
Book Review

Lehmann, P., & Simmons, C. (2009). *Strength-based batterer intervention: A new paradigm in ending family violence*. New York: Springer Publishing Company.

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Working with men who use violence against their partners is difficult and challenging work. As a field of practice, working with this population is growing and expanding on a continual basis. Historically, the mindset regarding working with men who abuse was quite narrow and there was little hope for change. The medical model would suggest that the prognosis for change was poor. For a long time, and some would suggest this pattern still continues, groups for men who abuse their partners were run along very narrow lines as well. For the past 20 years the primary model of ‘batterer intervention program’ (BIP) was the model developed in Duluth Minnesota. This model involved a mixture of the presentation of psycho-educational material in conjunction with a feminist analysis of violence against women. The Duluth model has remained the centerpiece of many programs throughout the United States and Canada.

However, as the field has expanded, there has been a growing interest in developing new and alternative methods for working with men who use violence in their relationships. Given the fact that the issue of violence against women is not dissipating, there has been a growing desire to engage men differently around their violence in the hopes of creating genuine change. While the Duluth model did not necessarily create the notion of confrontation, the model had become synonymous with a confrontational methodology. Many therapists began to experiment with new ways of engaging these men in the hopes of moving beyond the pervasive lack of change that were so often considered a part of these programs. Increasingly, methodologies such as cognitive behavioral therapy, narrative therapy and strength-based approaches have found their way into the discussion as treatment options for men who use violence in their intimate relationships.

Concurrently, there has been an increase in books designed to guide facilitators in adapting these new methodologies to work with violent men. The latest of these is entitled *Strength-Based Batterer Intervention: A New Paradigm in Ending Family Violence*, edited by Peter Lehmann, PhD and Catherine Simmons, PhD. Both of the editors bring substantive histories of working in the field of violence against women and are involved in projects at the University of Texas at Arlington and University of Tennessee, respectively. This book brings together some of the current innovators of practice with men who use violence. This book, according to the editors, is part of a shift in the paradigm of working with men who use violence in intimate relationships.

This book is a welcome addition to the growing body of literature on working with men who abuse. Comprised of ten chapters, the editors have attracted a cornucopia of practitioners

and theorists from the field of batterer treatment. The book is constructed with three distinct sections: a) a theoretical basis for strength-based practices, b) theoretical models, and c) practical tools. The editors provide a one-stop shopping experience for practitioners wanting to broaden their practice or are looking at alternative ways to deliver service to this population.

While the contributors to the book are convincing in their discussion of the need for a new paradigm, they provide the greatest benefit to readers by presenting new theoretical models and practical tools. (Omit the second sentence, which is redundant.) Solution-focused treatment, the use of motivational interviewing, the application of narrative therapy, cognitive behavioral therapy, and the Good Lives model all find a distinct presence within this book. Each chapter gives the reader a background on the particular theoretical position and then connects the therapeutic intervention to the work associated with strength-based practice and working with men who abuse. Each of these chapters is succinct and well written and offers an excellent overview for the interested reader.

This book truly excels, in the section dedicated to looking forward and the presentation of tools to integrate into practice. These tools, for the most part, can be used to facilitate engagement and assessment in virtually any group setting. To offer up such a vast array of helpful tools is generous to say the least. There are 20 different tools offered at the back of this book that a practitioner can easily implement within a group setting or individually with men who use violence.

The field of batterer intervention programs is quickly expanding beyond the Duluth model which has become the 'traditional' mode of thinking in the field. This book offers an alternative paradigm and embraces the notion of working with men from many different perspectives. For those who are working on ending violence against women and are interested in innovative practices designed to improve engagement with a typically difficult population, this book is a must have. It is likely that this book will find itself on many therapists' bookshelves and hopefully the practices will find their way into many group settings. If the authors have their way, we are entering a paradigm shift and hopefully women will be the beneficiaries of the work that has gone into this book.

References

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