

Royal Commission into Family Violence

Submission by Pete Dowe

1 “examine and evaluate strategies, frameworks, policies, programs and services across government and local government, media, business and community organisations and establish best practice for:

- a) The prevention of family violence
- b) Early intervention to identify and protect those at risk of family violence and prevent the escalation of violence
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- d) Perpetrator accountability

Assumptions and Misperception.

While this extract from a Psychology Today article refers to misreading individuals, I argue it has parallels with attitudes on Family Violence.

“So when it comes to perceiving *you*, your colleagues are (without realizing it) relying heavily on **assumptions**, the miserly brain’s favorite shortcut. Those assumptions guide what the perceiver sees, how that information is interpreted, and how it is remembered, forming an integral part of his or her perception of you.

Assumptions come in many varieties, but two of the most powerful and pervasive of these are confirmation bias and the primacy effect.”

The Confirmation Bias

“When other people look at you, they see what they *expect* to see. If they have reason to believe that you are smart, they will see evidence of [intelligence](#) in your behavior—whether or not there actually is any. If they have reason to believe you are dishonest, they will interpret a lack of eye contact or awkward [body language](#) as evidence that you have something to hide, as opposed to evidence that you are [shy](#), distracted, or in gastric distress.

In a nutshell, people will interpret your current behavior in a way that makes it consistent with your past behavior, and they will **tend to play down or completely ignore evidence that contradicts their existing opinion of you. What’s more, they will have *no idea that they’re doing it.***

Confirmation bias is shaped by many factors. [Stereotypes](#) about the groups to which you belong, your apparent similarity to other people the perceiver knows, and cultural attitudes—yours and theirs—are among the most consequential. And of course, their own past experience with you, if they have any, plays a major role.”

Psychology Today Mar 24, 2015

https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/the-science-success/201503/2-reasons-why-people-dont-get-know-the-real-you?utm_source=FacebookPost&utm_medium=FBPost&utm_campaign=FBPost

Confirmation bias also occurs when females commit family violence.

(Gender Bias, Gender Equality)

“Confirmation bias is shaped by many factors. **Stereotypes about the groups to which you belong**”

Female aggression predominantly, emotional violence is still unfortunately not an issue in our society which leaves victims without recourse, and difficulty raising the negative impact.

There is also some confusion on what constitutes female aggression such as Magazine articles in defence of aggressive females.

Articles arguing that “power women” are simply confident but supposedly “seen” as aggressive by all the “insecure men” who can’t cope with, are intimidated by, jealous of, “incredible” power women who are “successful” and have skills the “insecure men” don’t.

To clarify, Female Aggression as defined by Psychology Today is:

"Until fairly recently, there were no sounds associated with female aggression -- as if it didn't exist.

It's only in the last decade or so that aggression by the female -- in the form of social or relational aggression -- has been recognized.

The words now associated with female aggressive behavior include:

excluding, ignoring, teasing, gossiping, secrets, backstabbing, rumor spreading and hostile [body language](#) (i.e., eye-rolling and smirking).

Most damaging is turning the victim into a social "undesirable".

The behavior and associated anger is hidden, often wrapped in a package seen as somewhat harmless or just a "girl thing".

The covert [nature](#) of the aggression leaves the victim with no forum to refute the accusations and, in fact, attempts to defend oneself leads to an escalation of the aggression."

“Bullying in the Female World

The Hidden Aggression Behind the Innocent Smile”

Sep 03, 2011

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/the-long-reach-childhood/201109/bullying-in-the-female-world>

Appropriate Attitudes

Note the words "Until fairly recently, there were no sounds associated with female aggression-- as if it didn't exist."

Being Male today is sort of like being left-handed in a right-handed world and I would have thought feminists and feminism would be sensitive to that.

I have a question: "If it is a patriarchy, who's the dumb, inept bastard running it!?"

"Women write most of the books on human relations and over 80% of the purchasers are female. Most of these books tend to focus on Men, what they do wrong and how you can improve them. Most relationship counsellors and therapists are also women."

"If a woman slaps a man's face in public, everyone assumes he's in the wrong"

Why Men don't have a clue...

Alan and Barbara Pease 2005

Common Assumptions towards Male victims

"He musta done something" "He deserved it" "It's men's turn to be victims"

"Man bad, Woman good

Male wrong, Female right"

Pete Dowe

"Maleness in itself is not a crime or an illness or something we have to fight against,"

Clint Greagen

Maybe it's confronting for women and men to see femininity as other than the clichés

"all things sweet and nice"

or "bold, strong, confident, wonderful, incredible, fantastic, trail-blazing women"

or "always vulnerable" even in their criminality: The "poor, vulnerable murderess." The poor unfortunate, vulnerable emotionally-violent woman"

However It is weak-minded and wrong to censor reality simply to appease a politically-correct, gender bias-confirming mind-set.

