“I can be part of the answer”: Overcoming the Obstacles to the Prevention of Men’s Domestic Violence towards Women

By

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# Table of Contents

**Executive Summary**

1. **Introduction**
   - About this report
   - Background
     - What is meant by men’s domestic violence against women
     - What is meant by prevention
   - NZ Government initiatives on prevention
     - It’s Not Okay Campaign
     - White Ribbon Campaign
   - Why research engaging men in prevention?
     - The current state of knowledge
   - Why is masculinity relevant to the prevention of domestic violence?
     - What do we know about the construction of masculinities?
       - Hegemonic masculinity
       - Complicit masculinity
       - Subordinated or marginalised masculinity
       - Inclusive masculinity
       - Imagined masculinity
       - Being Cool: NZ masculine identities and violence prevention
     - Recommendations for engaging men in prevention
   - The goals of this research project
   - The structure of the report

2. **Methodology**
   - Safety and Confidentiality
   - Participants
   - Procedures
   - Table 1.
   - Influences

3. **Findings**
   - Masculinity and men’s relationships with women
     - Being the man - masculinities
     - Being the provider
The traditional New Zealand man
  Countering the romance of traditional roles 47
Traditional roles and cultural traditions 54
Summary 55

Masculinity and men’s domestic violence towards women 57
  Patriarchy, colonisation and men’s violence 57
  Being strong and powerful – having status 59
  Being a new immigrant and powerlessness 63
  Being the Provider 64
  Provider status and legitimate spending 69
  Woman as providers diminishes the status of men 73
Intergenerational effects 77
Summary 81

Masculinity and obstacles to prevention 82
  ‘Men don’t talk about emotions’ 82
  Emotions as weakness: identity portrayal and status 83
  Men are shut down emotionally 87
  ‘Pressure builds and it breaks’ 88
  Alcohol legitimates men’s emotional expression 94
  Alcohol use creates harmful emotional expression 96
  Contesting men don’t talk about emotions 96
Loyalty to your mates 99
  Language of loyalty 101
  Men’s support of violence prevention as disloyal to the team 107
  Contesting men opposing violence towards women is disloyal to men 115
Societal Values on Gender 117
  It’s okay to hit women 118
  Some women need discipline 120
  Women, provocation and male status/pride 122
  Behind closed doors you can hurt back 126
  Contesting values that legitimate violence towards women 128
Summary 130

Masculinity and existing prevention programmes 133
  It’s Not Okay Campaign 133
  White Ribbon Day 140
    The loyalty problem 144
    Contesting loyalty 147
    Men don’t wear ribbons 149
There are people like you – there is a way out

**Overcoming the obstacles**

Moral scrutiny
- Fairness and justice
- Taking a moral stand
- Thinking independently, making good choices and taking responsibility
- Breaking the mould

Pre-marriage courses

Holding men accountable
- Accountability groups
- Providing a climate to talk

Use mass media
- Use dominance to address gender – redefine strength
- Understand masculine identity and get the messages right
- Understand the hierarchies
- Use influential figures
- Use education campaigns

Use third parties to raise issues

Make non-violence the theme of the big events

**Summary**

4. Conclusions

5. Recommendations

6. References

**Appendix A**
Executive Summary

This study was concerned with overcoming the obstacles to the prevention of domestic violence by providing a snapshot of masculinities and intimate heterosexual relationships in New Zealand and by determining the association between masculinities and engaging men in the prevention of men’s domestic violence towards women. Twenty eight ordinary men aged between 18 and 65 from a range of backgrounds were invited to participate in focus group discussions. The men were mostly of New Zealand European and Pasifika ethnicities. The discussions were audio-recorded and the recordings transcribed. Transcriptions were analysed using discourse analysis.

