or maintaining "power and control" over a partner. It results from complex events, conscious and subconscious, and complex interactions in the dyadic relationship. These events and interactions result in the raising of "emotional issues". It is these emotional issues which drive the majority of behaviours. Consequently, the precipitating events need to be understood so that the emotions driving the behaviours can be better understood and regulated. ONS statistics quote more than 35% of domestic violence victims are male.

In the context of the Prison service and Probation service rigid control over the guilty person is required in the former and in the latter, supervision is required. In the cases in the "community" it is very difficult to "supervise", there is also no real need to have "power and control" over an individual; if this were needed the individual would generally be in prison. Consequently, the work undertaken needs to be "collaborative", working with, and alongside the client to help him or her to develop their skills and understanding and their own control over their own behaviours and lives. Since a major part of the impact on and potential impact of the behaviours is on children of the family and partners involved, it means that the efforts may not be collusive. Dangers particularly to children, who are more or less **at equal lethal risk** from both parents, need to be carefully considered **at all times**.

#### **9 goals for short-term therapeutic interventions**

- 1) Increase closeness and feelings of trust.
- 2) Develop autobiographical memory, Increase the clients' knowledge of him/her self.
- 3) Increase the individual's power of self-observation, reflection and analysis.
- 4) Increase tolerance of frustration and capacity to recognise and to control drive states.
- 5) Improve the client's object relatedness to family members and peers.
- 6) Increase self-esteem and the client's sense of self as a responsible agent.
- 7) Raise the client's developmental level as expressed by trust, pursue assertiveness, and sexuality.
- 8) Help the client to deal with problems with the use of more mature defences.
- 9) Develop the client's ability to be able to tolerate ambivalence.

**The safety of children needs to be prioritised over the safety of women.** Children, particularly young children, are very nearly equally at lethal risk from their mother as from their father. Statistically children are by a very large margin most at risk from their mother's future partner. A woman may not recognise (or accept) the risk she runs. Hardly any child will be aware of and will certainly have



absolutely no resources with which to change their situation. (The stereotype of the “wicked stepmother” does not hold good, statistically.)

**Brief outline of TEMPER’S work with abusive partners**, particularly with the violent, aggressive abusive partner. The work was constructed with the knowledge that more clients would be men, the work therefore had to appeal to and engage with mainly men but without excluding women.

With background experiences of counselling couples in RELATE this work was “gender inclusive” from the start. We were immediately aware that the work would largely involve the unravelling of the psychological factors triggered by intimacy, best conceived of from within the framework of Attachment Theory.

The research in America of Murray Strauss, Dutton and Corvo and John Hamell and very many others is supported in the UK by Archer and Graham-Kevan, Dr Louise Dixon and others. Confirmation of the need for a gender inclusive approach can also be found in the work of pro-feminist researcher Prof Michael P Johnson whose research is mentioned below.

In 1995 when we started the work we undertake was very frequently called “Anger management”. In many arenas, the courts for example, it still often is. Research and developments in the study and understanding of emotions over the last two to three decades and our own experiences now lead us to describe the work much more accurately as “emotional regulation”, a description which is only just beginning to percolated through into main stream usage. The courses have been delivered more than approx 230 times, more than 1250 men and 120 women have completed the work, 100%.

At this point it is perhaps pertinent to outline some aspects of “emotional regulation.”

Part of the work we undertake provides a study of the impact of the client’s own emotional experiences during childhood, during adolescence and during young adulthood. The objective is to enable the client to develop a more comprehensive view of themselves from the relative security and safety of a therapeutically informed group, and also of the context of their own family of upbringing; this could be described as developing a more complete “autobiographical memory”, and, at the same time the process helps to bring the client into a more reflective state. In an increasingly diverse society in the UK marriages and relationships between different very cultures, religions and expectations abound.

The ideological mindset of Women’s Aid, the lead agency in the domestic violence agenda, mainly says that domestic violence is an attempt to achieve “power and control” and hence “coercive control” by men, over women. We can look at places like Afghanistan and many other places where this is totally obvious. And of course there are and probably always will be some aspects of a male dominance in business and industry, but as yet I have still to hear of the first man to give birth to a child. I still believe that only a person of the female sex can do that.

