

The influence of discourse and the construction of domestic violence in service systems and collaborative community responses

Dr Ann Carrington and Ms Sally Watson

Acknowledgements

- DV service
 - The community collective network
 - Participant organisations – individual participants
 - College of Arts, Society and Education
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Background

- DFV an ongoing and increasing social issue
 - DFV in spotlight after a number of highly visible homicides
 - Increasing push for collective community responses
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Research Aims

The overarching aims of this research were to understand how discourse and the construction of domestic and family violence informs the service system response to domestic and family violence in a regional community and to explore implications for overall service delivery and collaborative community responses.

- To achieve this, the study had three sub-aims. These were to:
 - establish how the different stakeholders construct and respond to domestic and family violence;
 - identify which discourses and theoretical, ideological and philosophical frameworks inform the different stakeholders' construction and response to domestic and family violence; and
 - draw initial conclusions about the implications of discourse, ideology and the construction of domestic and family violence on service delivery and collaborative community responses to domestic and family violence in a regional community.
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Methodology

- Qualitative
 - Focus groups
 - Existing organisational documents
 - Discourse analysis
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Ethics and limitations

- Ethics approval via JCU ethics committee – H6418
 - Both researchers members of management committee of organisations within the community collective network
 - Small project – only one collective and only a sample from within the collective
 - Some key stakeholders declined to participate
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Defining discourse

- Genres – ways of acting – speaking writing
- Discourses – ways of representing – different perspective of the social and physical world
- Styles – ways of being – social or personal identities, values and attitudes

Key findings

- Discourses present
 - Impact of discourses
 - A collective discourse
 - Discourse and change
 - Different levels of discourse and change in a collective
 - Missing voices
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Discourses present

	The problem	Cause	Gendered	Level response	Scope (present/historical)	Change
Criminal/legal	A violent incident perpetrated by an individual. Men predominantly perpetrators, women predominantly victims	Not a focus/concern	DV predominantly discussed in gender neutral terms.	Personal/individual.	Responds to present moment primarily.	Through education, enforcement and legislative change.
Feminist	Patriarchal social structures disadvantage women	Structures that support and promote gender inequality and abuse of power and control by men	DV is a gendered issue and needs to be addressed from a gendered perspective	Personal, cultural and social	Focuses on present and contextual including historical issues.	Action required on all levels to bring about change.

Discourses present

	The problem	Cause	Gendered	Level response	Scope (present/ historical)	Change
Therapeutic	DV is a learned behavioural problem	Individual psychosocial issues		Personal level working with individual or couple	Context is personal relational issues.	Therapeutic intervention with men, women and families.
Dominant discourse	DV is a relationship problem and/or behavioural problem	Violent individuals/relationships. Drugs/alcohol	DV effects women and men. Often gender neutral.	Personal/individual	Reactive responses dominant	Not coherent, though dominant focus on individual
Bureaucratic	Individual and family problem.	Individual, relationship and social causes	Women and men are victims of DV.	Individual is predominant focus of service and policy response.		Dominant focus on individual
Indigenous	DV is an issue for individuals, families and community	Cultural male privilege and generational impacts	DV predominantly effects women	Individual as part of family and community.	Individual present moment in historical context	Work with men, families and community to change culture

Impact of discourses

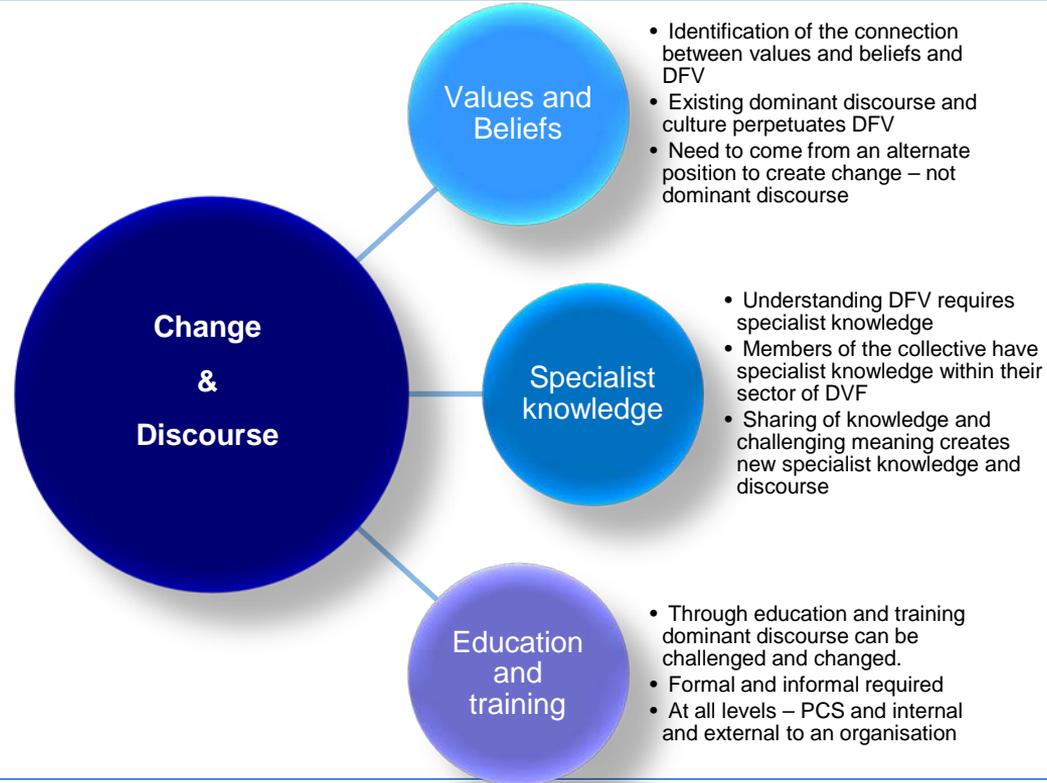
The way a discourse explains a problem, has a significant impact on:

