

WORK TO CHANGE MEN WHO USE VIOLENCE IN INTIMATE
RELATIONSHIPS.

PARENTING AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

THE NORWEGIAN EXPERIENCE.

ALTERNATIVE TO VIOLENCE

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ALTERNATIVE TO VIOLENCE (ATV)

- ATV started in 1987, as the first specialized treatment centre for male batterers in Europe.
- Today: Research and therapy centre for DV. Working with:
 - adult offenders, adolescents
 - adult victims and children.
 - NGO, public funding.
 - 13 offices in Norway (staff: 65) + 7 offices in the other Nordic countries.
 - 2016: 1117 men, women and children in therapy.
- Member of Working With Perpetrators – European Network (WWP-EN)
- The work of ATV is based on:
 - An understanding of gender, power and culture in society
 - The stories of battered women, battering men and children being exposed to family violence
 - Professional clinical psychology / Research

The overriding objective of ATV: Stopping the violence

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ATV'S TREATMENT MODEL

FOCUS ON VIOLENCE

Detailed reconstruction of the violence .
Assessing the "size" of the problem, danger and safety issues.

Partner Contact

FOCUS ON RESPONSIBILITY

Focus on active choices and intentions. Control strategies
Intentional vs. causal explanations

FOCUS ON THE CLIENT'S PERSONAL HISTORY RELATED TO VIOLENCE

Attitudes towards women . Masculinity
Trauma history. History on violence.
Attachment problems → empathy → violence as emotion regulation

OVERALL FOCUS ON THE CONSEQUENCES OF THE VIOLENCE

Empathy with the victims (partner/children) of the violence. Recognising the pain inflicted on others.

Being able to talk to the children about the violence

Partner Contact

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RESEARCH ON CONSEQUENCES OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCE STUDY (ACE)

Documents impact of childhood experiences on somatic, social and psychological problems in adulthood. The ACE study shows that having experienced domestic violence is associated with higher risk of premature mortality (2009)

FELITTI, MD, MD ANDA, MD NORDENBERG, MS WILLIAMSON, MS SPITZ, BA EDWARDS, PhD KOSS a MD MARKS. Original Articles: Relationship of Childhood Abuse and Household Dysfunction to Many of the Leading Causes of Death in Adults. The Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) Study. American Journal of Preventive Medicine.



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***“I decided that I would never become
like my father”***

Break the heritage of violence!

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VIOLENT MEN AS FATHERS

- Work with the men's images of themselves as fathers
- How the violence is affecting the child - father relationship
- How the violence is affecting the child - mother relationship
- How the child is affected by the violence – both on a short term and long term basis
- Life learnings from their own fathers
- Educate the men on the basic needs of children within a developmental perspective – and how the presence of violence is obstructing the coverage of these needs.

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(Råkil, 2006)

VIOLENT MEN AS FATHERS - PDI

PDI - Parent Development Interview (Arieta Slade - from Fonagy; Mentalizing)

- Invest thoughts and feelings in relation to *the relation* to the child
- Scores with Reflective Functioning (RF) as a measure
(-1: bizarre via 5: adequate, to 9: especially high)
- Purpose: to find to what extent a parent is capable of creating a **mental representation** of the inner world of the child.
- Many ATV-clients struggles with mentalisation regarding their children.
(Fathers are less capable to mentalize than we believed)

(Henning Mohaupt – ATV – PhD project)

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DIFFERENT POSITIONS REGARDING HAVING CHILDREN

- Some men have great expectations and dreams about being a father, as a planned "project"
- Other men are more on a mental distance.
- Some men have got a child that was absolutely not planned
- Other men have very little contact with their children
- Other men have got children that was not planned, but have developed a very strong sense of commitment and happiness about becoming a father

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DIFFERENT POSITIONS REGARDING BECOMING A FATHER

- Some men are not very reflected about being a father.
- Some men have quite authoritarian and harsh ideas about how fathers should be
- Some men have have dreams and ambitions on being a much better father than the father they had themselves
- Some men have never wished to become a father
- Some feel strongly they have failed as a father

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FATHERHOOD

- **Step 1: your father**

How was your father?

positive

negative

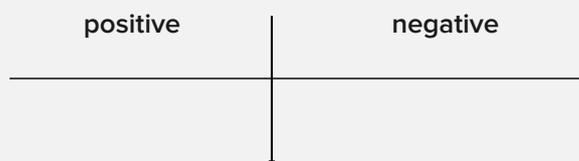
What did he learn you about love,
feelings and masculinity?

How did he make you feel?

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FATHERHOOD

Step 2: yourself as a father



What do you try to learn your child about love, feelings and masculinity/femininity?

How do you think you and your behavior makes her/him feel?

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FATHERHOOD

Step 3: your child



How do you think your child sees you as a father?