This study found a number of ways in which masculine practices and values affected the prevention of men’s domestic violence towards women. Many of the men portrayed the provider identity as an important defining feature of masculinity for them in their relationships with women although some spoke of the importance of this role as unspoken rather than overtly discussed with their partners. Some men spoke of this role as the source of tension when there were consumer pressures on them to provide that they were not able to fulfil. Some participants represented traditional masculinities as associated with male dominance and authority in the home and as associated with financial decision-making. While some men spoke with nostalgia of these historically clear gender identities others portrayed the Barry Crump/Jake the Muss identities as media representations of traditional New Zealand men to be avoided. Some men spoke of the expectation within these traditional masculinities, that men would go to war, and the historical and contemporary impact on men including the closing down of their emotional expression.

The men described the ways in which certain masculinities contributed to violence towards women. Some of the men portrayed status and feeling powerful as important within certain constructions of masculinity and some portrayed interactions with women partners or family members contributing to men feeling powerless and leading to men’s violence. Some of the men spoke about the difficulty with fulfilling the provider role, or perceived criticisms of a man’s provider ability, or women having
greater provider status, contributing to a man feeling powerless and potentially reacting with violence or seeking to assert his authority with violence. This finding has particular implications for men living in financial hardship and may account for the greater level of men’s violence towards women during recessions or times of economic uncertainty (WHO, 2004). Some men described the powerlessness of being a new immigrant, influences of traditional masculinities and cultures on their fathers’ authority as new immigrants to this country, the cultural differences in the practices of masculinity between their old and new countries and the resultant violence that they and their mothers experienced from their fathers. Some men described the impact of intergenerational domestic violence on men who had witnessed or experienced such violence, the determination to be different, and the need for assistance to move away from these past “moulds” or “default settings”.

In some men’s accounts some forms of masculinity constructed emotional expression other than aggression as weak and such constructions impacted on men’s ability to talk about emotional matters such as relationship issues with their wives or girlfriends or others. These constructions limited men’s ability to express emotions other than anger or aggression. The impact on men was portrayed as a build up of emotional tension, because of the failure to speak to others of matters that were troubling them, and a pressure release through violence towards their loved ones. Some men described alcohol or drug use as allowing for the legitimate expression of men’s emotions, otherwise not acceptable within certain masculinities, whereas others described violence as a possible outcome of the use of alcohol when the man was emotionally troubled.

The forms of masculinity that limited emotional expression were described as one of a number of obstacles to the prevention of men’s domestic violence towards women. Loyalty to the mates was evident as an obstacle to any prevention campaign that highlighted men’s domestic violence towards women as some men constituted such a gender specific approach as gender divisive. Such loyalty discourses were evident in the language of some men who depicted a focus on men’s violence towards women as inevitably casting men in the role of perpetrators and women as victims. The depiction by some men of a duality of men-as-bad and women-as-good in
prevention campaigns moved such men to talk about women as perpetrators of violence rather than to address the problem of men’s domestic violence towards women. These duality depictions allowed some men to shift the issue from one of men’s domestic violence towards women to a competition over who had the higher moral status as victims: men or women. As such a clear obstacle to any gender transformative campaign will be how to conduct such a campaign effectively within certain masculine ideals of competition, status and loyalty without inviting some men to pit men against women in a competition for moral status. Some men depicted men’s loyalty reactions to such campaigns as arising from their shame and guilt about the exposed violence of some men towards women and children.

Other obstacles to the prevention of such violence were identified as New Zealand cultural values around gender, evident in the language that depicted men’s justifications for violence towards women such as women’s provocation, women not following men’s authority or women nagging. Some participants described the hitting of women as acceptable within certain New Zealand communities whereas others stated that such violence towards women was clearly not accepted. Some men articulated the arguments that led to such violence being condoned, including that the man’s actions were not the stereotypic forms of domestic violence by men towards women that is represented as serious. Domestic violence was portrayed as carried out by someone other than himself. Privacy discourses were described as legitimating violence within the home and allowing it to remain hidden. Such privacy depictions that draw on a man’s home being his castle have also been found to be employed by men who use violence to support men’s domestic violence towards women and to silence intervention (Towns, Adams & Gavey, 2003).

