


Submission to the Royal Commission into Family Violence

Mentality
Promotion Prevention and Intervention
of
Domestic Violence against Men and their Children
May 2015

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Background on Mentality

Mentality is a community network of concerned men and women, researchers, support professionals, and organisations – providing competent, accessible, and evidence-based advocacy, information, education, and support services to male victims of domestic violence and their children.

Mentality's **vision** is to create an equal and democratic partnership between all stakeholders within an integrated family system that focuses on objective outcomes for victims of domestic violence. We aim to promote a culture free of hate, discrimination, and traumatisation of victims; where men and their children will be treated with respect and they are able to choose from a range of accessible intervention and support options based on peer-reviewed robust and regulated research evidence.

Mentality's **mission** is to deliver services, develop policy, advocate and support change to help achieve our vision by encouraging a balanced approach to the complex issue of family violence. We aim to develop awareness of the prevalence of violence against men, their traumatic experiences, the affect on men and their children, and the isolation they feel as a result of a Gynocentric Australian society.

Mentality provides **services** to men and children who have been the victim of family violence, with an understanding of the needs of men within the spectrum of social isolation. By emphasising the need to protect male victims, Mentality aims to achieve **direct outcome** such as a real reduction of the prevalence of domestic violence and thus improved health and relationships.

Domestic Violence against Men and their Children – The Facts

Research into domestic violence against men indicates that:

- a) domestic violence occurs with equal frequency among both men and women (thorough and empirical data collection may, in fact, indicate that there is a great number of male victims to female victims; and that women perpetrate domestic violence more frequently);
- b) male victims of domestic violence are likely to be underestimated because not only are they fearful to report violence to the police, they are also bullied into believing that in a patriarchal society it is impossible for a woman to have committed violence against them;
- c) survey participants are primed to think of assaults as only committed by males, hence they are more likely to report domestic violence as a problem caused by men;
- d) there are few if any investigations into the rates of sexual and psychological domestic violence of women against men;
- e) policy and practice responses from social and justice services are based on the dominant feminist patriarchal theory;
- f) under a feminist patriarchal theory it is believed that women cannot use domestic violence against men because it is simply an issue of power and control of which only men are capable;
- g) women who use domestic violence against men are unable to secure services as the system does not acknowledge their existence;

- h) women are violent and cause significant physical and psychological damage when committing domestic violence, using objects to hit, throwing objects, striking men with vehicles, bite, and using weapons;
- i) men do not seek help for issues a Gynocentric society deems impossible;
- j) men do not seek help for fear they may be ridiculed;
- k) when calling service providers male victims report that services can only help women and that they are blamed and told it is they who are the abuser;
- l) police fail to respond when men call due to an incident of domestic violence;
- m) police ridicule male victims, incorrectly arrest them without evidence even when it is the female who is the perpetrator;
- n) females misuse the legal and social service systems to inappropriately block access to children or gain financial advantage;
- o) men often stay with their violent partner in order to protect the children from their partners violence;
- p) controlling female perpetrators continue control against men after separation through police and the legal system;
- q) surveys do not study the externalised impact of domestic violence on men, as men often suffer differently to women, including the experience of primary post-traumatic stress disorder and secondary alcoholism; and
- r) men are killed by women;

Despite an overwhelming amount of empirically obtained data finding that women commit domestic violence against men, these findings are ignored by the community due to a Gynocentric focus on unscientific feminist patriarchal theory and its immense pressure on politicians, researchers, and policy makers.

As a result, we find that the current approaches in addressing family violence are entirely inadequate, ill-informed, misguided, non evidence-based, and prejudiced. The data now suggests that despite greater government spending, higher community awareness, and funding of numerous support agencies the number of victims is increasing rather than decreasing. Add to this the number of unheard male voices and we truly have an intolerably endemic situation. Despite the systems failure, feminist lobbying groups scream for more of the same rather than an innovative, egalitarian and evidence-based approach to the problem.

The Future of the Prevention and Intervention of Domestic Violence

Mentality welcomes the Royal Commission into Family Violence, but fears that it will be blind to the prevalence and impact of both domestic violence against men and the re-traumatisation a Gynocentric Family System has on this large population.

Issues, which now require urgent attention include:

1. current research design lacking internal and external validity;
2. service development based on and measured with anecdotal evidence;
3. the community tolerating and even condoning domestic violence against men;
4. the total lack of support for male victims of domestic violence;
5. the lack of regulation and monitoring of a feminist-patriarchal domestic violence industry; and
6. the discrimination against men.

CONSIDERATION FOR THE ROYAL COMMISSION AND ITS GOALS

Current research seems to be entirely survey based with question design susceptible to confirmation bias, non-representative of the population, lack of random sampling, resulting in a large margin of error. Males are always under-represented in victim surveys but over-represented in perpetrator surveys. These facts are withheld from the public and research is purported to be scientific rather than anecdotal and biased.

An objective analysis of the current state of the family system would suggest that judicial, health, and community services are entirely Gynocentric, supporting only females and their children (if those children are accompanied by a female).

The theoretical approach guiding research design need to be more diverse to attempt to explain a complex issues. The sole use of feminist theory cannot explain the phenomenon. In fact, it results in damaging bias to such an extend that even the Royal Commission cannot bring itself to say that men 'are' victims of domestic violence, but opts to say that men 'may' be affected by domestic violence, stemming from a belief system that purports that we live in a patriarchal society and thus is it impossible for men to be victims. The feminist theoretical approach thus lacks validity and external consistency as it does not explain why most men do not commit violence against women, why women commit violence against men, and why there is violence among lesbian couples.

