

Dr John Jory

Presentation to the Royal Commission into Domestic Violence

CV:

- General Practitioner with 44 years experience
- Family Counsellor and Psychotherapist with 40 years experience
- Sociologist with 40 years experience
- Martial Arts practitioner with 53 years experience

Since the announcement of the establishment of the Royal Commission into Domestic Violence all the public information and opinion I have seen, and I mean **all**, has focussed on male violence against women.

I am unqualified in my support for the concept that there is no excuse for such violence ever.

As public debate into domestic violence against women has evolved over the years its definition has expanded from considering only physical violence to recognising that psychological violation is part of the same spectrum of behaviour and is equally unacceptable

I am also unqualified in my support for this concept. While physical injuries heal, psychological injuries live on and can completely ruin the life of the victim.

There are many forms of domestic violence, but two other forms of domestic violence in particular, have been completely ignored – domestic violence by women against children and domestic violence by women against men.

The vast majority of instances of domestic violence is that of women hitting children and women emotionally violating children by screaming at them or emotionally blackmailing them.

Domestic Violence by Women against Men

1: Physical violence

While male violence against females is seen (rightly) as reprehensible, female violence against males is seen as being not only justifiable but usually funny.

- When Lorena Bobbitt severed husband John's penis in a moment of jealous rage, the entire world thought that it was a huge joke

- At the same time a Latino husband in Carolina severed his wife's nose in a moment of jealous rage. Nobody thought that this was funny
- When Tiger Woods' wife clouted him with a golf club after finding that he had been unfaithful, the entire world thought that it was highly amusing and that he had been given his rightful comeuppances
- If the situation were reversed, would the community have considered it highly amusing and think that she had been given her rightful comeuppances?
- Over one recent weekend I took a count of incidents of relationship violence on television – and I don't watch much television.
 - There was one incident of male violence against a female, and it was portrayed unequivocally as being totally unacceptable.
 - There were eleven incidents of female violence against males, and they were all portrayed as being humorous. They usually involved the woman either slapping the male's face or punching his jaw for some perceived or real slight on her dignity.
- I have been working in full time general practice since 2007, the first five years in a corporate practice and the last three in my own practice. During this time I have seen many thousands of patients.
 - I have only seen one case of the effects of domestic violence - I have attached a photograph.
 - The victim was a young male with cuts to his body. At first he was reluctant to talk to me about the causative incident but, in the intimacy which occurs while the doctor is repairing the lacerated tissues of a victim, he eventually unfolded.
 - He and his girlfriend were drinking wine and were moderately intoxicated. An inconsequential dispute arose, during which she flew into an emotional rage and attacked him with her wine glass. He didn't even think of defending himself physically, but turned away. As can be seen from the photograph, she stabbed him twice.
 - I strongly urged him to report the matter to the police. He refused. I pointed out that, if she were permitted to continue without censure, her next attack, whether on him or a subsequent partner, could be serious or fatal. He was unmoved.
 - On talking with him I arrived at the following conclusions:
 - He felt ashamed and humiliated – he said that, if the matter were made public, he would be the laughing stock of his friends and workmates
 - He blamed himself – he said that it was really his fault because he shouldn't have said anything to make her angry
 - He had no intention of leaving her – he said that he was sure that she felt so guilty that it wouldn't happen again
 - This was a classic case of "Blame the victim."
- Female violence against males is seriously unreported. Reporting of it is seen as undermining the force of the female claim to exclusivity of suffering.

2: Psychological violation

- Most cases of physical violence by a male against a female do not produce injury. They involve a push or a non-injurious slap.
- Women who practice martial arts experience such physicality many times each training session without suffering any ill-effects.
- This is not saying, though, that non-injurious domestic incidents are without damage. They cause severe and long-lasting trauma.
- It is not the physicality of these attacks, however, which causes the damage, it is the psychological violation.
- Physical wounds heal, but psychological ones don't. Unless specifically and professionally treated they fester on and on, often distorting and ruining the person's whole life.
- Men roaring at women has been recognised as a form of violation which is unacceptable.
- Women screeching at men is considered the woman's right. The man probably deserved it anyway.
- I can assert, from my extensive experience, that being screeched at by a woman is just as violating and just as traumatic for a man as being bellowed at by a man is for a woman.
- I can also confidently state that far more men live in fear of their wife's rage than women live in fear of their husband's.

Domestic Violence by Women against Children

- This is by far the commonest form of domestic violence, at both a physical and a psychological level.
- It is where children learn that, if you are tired, depleted, emotionally distraught and at the end of your tether, you have the right to hit a fellow human being.
- Whether it be for reasons of exasperation or for those of guidance and discipline, it is the mother who administers domestic violence against children in the vast majority of cases.
- Even when the father is involved, it is often a case of: "You just wait until your father gets home," which the child sees as being the doing of the mother rather than the father.
- In addition to physically hitting the child, the spectre of a mother screeching indignantly at small children is one which is only too common in our homes, streets and supermarkets.