Professor Michael P Johnson, claims to be a pro-feminist researcher, his work established “coercive controllers” / “intimate terrorists” of the order of 7 men per 1,000 in the general population and 5 women per 1,000, **prior to separation**. Other researchers, Graham-Kevan and Archer, for example, established that “common couple violence” accounts for averages of about 74% of domestic violence, mutual couple violence for about 4%, violent retaliation for about 10 % and intimate terrorism for about 12%.

Wishing to funnel all men into a “coercive controller” stereotype for their own purposes, Women’s Aid had to decry “anger management” as not being anything to do with the violence that goes on in families, i.e in their view it is all “coercive” control. At one level they were right; much of the behaviour which is expressed is not about “anger”, but it is very largely driven by emotions of which anger, fear, grief, trust and disgust/shame are the main suspects. Instrumental violence represents a very much smaller percentage of the violence between intimate couples.

It follows that rather than undertaking “pure, anger management” what is required is “emotional regulation”.

**Duluth. The fallacy of the “power and control wheel.”** The Coercive control model.



The late Ellen Pence and Michel Paymar are credited with the construction of the original DAIP (Domestic Abuser Intervention project) in America. It was designed for working with abusive men. In the late 80s and early 90s it was the dominant model and was followed and largely copied into UK by The Domestic Violence Intervention Project (DVIP), based in London. In her book published in 1999 the late Ellen Pence recognised some of the errors that had invaded the Duluth Programme for Male abusers. Those errors were simply copied into the UK where they have remained, unexamined and even, truly, resisted. She wrote:

**“I found that many of the men I interviewed did not seem to articulate a desire for power over a partner. Although I relentlessly took every opportunity to point out to the men in groups that they were so motivated and merely in denial, the fact that few men ever articulated such a desire went unnoticed by me and many of my co-workers. Eventually we realised that we were finding what we had predetermined to find.”**

**RESPECT, the accreditor, emerged from DVIP.** The senior officers were both former employees of DVIP. The first programme to be accredited was DVIP's. In 2018 DVIP was absorbed into the Richmond Fellowship with debts of C £160k.

Meanwhile, a string of prominent researchers amongst whom the following stand out have moved the thinking about all human interactions forwards enormously over the last 20 years: Dr Sylvan Thompson (affect theory), Dr Allan Schore, (Bowlby's attachment theory), Dr Joseph Ledoux (emotion -preceding thoughts) and Dr Daniel Siegel, definitions of emotions, (the mind, mental health and emotional regulation.) Dr Steven Porges (polyvagal theory) Much more recently Dr Lisa Feldman Barrett has contributed enormously to the greater understanding of emotions.

#### **“Emotion Regulation and the Mind” (Siegel page 274)**

“The capacity to regulate the appraisal and arousal processes of the mind is fundamental to self organisation; therefore, emotion regulation is at the core of the self.

The acquisition of self regulation emerges from dyadic relationships early in life. Attachment studies suggest that the types of interpersonal communication that facilitate autonomous self-regulation begins with healthy dependence. Such relationships involve sensitivity to the child's signals, contingent communication and reflective dialogue that permits the child to develop coherence and mentalising capacities, achieving self-organisation within emotionally attuned, interpersonal experiences.

At the emotional core of attachment relationships are the amplification of shared positive states and the reduction of negative affective states.

A proposed model of emotional regulation includes 7 elements: intensity, sensitivity, specificity, and windows of tolerance, recovery processes, access to consciousness and external expression.”

The above gives the very firm clues as to the therapeutic background into which adults need to move in order to learn to address their behaviours by learning to regulate themselves.”

If “attunement” is part of a process for rehabilitating abusers then virtually all of the so-called “accredited programmes” attune “out”! The global prescription of the male abuser's use of “power and control” blocks every likelihood of attunement!

From the above fallacy and under the guise of “holding men accountable” the main tools used by the accredited programmes are the terms “denial, minimisation and partner blaming”. They are used in a confrontational manner. “Conduct a police-style interview” is the direction given to future facilitators by a training programme approved of by RESPECT ! The very use of those terms and the manner of their usage are inevitably designed to raise the defences of the individual, defences one should be attempting to reduce rather than raise unless your objective is pure confrontation and hence potential provocation! The “accreditation” requirement of cameras in the room (allegedly for supervision purposes) means that the individual participant, doing his own “risk assessment” of the situation to him, will not speak openly. Had he installed a camera in a couple's own home he would likely be accused of coercive behaviours!