There is a gender-biased assumption that female perpetrators and their victims are insignificant, infinitesimal and ought be ignored as not a “real problem.”

This is not gender equality!

People will “**tend to play down or completely ignore evidence that contradicts their existing opinion...**”

“What’s more, they will have *no idea that they’re doing it.*”

The manifestation of confirmation bias

Or “Quick! call the thought-Police!”

Everytime a female perpetrator hurts a child, a female or a male the “thought-Police” are called to “explain” that these victims and these perpetrators aren’t a problem or an issue and to actively advocate inaction and “paying no attention” to these victims and their perpetrators and to only pay attention to the “real problem” female victims, male perpetrators.

Family Violence Physical Violence by Females towards Males

<http://www.news.com.au/national/crime/mistress-charged-with-killing-boy-woman-with-garden-shears/story-fns0kb1g-1227288631539>

<http://www.heraldsun.com.au/news/law-order/woman-pleads-guilty-to-stabbing-death-of-cousin/story-fni0fee2-1227183110530>

<http://www.theage.com.au/victoria/lisa-mclaughlin-faces-court-over-seaford-stabbing-murder-of-graham-stevens-20140923-10kpl9.html>

<http://www.theage.com.au/victoria/woman-had-sex-with-man-she-convinced-to-kill-her-exboyfriend-court-hears-20140812-102qu9>

<http://www.theage.com.au/national/girls-at-war-the-new-face-of-violence-20090815-elsm.html>

<http://www.9news.com.au/National/2015/05/23/05/58/Woman-charged-over-NSW-stabbing>

Family Violence Emotional Violence by Females towards Males

“I Wasn't Treating My Husband Fairly, And It Wasn't Fair”

<http://www.sunnyskyz.com/blog/610/I-Wasn-t-Treating-My-Husband-Fairly-And-It-Wasn-t-Fair#frUxqE4UdtoTohOP.99>

It is also assumed that

“We can’t have a one size fits all approach.”

Meaning we can’t include in the Family Violence problem male victims of female perpetrators and their other victims: children, and other females.

This is social exclusion!

Those assumptions will NOT prevent family violence, NOT hold perpetrators to account, NOT protect those at risk of Family Violence.

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“they will tend to play down or completely ignore evidence that contradicts their existing opinion of you. What’s more, they will have *no idea that they’re doing it.*”

On Q and A ABCTV there was some seeming “mumbo jumbo” about Males as a “minority” of family violence victims could be included under the category of women.

This is NOT inclusion.

And will female perpetrators be included under the category of Men?

Can’t wait to read the data!

This is nonsense!

It is also Inadvertent solidarity with female criminality,

and inadvertent discrimination towards and neglect of child, female and male victims of females.

Child victims of female perpetrators

Maternal Infanticide and Maternal Filicide

<http://www.irishtimes.com/news/world/australian-mother-charged-with-attempted-murder-of-newborn-1.2012940>

<http://www.heraldsun.com.au/news/national/cairns-child-massacre-accused-found-god-denounced-technology/story-fni0xqrb-1227163832647>

<http://m.heraldsun.com.au/news/law-order/killer-mum-in-court-bid-to-access-daughter-she-injured-in-horror-attack/story-fni0fee2-1227083123400?sv=ccb812481eb77aaf07679d2b371e2eef&>

a 1999 U.S. Department of Justice study concluded that between 1976 and 1997 in the United States, mothers were responsible for a higher share of children killed during infancy, while fathers were more likely to have been responsible for the murders of children age 8 or older.^[1]

Furthermore, 52% of the children killed by their mothers (**maternal filicide**) were male, while 57% of the children killed by their fathers (**paternal filicide**) were male.

Parents were responsible for 61% of child murders under the age of five.^[2]

Sometimes, there is a [combination of murder and suicide](#) in filicide cases. On average, according to [FBI](#) statistics, 450 children are murdered by their parents each year in the US.

^[3]<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Filicide>

Re Social Exclusion, Gender Equality and “We can’t have a one size fits all approach.”

As a matter of fact, “excluding” is typical aggressive behaviour on the part of females.