Personal Observations after Four Decades as a Counsellor

In over four decades of practice as an analytic psychotherapist using techniques of regression into the patient's life experiences, I can make the following observations:

- Relatively few of the thousands of patients I have treated feared their father. The vast majority feared their mother

- In the absence of major trauma, the majority of human emotional issues originate in the patient's experiences with his or her mother during the formative years
- Intentional or unintentional exploitation of this relationship by the mother result in helplessness, resentment and anger in the child
- Because anger towards the mother is defined, by both the mother and society, as being the worst form of blasphemy, the child feels guilt and self-disgust
- The majority of children, as they develop, try to deny these feelings by being compliant and trying to demonstrate to her individually and society in general that they are really "nice" people
- A minority, however, are unable to contain the emotional pressure and act out their repressed anger in acts of both physical and emotional violation on others, usually their partners or their children
- When people come to awareness of these emotional forces in the therapeutic situation, resolution occurs and the persons can continue through their lives no longer hampered by such handicaps
- Over the years three quarters of my patients have been women. The benefits of resolution of the problems benefits women as well as men.

Sociological Perspective

- Social problems exist for a reason.
- A visible social problem is virtually never the result of a single visible cause.
 - An unemployed young person may be seen as being the result of a demotivated, social welfare dependant family, which may be seen as the result of poor educational opportunities, which may be seen as the result of ineffective government policies which may be seen as the result of social pressures by the middle classes, which may be seen and so on.
 - Experience shows that the well intentioned giving of a job to that young person usually doesn't help. When he or she is not capable of performing it efficiently and fails to turn up after a few days it just reinforces stereotypes of the unemployed and further ingrains the problems.
- So it is with domestic violence.
- Domestic violence is about unresolved feelings of anger, fear, self-loathing, helplessness and injustice. These issues are not just character deficiencies in the perpetrator, they are manifestations of deeply ingrained social processes.

What Should Be Done?

Basic principles of counselling and conflict resolution apply to domestic violence.

1. Genuine commitment from involved parties
2. Definition of problem
3. Determination of dynamic processes
4. Acknowledgement from all parties of their own contribution to the problem
5. Formulation of strategies to resolve issues
6. Conscientious application of these strategies.

Genuine Commitment from Involved Parties:

- As a general rule, when two parties seek outside help to resolve issues within their relationship, each party considers him or herself to be the innocent victim and the other to be the unjustifiable perpetrator. In other words, their motivation is not to have a problem resolved, but to have the other party exposed, blamed and punished.
- Unless this is explained to them at the beginning of the process, unless they are made aware that they may not find revelation of their own contribution to the problems to be particularly comfortable and unless they agree to follow through no matter where the process may take them, there is very little chance of success.

Definition of Problem:

- The problem should be fully defined at the very beginning of the process
- My definition of domestic violence is “The physical or psychological abuse within a household perpetrated by a member with a position of advantage against a disadvantaged member.”
- The full range of domestic relationships should be defined:
 - Man to woman
 - Woman to man
 - Man to male children
 - Man to female children
 - Woman to male children
 - Woman to female children
 - Child to child
 - Gay relationship
 - Man to man
 - Woman to woman
- The full range of violence should be defined
 - Physical violence
 - Causing significant medical injury
 - Causing little or no medical injury
 - Psychological violence
 - Bullying and intimidation
 - Emotional manipulation
 - Financial manipulation
 - Sexual violence
 - Forceful sexual molestation
 - Manipulative flirtatiousness
 - Manipulation of another party’s sexual insecurities
- The full range of emotions experienced by the various parties should be defined
- A complete picture of the occurrence pattern of incidents over time should be given:
 - Media, politicians, police and special interest groups all tend to present a disproportionate impression of the prevalence of antisocial events. For example, when the Assistant Commissioner for Traffic lectures the public on the road toll or the media trot out the word “Carnage,” they are implying that all members of the public are irresponsible. They do not mention that

the road toll is a fraction of what it was thirty years ago or that, when population growth and road use are factored in, it is continually diminishing.

- I know that, as a doctor attending casualty departments for the last 45 years, the rate of presentation of domestic violence victims has been decreasing steadily over this whole time
- More rigorous reporting criteria may be giving an impression that male violence against women is increasing (although no such rigor is present in reporting female violence against either men or children). The picture needs to be clarified and presented to the public in a just and unbiased fashion
- Most reporting is based on the orthodoxy that there is no justification, ever, for domestic violence by a man against a woman
 - Presentation of information which explains why a man might reach the stage of being violent is seen as being completely unacceptable on the grounds that it gives him an excuse to escape responsibility for his actions
 - This orthodoxy is, however, modified in various cases:
 - Domestic violence by indigenous men against women is seen as being regrettable, but not damnable because of the social disadvantage involved
 - Domestic violence of interned refugee asylum seekers is seen as being understandable for the same reason
 - We can conclude, therefore, that understanding of contributing factors is only unacceptable for mainstream society.