It is good to note that the Royal Commission acknowledges that "it is difficult to measure the precise prevalence and impact of family violence". Nevertheless, this is due to the poor research design and a fear what robust empirical data collection may find, damaging a feminist domestic violence industry.

We also suspect that the Royal Commission refers here to women who do not report family violence only, which would be disappointing, as it is primarily men who do not feel comfortable in reporting family violence committed against them. In fact, research indicates that only five percent of male victims of domestic violence report their abuse, whereas 29 percent of female victims do. A simple projection would then indicate that the prevalence of domestic violence against men is, in fact, very similar to that of women.

The Royal Commission also uses emotive language such as “substantially more” rather than scientific language such as ‘significantly more’ which, if used, would have to be substantiated with the publishing of standard deviations and margins of error. To date we have been unable to find any such empirical reporting in the literature the Royal Commission relies upon.

The Royal Commission states that there is “a need to increase public awareness of the problem, and to change attitudes that blame those affected by family violence” yet there is no mention of the overwhelming community aptitude, which condones violence against men and in fact finds it humorous at times.

The media, advertising and sport find violence against men tolerable and even admirable. Men are depicted as stupid, lazy, and inferior to women.

NON-EFFICACY IN THE RESPONSE TO FAMILY VIOLENCE

The results speak for themselves. Family violence against men has increased while violence against women has remained steady over the last twenty years.

The increase, rather than decrease, of the prevalence in family violence is likely due to the failure to address the problem by acknowledging its complexity. Instead, we do the same as we did with drugs some 20 to 30 years ago by declaring ‘War on Drugs’; we now simply declare ‘War on Men’. Making a complex social issue a purely political one. As such, it would be political suicide to speak about domestic violence against men. How then, can feminist groups continue to claim that we live in a patriarchal society when men are attacked for speaking out, politicians are held hostage, men have no services provided to them, need to battle the legal system but opt to simply give up, funding and support services are solely provided to females, women are able to make vexatious and frivolous accusations, and male victims are re-traumatized. An objective, rather than subjective and theoretical, analysis clearly indicates that this is not a patriarchal society but (at least in the area of family violence) a gynaeocracy.

The Royal Commission acknowledges the groundbreaking efforts but fails to operationalize groundbreaking. If the objective was to demonize men and re-traumatize male victims of domestic violence then the efforts were indeed groundbreaking. If the objective was to reduce the amount of family violence then the data speaks for itself – it was a miserable failure. Yet, it seems our community is asked to invest and do more of the same rather than invest in new innovative and evidence-based prevention and interventions.

DISCRIMINATORY REFORMS TO FAMILY VIOLENCE.

Policies and legal responses have been biased, non-evidence-based, politically emotive/motivated, discriminatory against men and their children, and traumatizing for male victims of domestic violence. The Royal Commission cannot state that responses to family violence have improved, the data suggests otherwise. Simply doing something and wasting funding on programs that do not improve outcome is not a desirable response for our community.

So called public education campaigns look more like propaganda than evidence-based education.

Victoria Police has no strategy to reduce family violence against men and their children; resulting in under reporting and at times heavy handed intimidation by Victoria Police against males.

IMPROVING OUR RESPONSE TO FAMILY VIOLENCE AND ENSURING THE SAFETY OF PEOPLE AFFECTED BY FAMILY VIOLENCE

First and foremost 'education' and 'research' that informs the family violence system needs to be reviewed and empirical research design promoted. From a clear picture we can then have informed policy development and service design.

Unbiased and empirical evidence may indicate that:

- We need health services supporting males and their children;
- Better and fairer Court involvement when it comes to male victims;
- Police involvement that is free from ridicule directed at male victims;
- A Court system that is less strained by filtering frivolous and vexatious complaints;
- Criminal prosecution of individuals who make frivolous and vexatious complaints; and
- A democratic, inclusive and integrated multi-agency approach.

MAKING PEOPLE WHO HAVE BEEN VIOLENT ACCOUNTABLE AND HELPING THEM TO CHANGE THEIR BEHAVIOUR

While there are no services available for male victims of domestic violence, there are also no services available for female perpetrators.

Programs that are available to male perpetrators are condescending and provided by 'professionals' with little to no experience or qualifications. The industry of male blaming is also un-regulated, allowing service providers to design interventions, which show little to no efficacy.

FAMILY VIOLENCE AND PARTICULAR GROUPS AND COMMUNITIES

It is interesting to note that the Royal Commission shows greater concern for small populations such as Aboriginal and Torres Straight Islanders, CALD, gay, lesbian, transgender, then men who make up half the population.

CONCLUSION

It is entirely anticipated that the Royal Commission will ignore all suggestion by the few men and organisations who haven't been muzzled by a Gynocentric research culture which aggressively apposes all male voices and does everything to distract from its lack of evidence-base and poor scientific procedure. It is, however, encouraging that men are starting to voice their concern on social media from which it is hoped a respectful, democratic, and blame-free discussion will emerge.

As long as violence against men is condoned we cannot hope for a society free of domestic violence.

As long as empirical data collection methods are ignored by researches in an attempt to sell their fudged data to the public, we cannot hope to find real solutions.

As long as we approach domestic violence as a 'WAR AGAINST MEN', we cannot hope to find equality.

As long as we simplify the complex issue of domestic violence, we cannot hope to reduce prevalence.

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