**TEMPER's work** is delivered by a trained and experienced male and female counsellor in an intensive, closed group, was in an intensive, therapeutically informed format in 16 sessions over two weekends, 9.00 a.m. to 6.00 p.m. all four days, 3/4/5 weekends apart, whenever possible 3 or 4. The groups were run for between 5 and 8 people, both men and women who were in, or who had been in, heterosexual or gay or lesbian intimate relationships in which they exhibit(ed) violent and or aggressive and or abusive behaviours and or behaviours of a coercive and controlling nature.

From February 2025 we changed the format to 8, 3-hour on-line group sessions, maximum size 8 clients with two facilitators in a closed group. In addition to this there is also homework, most often in the form of clips. Following the completion of the 8 online sessions there is also a face-to-face day on a Sunday, 9.00 a.m. to 6.00 p.m. again in a group of maximum size but in a group closer to the individual's home. This was done in response to the closure of the DAPPs with clients arriving from all over the British Isles.

**Why mixed groups?** Coming from a couple counselling background we saw no reason not to have mixed groups, and every reason why that would be advantageous. Much later, according to Dr Louise Dixon, her research established there is very little difference between the underlying criminological needs between the men and women involved. We would add that essentially and additionally men need to learn about women (and about themselves) and women need to learn about men (and about themselves), so why would they not work together? It is quite obvious really!

The work is highly complex but focused on the individual (in the couple relationship) and initially on emotional regulation, attachment theory and systems theory, interspersed with and followed by domestic violence focuses. It is largely skills and practice based with strong experiential aspects rather than didactic and it is delivered in the simplest of forms so that virtually everybody can take part. We will defer anyone whose "reasonable" concentration is completely swamped by current distress, supporting them appropriately until they are able to take part. The ability to read and write is not really necessary, but unfortunately, because of the group format, the ability to understand and speak English well enough is a requirement, although on several occasions poor English speakers appeared on courses with others who were bi-lingual in their language, permitting some of the work to be carried out in their own language and with willing albeit unprofessional translators. The disturbance to a group of "by professional translation" makes that option completely untenable.

We will decline anyone with whom we are not reasonably sure we can make significant progress. Our clients would tend to be from medium and low risk categories, but not exclusively. The work is currently only delivered in English. It is not practical to have it done "by translation." Individual work has been undertaken with a profoundly deaf man who could read and write very well, and 2 individuals whose English was OK but not good enough to make use of in a group setting. A near total lack of available finance precludes this individual work, which would, in any case, lack a very great deal of the potential dynamics and much of the wider learning implicit in well focused, and experiential group work.

A preliminary visit, which pre-covid and Zoom was most usually domiciliary, within 10 days of the initial contact and lasting in most cases about 1 hour, assesses if we can work with the case and also prepares the client for the ways in which we work. The preliminary visits are now carried out via WhatsApp or Zoom. Carried out by one of the counsellors due to be undertaking the group work it also reduced the individual's "tensions" about whom he or she would meet when they got to the course. It also immediately presents the opportunity for telephone support in the interim if required, for example, if an individual appears to have suicidal intent.

**We delivered face-to-face work in Birmingham, N W London and Wakefield West Yorkshire, venues which are now used for the face-to-face day. We are planning to extend the sites to the South West and also the North-West. :**

The basics of the content are:

- 1) Learning new skills to use in couple relationships and the ability to absorb and respond to these, and the management of a wide range of emotions and emotionally driven behaviours, particularly those related to ANGER, GRIEF and FEAR. Learning to achieve an experiential

- “focus in” and a “focus out”, are two of the basic goals of this area of learning, separating, as it were, “me” from “you”, but also recognising “the system”, and the wider position of “we/us”.
- 2) Establishing the underlying causes of their violent / aggressive / abusive behaviour. Most usually with our client group these are emotional causes, but very occasionally they have a more “instrumental violence” background, it involves learning to regulate / manage their redundant behaviours. Developing an understanding of equal couple relationships and what this means. An assessment as to the likely effectiveness of this work can also be produced for social services or the courts – but at an additional cost.
  - 3) A focussed therapeutic component will very often allow [a person to make enormous progress with their own “emotional problems”](#), and or assist them in achieving a much better idea of their emotional problems such that, if suggested, they will a) be willing to find other help and understand why they need it b) be able to make good use of that help.
  - 4) Empathy and “Emotional regulation” emerge for many individuals from the integration of the above three areas.