Determination of Dynamic Processes:

- Instances of physical or psychological violation rarely occur in an isolated manner. There is usually a pattern:
 - Mood changes appear in the perpetrator and build in intensity leading to the violation
 - Some life event occurs which triggers off the process in the perpetrator
- The Royal Commission is in a position to establish the dynamic processes which create the sense of injustice, helplessness and anger which lead to domestic violence in the first place, and also the processes which precede and trigger off violent episodes.
- In individual psychotherapy, the bringing to conscious awareness of an individual's unconscious processes enables that individual to return to mental health
- The same is true at a society-wide level. The attainment by the general public of an awareness of the psychodynamic processes which lead to domestic violence is a major step to resolution of the problem.

Acknowledgement from all Parties of Their Contribution to the Problem:

- This is, I think, the most vital step
- Until now it has been an article of faith that in male to female domestic violence, the male is the unqualified villain and is to blame for the entire scenario, while the female is the innocent victim and completely blameless
- Blame:
 - Understanding contributing factors does not attribute blame.

- In the therapeutic context, whether it be with individuals or groups, there is no such thing as blame.
- Blame is a process of trying to project responsibility onto another.
- For healing, resolution or closure, the participants must understand not only the dynamic mechanisms which have produced the problem and the parts others have played in it, but also they must understand and take responsibility for the part they have played
- When social standards have been breached, the persons responsible must take responsibility for their actions and accept the penalties dictated by society. These can vary from humiliation in the eyes of others for minor breaches to gaol terms for major offenders
- Male role:
 - For the last 40 years the vast majority of males have been blindly accepting gender blame for perceived mistreatment of women.
 - Men who have spent their entire lives endeavouring to act correctly towards women still feel guilty about unconscious mistreatment of women, or because of some sort of transference of guilt from visible transgressors such as wife beaters.
- Female role:
 - The female assumption of innocent victimhood and the subsequent demands that they be given a privileged position in society with the perceived villains being punished and themselves being protected from any possible inconvenience has led to various situations:
 - Unacceptable female behaviour is totally ignored – the fact that, between 1985 and 1995, 29 mothers killed their children, or that virtually all family child murders of children under 10 were committed by mothers is not acknowledged
 - When unacceptable female behaviour cannot be ignored, the perpetrators are treated with sympathy and understanding
 - On 28 May 2015 Akon Guode performed a U-Turn before driving over a footpath, through shrubbery and into a lake at Wyndham Vale, drowning her three children
 - On 4 September 2005 Robert Farquharson veered across the Princes Highway near Winchelsea and crashed through a fence before coming to rest in a farm dam, drowning his three children
 - The issue to consider here is not the innocence or guilt of the parties, but the difference in reporting by the media between these two cases
 - In both cases it is understandable that a reporter would consider that both drivers had deliberately driven into the water
 - In the case of Robert Farquharson they were indignantly baying for blood from the first, not content to report the matter neutrally and allow the courts to work out the facts

- In the case of Akon Guode they were the embodiment of non-sensational reporting, taking a very sympathetic tack and talking about how she had felt dizzy at the time
- If Mr Guode had been driving, would they have been so understanding?

Formulation of Strategies to Resolve Issues:

- Up until now, the major strategies relating to the domestic violence issues have been:
 - Limitation of the definition of domestic violence to that of male violence against female and, to a lesser extent, against children
 - Refusal to consider any of the dynamics of the causes of male violence on the grounds that any such consideration would:
 1. Be an inexcusable slur on the sanctity of womanhood and motherhood
 2. Be seen as blaming women
 3. Be used by demonised males as an excuse for further excesses of violence against women
 - Introduction of ever increasingly draconian social condemnation and legal penalties against males who are violent, males who collude with violence and males who potentially could be violent (i.e. all males)
 - Monopolisation of publicity to presentation of only one-sided considerations of the entire gender issue, projecting indignant guilt on the male half of the community
 - Refusal to acknowledge that:
 1. The vast majority of males do not indulge in domestic violence, do not have any intention of indulging in domestic violence and do everything in their power to prevent domestic violence
 2. In real terms domestic violence has diminished to a fraction of what it was four decades ago
 - Scornful invalidation of any efforts to present a balanced picture
 1. Refusal to acknowledge any evidence which doesn't support the concept of male guilt and female innocence
 2. Demonisation of any person who speaks up on the issue as being a misogynist, deranged and a monster
- The effect of this process has been:
 - To increase the level of injustice levied on the male half of the community, thus increasing the degree of helplessness, frustration and resentment
 - To increase the intensity of denial behaviour in the majority of men, making them more compliant with the social demands and less able to speak up for themselves
 - To increase the intensity of emotion in that small proportion of the male community who act as a vent for the unresolved and unacknowledged anger of the whole community
 - In other words, as with all issues of social injustice, the more repressive and draconian the measures taken to repress them, the more they stoke the fires

