

## FAMILY VIOLENCE ROYAL COMMISSION GREGORY RIDDETT

I am an Accredited Mental Health Social Worker and Clinical Health Sociologist working in private practice. I have worked in health and welfare since 1974. I am a former senior criminal investigation officer with the Department of Social Security. I visited people's homes five days per week for somewhere between 13 to 16 years with the Department of Social Security. Those years exposed me to intimate details of family breakdown and family violence. My training and practice is to deal in factual evidence and not to pre-judge. If we ever speak, you will see I am straight to the point.

### **SERVICE DISCRIMINATION**

#### **Non-male abuser**

In early 2010 I contacted a family violence crisis centre for a lady and her children to arrange help. I was advised by the crisis centre that the lady and her children were not eligible for help as her abuser was not male! In that case the abuser was the lady's mother. (Some centres would not take male children).

#### **Gay men**

Gay men were not considered to be in a family situation and it was discouraged to engage with them. (CAFS)

#### **Male victims**

When I raised the issue of male victims of family violence with my executive manager, she told me to provide services to them and to keep it quiet, and do not advertise that we provide a service to male victims of family violence as we did not want any trouble from the feminists in the service. That program was the federal Men and Family Relationships Program (Bethany).

Whenever a man claimed to be a victim of family violence by his female partner it was dismissed as being retaliation to his (supposed) abuse of her and they were funnelled into the Men's Behaviour Change Program (MBCP). All men coming into the Men and Family Relationship Program (Federal) were to be assessed for MBCP (State) first regardless of what the men wanted (CAFS).

A male victim of attempted murder by his wife was also pressured to enter the MBCP as he yelled at her after her attempt to kill him with her car. The lady concerned denied it to the police yet admitted the attempt to me. The police did lay any charges against her with an attempt on my client's life or well-being (CAFS).

### **GENDERED**

#### **Heterosexual**

The following, point 14 from your web page is a case in point;

*14 Research shows that it is overwhelmingly women and children who are affected by family violence, and men who are violent towards them. For this reason, family violence is described as being 'gendered'. Although family violence is gendered, men may also be affected by it.*

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The gendered argument is seriously challenged by this massive bibliography which also contains Australian research.

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**REFERENCES EXAMINING ASSAULTS BY WOMEN ON THEIR SPOUSES OR MALE PARTNERS: AN ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY**

*Martin S. Fiebert  
Department of Psychology  
California State University, Long Beach*

*Abstract: This bibliography examines 343 scholarly investigations; 270 empirical studies and 73 reviews and/or analyses, which demonstrate that women are as physically aggressive, or more aggressive, than men in their relationships with their spouses or male partners. The aggregate sample size in the reviewed studies exceeds 440,850.*

*The full bibliography can be found at <http://web.csulb.edu/~mfiebert/>*

In my work with male Victims it is impossible to use the gendered model.

**Lesbian**

The gendered argument does not stand up in lesbian relationships which have a high family violence rate of up to 52% (“No More Secrets”, Janice Ristock).

In my work with Lesbians it is impossible to use the gendered model.

**Ethics and Duty of Care**

**“Identification of characteristics and patterns of male domestic partner abusers”**  
<http://crg.aic.gov.au/reports/200001-04.pdf>

Wayne Scott’s research Pages 32 and 35 identified serious concerns in relation to escalation of violence by men who had completed the MBCP. Those findings were dismissed as “we need to be more careful with who we let conduct research”. Anecdotal evidence from some partners supported the research.

When the issue of duty of care was raised in relation to the failings of the MBCP as in making some men more violent it was dismissed as men not taking responsibility for their abusive behaviour. I was also told that duty of care had been discussed with the Department of Justice and I was assured there were no duty of care issues with men returning home more violent as a result of completing the MBCP. This was despite the fact that it was known to do so (CAFS).

It was brought to my attention by a private practice psychologist in Ballarat that she was counselling a number of men in relation to suicidal ideation as a result of having

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completed or in the course of completing the MBCP. When I brought this to the attention of the program manager I was disciplined for discussing the issue with the psychologist, despite the psychologist raising the concerns with me. I was also told by my manager that I was not doing a good job as I let my Social Work ethics stop me. On another occasion I asked my manager if we would ever discover what caused family violence. In an abusive manner my manager slammed his fist down on my desk in front of me stating that family violence was caused by patriarchy and men were patriarchs, end of story!!! This started a slide for me where I was a victim of bullying (including sexual innuendos) by my manager and another male staff member (CAFS).