Diagrammatically as we present them elsewhere the above “three strands” contain all the relevant elements / themes. But when the client is able to engage with either or both of the facilitators and or other group members in a “reflective” state then the impact and change achievable may be truly enormous. This is expressed in an independent client’s report by a social services employed team of clinical psychologists. Some of [the report is available here in an anonymised form](#); it indicates a client whose “diagnosis” effectively changed from “having a severe personality disorder” to falling within the “normal” range.

A body of expertise now recognises that “personality disorders” result from “over exposure” to emotionally stressing events, the more prolonged or “severe” the experiences, the greater the likely ensuing problems with increasing severity. For a long time these states were deemed to be “traits” and to be rigid over time. That position is now having to be fundamentally re-thought. Prof Lisa Feldman Barret updates a great deal about emotions [at this link](#).

Of course over exposure by children to emotionally stressing and or traumatising events is, in most cases, exactly what Social Services are usually trying to prevent by their interventions; it follows that it is necessary in this type of work for the parents of such children to learn and understand how their own “emotionally stressing and traumatising events” impact(ed) on their own emotions and thus their behaviours and, consequently, potentially on their own children.

### **Child abuse**

No work is generally undertaken which directly involves working with clients as abusers of children. (There have been about 4 cases where we have had to contact social services where our concerns about the potential for child abuse were raised beyond what was already known to social services.)

Obviously from the above descriptions the original course spent several hours (about 6.5) looking at what their own experiences of growing up were, frequently with this client group, this involves their own abuse. The inadequacy of their own experiences as children are flagged up, not to excuse them their current behaviours, but so that they have their childhood hurts recognised, acknowledged and can also develop, or begin to develop, a much more rounded view of what appropriate child-rearing involves and what is inappropriate. This aspect of the work also helps with establishing some of the foundations of empathy. At times in dramatic scenes some participants are cast in the role of children.

Included in the online version of this work there is now a more pronounced focus on the parental bonding bonding experiences of the parents with their new baby and a much more detailed follow-up on the adjustments a couple make, or fail to make, following the arrival of the new child. .

During the face-to-face day In the dramatic staging of a violent scene that involved their partner, the role of children present, or in the house, is taken by other course participants. In their turn a client may also be involved in the roles of children in the families of other participants. The impact of these roles, their feelings and thoughts in terms of “Mummy and Daddy” are explored. Impacts from this exercise are usually enormous.

On many courses differences between partners in the management of children has been an immediate focal “cause” of individual incidents of domestic violence, these would then be looked at in

greater depth, in other cases the (mis)behaviour of children (which can often be seen as resultant from the abuse of one parent by the other, or both, as the child attempts to intervene within the often extreme limits of their scope.) In such cases appropriate behaviours and boundary setting are discussed in much greater depth: there remains the possibility of 1 to 1 sessions following a course, for any residual areas of need detected during the work but which were unable to be addressed or completed within the body of the work for whatever reasons.

There has also been a significant increase in the number of clients who have had RAPE found in their Family Court findings of fact. In the Family Court findings are made on the balance of probability as opposed to "beyond reasonable doubt" in the criminal court. A new focus has been researched and is now delivered to address this issue.

**The framework of attending** presents people with problems, mainly of trust.

- a) Their ability to take part in the exercises is examined, and any "blockages" are worked with.
- b) Their ability to mix with other people and find a form of honesty with which to take part is explored, and the opportunity for building a new social platform is usually created.
- c) The extent to which they are "coercive controllers" is observable and challenged, but clearly very few are. (ACPO nationally estimated 25,321 male coercive controllers in its paper "Preventing violence to women and girls." The title of the paper almost inevitably caused it to omit an extrapolated 18,022 female coercive controllers!)
- d) A client's commitment and motivation can be judged in terms of completion, completion of a very significant part of the course.
- e) Any differences between their general reactions with males and females can be observed, pointed out, worked with and reported on.
- f) Engagement: many different elements make up engagement, a good deal of the work is undertaken in pairs, which makes it very intensive and there is virtually no opportunity for anyone to "hide" and thus fail to engage. Over the years 5 clients have been ejected for failing to engage, a 6<sup>th</sup> was very nearly ejected.

*David Eggins*

3.11.2022

With minor updates November 2024 and then again 2025

In moving the programme from "Anger Management" to "Emotional Regulation"