

The Men and Masculinities Programme

Coercion and control

Accountability and understanding

Supporting change

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PARTNERSHIP

Who this programme is for

The 'Recovery and Accountability Partnership' offers programmes for men in recovery designed to deepen their understanding of themselves and their relationships.

Our programmes are built to support the process of change; they work from the premise that part of this involves the person understanding his past, the harm he does to himself, and the harm he does to the ones he loves.

The programme is open to any man in recovery who knows deep down that his relationships have become distressing and damaged by his drug and alcohol use and his behaviour. The programme will create a safe and supportive space for men to explore the impact of gender socialisation on their relationships, their substance use, their experiences of parenting and their self-care and self-esteem.

What will the programme cover?

The programme is designed to support any other treatment the man may be involved with. And it is first and foremost a behavioural programme: we will focus on the behaviour, how we act, how this re-enforces how we think and feel and most importantly:

HOW TO ACT DIFFERENTLY.

Trauma Informed

The story of how any man ends up in a programme with us is his to find, and we will support him towards this narrative.

We will use the programme format to work with him to make sense of the worst of himself and his experiences, how he came into treatment and how he came to be **hurting the ones he loves**.

We understand that masculinity is a box for all, and a prison for some. **Over the years of running this programme, we have come to see trauma, shame and distortions of power and powerlessness** as being at the heart of men's violence towards their partners and children.

Coercion

"Everybody rows, right? Everyone shouts and screams, she can give as good as she gets, it's not always me".

Well, yes, but **no**. We know from our work with recovery that there is always a choice. He can choose how he responds to difficult situations, and he can choose to act differently. **Coercion in relationships is a choice.**

Coercion is the place where all violence and abuse starts:

It is the pressuring, the sulking, the ever escalating attempts to set the rules, underlying focus upon his needs and feelings and the ongoing attempts to block her anger, her needs and her reality.

The programme begins here because this is where the abusive behaviour begins and the relational patterns start to become entrenched. Even when violence has not been established as an ongoing threat in the reality of the relationship, the programme understands that all abusive behaviour is a move towards establishing the 'right' to set the rules.

Accountability

Coming into treatment can be a hugely optimistic time; the man will want to 'step up to the plate' and to make sure the people he loves will come to know how he has changed. But without addressing his violence or attitudes in relationships, is it safe for him to be in touch with her or the children?

A part of the Men and Masculinities is all about understanding these risks, his real feelings, and supporting behaviours, and helping him with the process of rebuilding his relationships and meeting the challenges of new ones as they emerge.

Relationships, conflict and contact with children are all understood to be major triggers for relapse and our programme will help him think through all of these situations in a **genuine and supportive manner**.

Accountability is not about blame; instead it is about the ownership of his behaviours and an understanding of hers, it is about teaching him to think *inwards* and *outwards*. To cope under pressure and to: **learn to live honestly, in the light of the harm.**

Signs and signals

The programme is designed for all men; it addresses masculinity, relationships and parenting. Phrases such as these are often indicators:

I need anger management....my (ex) partner says I need to see you...my (ex) partner and I are fighting a lot...my (ex) partner and I need counselling...my (ex) partner is not coping and taking it out on me...the kids are out of control and she's not firm enough... I'm depressed/anxious/stressed/not sleeping/not coping/not myself

I feel suicidal (or have threatened or attempted suicide)

If in any doubt – make the referral – we will always assess his suitability.

"coercion is the place where all violence and abuse starts"

"if in any doubt, make the referral"



From pain to violence

Whatever his story, whether or not he blames her, his drug use, his upbringing, his stress levels or tells us it is a one off incident, we will work across all areas of his life to allow him to move towards making clearer, safer choices.

The programme is very much structured in a 'third party' manner which allows us to show rather than tell. Insight gained **from hearing other people's stories is applied to his own, and in our experience, the men that have attended will almost always open up and address their abusive behaviour very early on in the process.**

The reality is that men attending a substance use treatment programme are already engaged in the process of re-evaluating their lives. The Men and Masculinities Programme offers them the opportunity to focus on developing more respectful, healthy and intimate relationships.

We will not shy away from the worst of his behaviour, but we understand the pain at the heart of it all.

Does this work?

We have now run two full programmes and worked with 30 men in total (25% of the treatment cohort in the Islington day programme).

We have a more detailed evaluation setting this all in context but to summarise, we found that:

Of the **30** men assessed, **27** commenced treatment in the Men and Masculinities group programme.

77% of these men completed at least **30** hours of intervention relating to their use of coercive control and violence.

Men on the programme recorded (via TOPS) reducing their drug and alcohol use by **29%** and recorded a **40%** improvement in their quality of life.

Active, supportive contact was established with **over half** of the attendees' partners / ex-partners.

Addressing domestic abuse and coercive control in a substance use setting did not at all impinge on the overall treatment programme for the men participating.



"We will not shy away from the worst of his behaviour, but we understand the pain at the heart of it all".

Some useful screening questions:

"Have you ever felt like you've lost it"

"Have you stormed off, smashed / punched the wall / TV etc?"

"Have you ever caused a row as a reason to leave and use?"

"Have you raised your hand in anger?"

"Have the police ever attended an incident involving you and your partner?"

"It sounds like your behaviour can be frightening: does your partner say she is frightened of you?"

"What worries you most about your behaviour?"



Recovery:

The partnership offers programmes for men in recovery designed to deepen their understanding of themselves in their relationships.

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Accountability:

We will also always offer a linked (ex) partner support service for those at risk from any man that attends. This enables a separate team to give survivors and victims information about the programme and assist them in having realistic expectations. Our aim is to increase women and children's safety, and we know that it is a man's (ex)partner who will really know if he has changed.



**Recovery &
Accountability**



cranstoun

PARTNERSHIP

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