“The words now associated with female aggressive behavior include:

excluding, ignoring, teasing, gossiping, secrets, backstabbing, rumor spreading and hostile [body language](#) (i.e., eye-rolling and smirking).”

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/the-long-reach-childhood/201109/bullying-in-the-female-world>

Rule of Law IS One Size Fits All

"Rule of law, equal application of the law, due process, respect of one person for another are necessary for a peaceful productive society"

Malcolm Fraser

Gender Equality

Gender Equal Application of the Law

<http://www.heraldsun.com.au/news/opinion/justice-system-must-be-blind-to-gender-when-it-comes-to-crime-and-punishment/story-fni0fhie-1227089312201>

Emotional Violence Controlling Behaviours: “She who must be obeyed”

Happy Wife Happy Life?

<http://www.sunnyskyz.com/blog/610/I-Wasn-t-Treating-My-Husband-Fairly-And-It-Wasn-t-Fair#frUxqE4UdtoTohOP.99>

What if she’s not happy? Live in Fear?

The justification by the woman:

That’s ok you have a happy life when she’s happy.

Why?

Because she said so!

Or your life will be miserable if she's not happy.

So when she's happy,

You can live in fear of next time she's unhappy?

What a life!

Emotional violence towards men.

What recourse would a man have if his partner is cruelly emotionally violent, taunting, seeking to provoke, he walks away but she follows him around the house from room to room invading his "personal space" with her head literally "in his face" self-indulgently saying cruel insults calculated to wound deeply, in the belief that he has no recourse to her taunting behaviour?

How can he get her to stop?

He can only leave the situation.

Should he have to?

It's his home too.

Assumptions.

Just a girl thing?

She loses it occasionally?

Happy Wife Happy Life?

He deserved it anyway?

He musta done something bad to make her react like that?

It's men's turn to be victims?

Taunting

A general comment on Taunting and lesser penalties for lesser offences.

I read Alastair Nicholson of the National Centre Against Bullying talk of having lesser penalties for less serious bullying offences so that 1) we don't wait to act until the worst negative impact

2) the judiciary are more likely to award lesser penalties for lesser offences.

And then I saw this scenario happen in an NFL American Football Game.

A player intercepted a pass near the sidelines resulting in a turnover giving possession of the ball to that player's team.

It was a finals match, the scores were tight and it was the last quarter.

When the player intercepted the ball he was understandably excited and he also intercepted the pass in front of players from the opposing team, currently off-field watching from the sidelines.

He was unable to resist the temptation to gesture to the opposition "How did you like that?"

Pretty tame.

But it was "taunting" and the umpires "pinged him" and his team with loss of yardage pushing the team further back from the goal which could have been a significant factor in losing the match.

Did he commit the sin of all time?

No.

Was the penalty severe? No

Did he taunt? Yes.

Is taunting in the NFL wrong? Yes

The penalty was just.

Should a Male or Female have recourse to emotional violence from their partner, in particular taunting?

I argue yes.

:Family violence...includes physical, sexual, psychological, emotional and economic abuse. Any behaviour that physically or emotionally hurts you or makes you scared of being harmed is a form of violence."

http://www.lawhandbook.org.au/fact_sheets/ch11.php

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Strategy of "controlling behaviour"

We should not be focusing on scrutinising legal behaviour at the risk of looking the wrong way when crime occurs.

For instance have you noticed that the tragic Family Violence problem has not improved?

Yes, I suppose you have.

Over zealous focusing on things that aren't wrong at the expense of addressing what is tragically wrong.

Language.

"The week before our Prime Minister promised to "shirt-front" the president of Russia, I was at the gravesite of a man who hit his wife so hard she went through a door."

<http://www.smh.com.au/comment/no-room-for-violent-talk-when-families-are-still-suffering-from-sins-of-the-father-20141017-116ypq.html>

Does the Prime Minister's remark taken out of context have any relevance to Family Violence?

If he'd said it to his wife it would. It would be a threat.

Finger pointing, raising voice, swearing

These are not illegal, nor automatically lead to violence.

Are they relevant to Family Violence?

They are as "controlling behaviour" by prescribing how one can and can't express themself.

I've seen a man actually stifle the expression of another man whose inflexion rised simply as the sound of astonishment at the other man's remarks. The rising inflexion was criticised as raising his voice and inappropriate and disrespectful expression.

I thought this attitude was "Controlling" and "manipulative"

Proactive

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"Let's lock everyone up before they do something wrong?"

"Oh. Due process eh?"

Well what if we just lock up men?"

"Due process again?"