- i. How a 'victim' is responded to at different points in the service system
 - ii. How a perpetrator is responded to
 - iii. The types of responses funded and overall level of public funding committed
 - iv. The nature of public campaigns to influence public behaviour/attitude
 - v. Media messages about DV
 - vi. Community commitment to change
 - vii. The construction of the law
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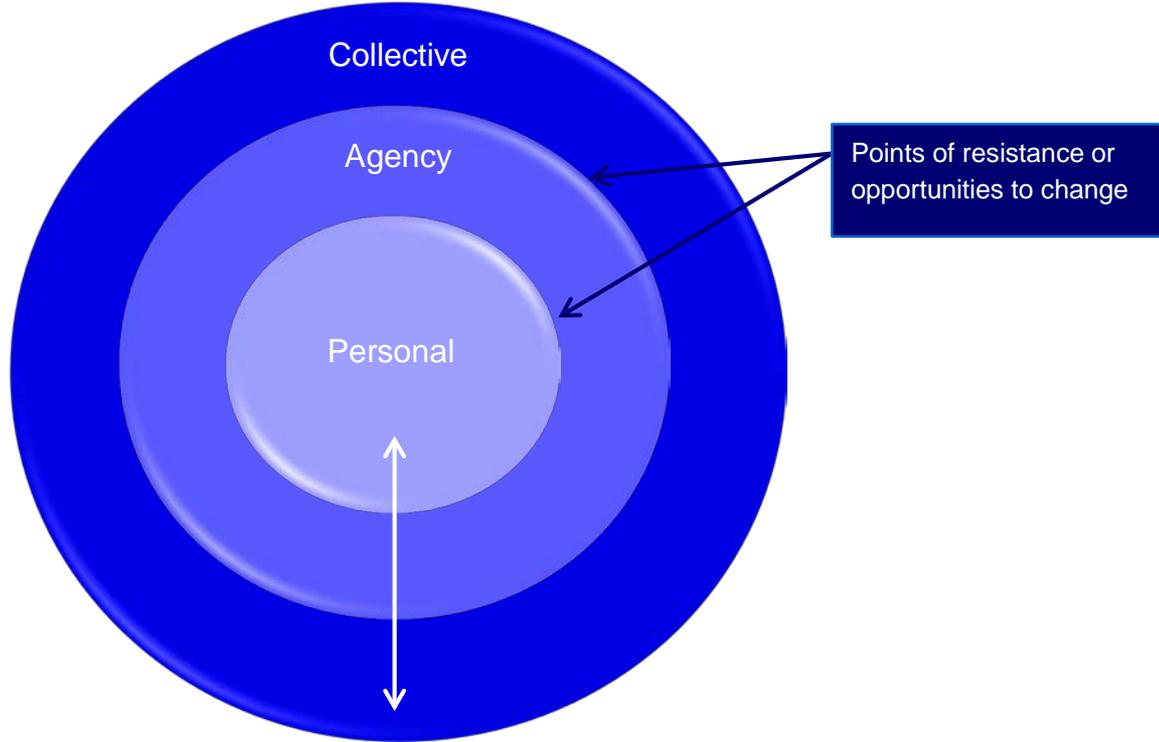
A collective discourse



Discourse and change



Different levels of discourse and change in a collective



Missing voices

- Key stakeholders absent from collective meetings
 - Is non attendance a form of resistance or exclusion?
 - Limits the development of the collective discourse
 - Restricts practical responses informed and supported by the collective
 - Important to pick up on these voices/perspectives in future research
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Implications

- Different discourses cause tensions – is this a positive or negative?
 - Different construction and discourse create a disjointed and inconsistent responses to service users
 - Collective discourse can inform organisational and personal discourse to reduce the disjointed responses to service users
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Implications

- Relationships developed in collective provide an avenue for positive and cohesive responses to service users
 - Collective action and projects can influence the service system and other social, political and structural systems – limited to local issues
 - Power to change or challenge practice at institutional level difficult for sole members within the collective. May have success with individual cases but not change organisational discourse (policy)
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Thank you

Any Questions?

ann.carrington@jcu.edu.au

sally.watson@jcu.edu.au