When your child observe you, what does she/he learn about love, feelings and masculinity/femininity?

How does she/he feel?

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TO MAKE THE CHILDREN "PRESENT" IN THE GROUP

Assignment: Bring a picture of your child to the next group meeting.

- Present your child / your children to me / to the group
- Who is she/he?
- Tell us about his/hers personality
- What is his/hers dreams and needs?
- What does she/he like?
- How is he/she affected by the violence?
- What is your feelings towards him/her?

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READING CHILDREN

What does this child feel?

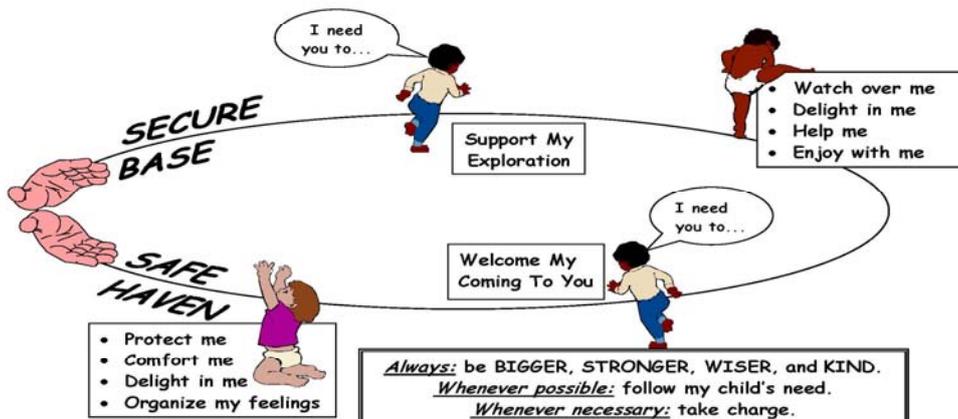
How can you see that?

What does he need?



CIRCLE OF SECURITY

PARENT ATTENDING TO THE CHILD'S NEEDS



© 1998 Cooper, Hoffman, Marvin, & Powell
circleofsecurity.org

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND PARENTING

Parenting is:

- To «see» the child as an autonomous physical and psychological being.
- To put the child's needs before one's own.
- Emotional validation of the child
- Violence produces **fear** and **insecurity** in the child and mother.
- Violence has to be explicitly addressed when present in the family.
- Main question: Are violent parents **good enough** fathers or mothers?
- *This is a simple and difficult question at the same time.*
- *Many factors in this (frequency, quality, seriousness).*
- *Break-up of the family is not the only desirable solution....*

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REPAIR; ANTIDOTE AGAINST VIOLENCE

1. Talk to the child about the violence
2. Take full responsibility, state that it was wrong
3. Be empathic and interested, understand and support the child's reactions and emotions.

PARENTS SHOULD NEVER SAY "I'M SORRY" – THEY SHOULD DO "I'M SORRY"

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DEEPLY INVOLVED POLITITIANS



Knut Storberget

«The single most important thing we can do to improve the childhood conditions of our children is to make domestic violence one of our top priorities as leaders»

*Knut Storberget, 2007
Minister of Justice
Norway*

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THE NEED FOR COLLABORATION

ATV is collaborating with:

- The Anti-Violence Centers / Shelters
- Social Services
- Mental Health Services
- Family Doctors
- Local and national Authorities

All professions need to develop a language on how to adress the violence

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SITUATION IN NORWAY

We - the collaborators agree that:

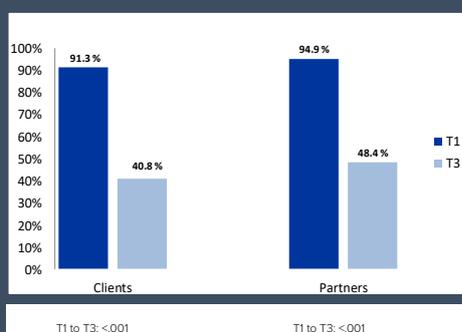
- Violence has very harming consequences for the child and has to be adressed by us
- **Men who use violence may not be good enough fathers**
- It is absolutely neccesary to include the presence of violence and its harming consequences when assessing what is best for the children

Norwegian legislation: Defocusing fathers rights to see their children.

- **Focusing on the psychological needs of the children**
- Children's rights to contact, but also **children's right to not see their father** if he is using violence.

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OUTCOME RESULTS, DATA FROM CLIENTS AND PARTNERS.



T1: At treatment start

T3: 18 months after treatment stop

Stat. significant reduction in violence, both total and on different types of violence.

Change from more severe to less severe violence.

At T3: Both clients and partners are interviewed (not postal questionnaire).

(Askeland et al. 2015, in progress)

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Thank you for listening !

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