which cause them and the more they complicate and perpetuate the problems

- Establishment of effective strategies:
 - These strategies need to be:
 1. The establishment of forums where all parties involved, i.e. all members of the community, are made aware of the whole dynamic picture of the issues and of the interactions therein
 2. The establishment of a convention that there is no such thing as blame or fault in open acknowledgement of a person's own contribution to the problem (which is not inconsistent with each person taking responsibility for the consequences of any of their actions which have contravened social conventions – e.g. it does not excuse wife-beaters from the legal consequences of their actions)
 3. The establishment of a convention that, when a person or persons acknowledge their own contribution to a problem, it is not seized on by the other parties and used as ammunition against them (which, if it happens, is merely those other parties refusing to acknowledge responsibility for their part in the problem)
 - The levels of communication to be considered:
 1. Public level:
 - Public education:
 - Government publicity campaigns (similar to the Grim Reaper campaign or the anti-smoking campaign). These would define in an understandable way that, while every person must take responsibility for his or her own actions, there are two sides to every story, that we all need to recognise our part in our problems and that help is available
 - Media awareness – This is not able to be controlled by regulation, but is amenable to social pressure. Media need to be made aware of the social irresponsibility of one sided and sensationalistic reporting on the domestic violence issue
 - Public support services:
 - At the moment virtually all public support services automatically follow the politically correct policy of demonisation of men and sanctification of women. While this is a source of great satisfaction to many, it is of no help to men who are genuinely trying to resolve their issues. This must change if effective resolution of the domestic violence problem is to be achieved
 2. Individual level:
 - The resources available to the individuals are:
 - Websites, pamphlets and other passive sources
 - Telephone help lines and internet chat services, which provide remote interactive assistance
 - Public individual counselling services

- Private individual counselling services
- All the above services are provided by individuals who have chosen to be involved in their careers because they wish to help people. By definition they are caring people. However, they take their definition of caring from the prevailing orthodoxy, so, at the moment, they are quite supportive in their own way but are actually, no matter how well-intentioned, more a part of the problem than of the solution. There needs to be a major re-education of all such helpers if the fundamental problems of domestic violence are to be addressed.

Conscientious Application of these Strategies

- In the century or so since psychological intervention has been available, many different systems have been developed. All of those which have become established do so because they have proven to be effective
- One could even say that, if any one of them were universally applied, the world would have no problems
- Experience has shown, however, that, no matter how effective the system may be, the main obstacle to its success is in the failure of the participants to consistently apply its strategies
- This is because, no matter how much individuals may dislike the unpleasant aspects of their lives, and no matter how much they think that they would do anything to escape the entrapments which make them miserable, they are actually secure in their misery and, when push comes to shove, cannot sustain the efforts needed to produce meaningful changes in their circumstances
- If there is to be a real and fundamental improvement to the problem of domestic violence not only is it essential to arrive at a real understanding of the problem and to set up effective services to educate about it and to deal with it, but it is also vital that part of the resources be devoted to following through at both a social and an individual level to support people and institutions when the inevitable urge to lapse into the security of their accustomed misery arrives.

Overview

The Royal Commission into Domestic Violence is in a unique position to exert sociological influence. It is a social crossroads and has a choice of two paths of action:

- It can follow the well-trodden path of considering only the (admittedly horrendous) presentations of female victims of male violence and violation and then present the predictable recommendations of escalated repression and punishment of the male community, or
- It can take a balanced overview of the problem, consider all of the factors involved, arrive at an in depth understanding of the complete issue and pioneer a path of real resolution and social improvement.

Following the second path would, in my opinion, not only resolve the domestic violence issue, but would provide a template for treatment of so many of today's social problems,

such as drug usage and gambling, which have only been exacerbated by the well-intentioned interventions of standard orthodoxy.

Attachments:

Link to:

THE KILLING OF CHILDREN IN VICTORIA, 1985-1995 A Report to the Criminology Research Council

<p://crg.aic.gov.au/reports/32-93-4.pdf>

Link to:

The Surprising Truth About Women and Violence

<http://time.com/2921491/hope-solo-women-violence/>

Link to:

<http://www.3aw.com.au/news/three-children-dead-and-one-other-fighting-for-life-after-car-crashes-into-lake-at-wyndham-vale-20150409-1mgt9h.html>