"How about we intervene and corner a human "time-bomb!?"

Proactive may simply be intimidation by the authorities of law-abiding people and family emotional violence.

Family violence intervention orders

Increased Penalties for false reports and spurious complaints

To protect victims we need to determine, to bother to determine who is genuine

Spurious complaints/ false reports turn the victim into a social undesirable.

We must take victims seriously!

Women want to be believed.

So do Men.

In order to take seriously legitimate victims and genuine complaints we must take a very dim view of spurious complaints/ false reports.

There has been no message to the wider community that complaints must be genuine and that there are (should be) severe penalties and consequences for spurious complainants.

We must do this or the legal system will continue be used to “perverse and evil means” in order to victimize.

Spurious complaints waste finite, precious, vital time of the Courts and Police.

I’m sure it would be offensive to Victoria Police line officers to be “used” by a spurious complainant to bully, control, intimidate the victim.

We must bother to determine who is genuine if we are to be just and protect victims.

“He said, She said” and a policy of not bothering to determine who is genuine without severe penalties for spurious complainants only rewards the perpetrator, and creates victims.

PERPETRATORS KNOW THIS!

Perpetrators know a victim’s lack of recourse well!

It is their modus operandi summed up in the expression:

“What are you gonna do?”

(you have no recourse)

I have been informed there is often just one legal aid lawyer available at Court for a complainant and respondent.

This means one side will most likely be unrepresented.

If the Complainant is spurious and has “the” lawyer. The lawyer may pressure the respondent to accept a “No-fault order” “offer you a deal make it short and sweet.”

If the complainant is spurious and their complaint is part of “ongoing emotional violence” toward the respondent, the respondent under stress may wilt and accept a no-fault order just “wanting it all to go away”

If they do, and given that the original complaint is spurious, what is to stop a subsequent spurious complaint of breach of the no-fault order in which the victim would be imprisoned in a severe travesty and there is nothing anyone could do about it.

Or in the case of a genuine application for an intervention order what is to stop a spurious complainant applying for a counter order to “muddy the waters”

“It takes two to tango” is a “win” for the perpetrator by superficially diminishing the credibility of the victim and covering their own tracks.

Some may now assume the victim “asked for it” and the victim “makes the perpetrator act as they do”

Assumptions may well benefit the perpetrator and the perpetrator may manipulate perceptions based on assumptions.

We must bother to determine who is genuine if we are to be just and protect victims.

It only rewards the perpetrator, and creates victims to leave it at “He said, She said” and a policy of not bothering to determine who is genuine, indifference to the crime of perjury, without severe penalties for spurious complaints/ lying to Police, false reports.

Vigilantism

I also argue the authorities need to clarify “If you see something say something” as it has inadvertently “legitimised” vigilantism, the spreading of lies and rumours, covert bullying and cyber bullying.

There is a hyper-vigilant community with vigilantism and what seems to be a perverse notion of “progressive community minded” vigilantism.

<http://www.heraldsun.com.au/leader/outer-east/a-man-who-took-an-innocent-selfie-at-westfield-knox-has-his-image-splashed-all-over-facebook-by-a-mum-who-thought-he-took-photos-of-her-children/story-fnrwkhlp-1227342634069?sv=5df99dd2afa510e238eadc82edc555ed>

“If you see something say something”

See what? Someone you don’t like the look of? A mis-interpretation of law-abiding behaviour?

Say something to who? Facebook? Other Social Media? Everyone you know and run into?

Say something to the authorities if you are genuinely concerned.

And leave it at that.

Complainants must be genuine and alerting the authorities of their concerns,
not vigilantes spreading lies and rumours.

The authorities need to clarify "If you see something say something" and emphasise there is no role for vigilantes to play!

"We will not walk in fear of one another. We will not be driven by fear into an age of unreason if we dig deep in our history and our doctrine" Ed Murrow

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vEvEmkMNYHY>

Family violence towards women.

Sean Connery on slapping women

"I think it depends entirely on the circumstances and if it merits it...If you have tried everything else and, women are pretty good at this, they can't leave it alone. They don't know when to have the last word and you give them the last word but they're not happy with the last word. They want to say it again and get into a really provocative situation, then I think it's (slapping) absolutely right"

Sean Connery Interview with Barbara Walters 1987

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mzXkbJwrN38>

Connery is WRONG is WRONG is WRONG

If Connery couldn't control himself he should've left the situation.

If he had've left the situation we could discuss the question of whether a man should have to leave the house to avoid being taunted and provoked?

The End