Existing mass media campaigns that the men were aware of were generally supported: some men finding the prevention messages that such campaigns gave raising the awareness of such violence, that it is not acceptable, and filling an information gap about where to seek help. The “It’s not okay” campaign was well received and some men were able to articulate the objectives of the campaign, which were to raise awareness of family violence and to de-stigmatise help-seeking. Some men were able to articulate the difficulties that some men might have with the White
Ribbon campaign, which specifically addresses men’s domestic violence towards women. Some men criticised the campaign for setting up a duality of good men and bad men. The comments on the campaigns allowed a number of motivational statements for change to be identified that could be employed in any subsequent campaign to engage men, for example “All that it takes for violence to increase is for a good man to do nothing”; “I can be part of the answer”.

Participants made many suggestions for overcoming the obstacles to engaging men in any such campaign. Some obstacles that they were able to overcome themselves in order to be nonviolent were evident in their texts. Taking a moral stand against all forms of violence and seeing men’s domestic violence as one form of violence that men could work against was articulated as an approach by some of the men and was evident in the texts of other men as an effective approach. Identifying fairness and justice as values that apply to oneself and to all others regardless of age and gender; thinking independently from one’s mates or other influences that lead to the acceptance of violence; taking responsibility for one’s own thoughts and actions; breaking the silence about one’s violence and talking to good mates or to groups of men who would not collude with such violence were articulated in descriptions of change. Holding men accountable for their violence was depicted as raising awareness of the need for change.

Some accounts suggested that men could move beyond seeing a gender-based campaign as disloyal to men if they were strong in their anti-violence commitment and seen by other men to be firm in their beliefs. Providing a strong message that domestic violence or family violence was not something they liked or they wanted in their lives was described by some as providing a means for men to advocate for women without being seen to be anti-men.

Mass media campaigns were depicted by some of the men to be the way to reach the numbers needed for change. Some of the men’s statement suggested that there was a need to be conscious of masculine identities in any such campaign and to be conscious of how to situate any message so that it is not read as hypocritical, especially when employing men who use violence in their professional sports. Some men’s accounts suggest that there is a need to be conscious of status, hierarchy and
the potential for violence when advocating for men to speak to other men about their violence. Such accounts suggest that there is a need to be careful about who is expected to approach whom about any violent action and how approaches should be made in order not to cause harm. Having a third party raise the issue - through leaders speaking to large groups or through DVDs or television programmes that could be recorded - was depicted as assisting men to discuss the issue, and to raise the issue with their adolescent children, without the stigma associated with having raised the issue by themselves for discussion. Some men suggested that influential figures such as church ministers, mentors, mothers and youth leaders will be effective in encouraging men to be engaged in campaigns or actions involving the prevention of such violence.

Key recommendations from this study are that:

1. Discourse analytic research informed by knowledge of men’s domestic violence towards women accompanies any mass media prevention campaign in order to ensure that the mass media messages will be effective with target audiences and to avoid messages that are ineffective or create unintended consequences.

2. That carefully identified community leaders, selected for their appeal to target audiences, who promote anti-violence messages, are used to engage men more in the prevention of such violence.

3. That any population-based intervention aimed at engaging men in the prevention of men’s domestic violence towards women begins by promoting a strong message that most men do not use violence towards women and that most men are decent people and want to do what is right.

4. That policy makers who are concerned with the prevention of men’s domestic violence towards women note that some men identify strongly with being the provider in the family and that economic hardship will impact on some men’s masculine identity such that their inability to provide may be interpreted as diminishing their masculinity. Such an interpretation may provide a justification for violence towards wives and girlfriends as financial pressures are constructed as a criticism of the man. I recommend that the Ministerial
Taskforce on Family Violence takes strong action to ensure that mass media messages, designed to prevent men’s domestic violence towards women, receive particular attention during times of economic hardship or high unemployment when more of such violence occurs.

5. That a kaupapa research project on this topic be funded.

6. That Pasifika health promotion workers are funded to translate the findings of this research into effective action for the Pasifika community.

7. That the Families Commission and the Ministry of Social Development mass media prevention campaigns continue to focus on gender transformative interventions aimed at the respectful and moral treatment of girls and women as these show evidence of effectiveness with gender-based violence such as men’s domestic violence towards women and sexual violence. That these campaigns promote all forms of gender and social equity, which work to counter men’s domestic violence towards women (WHO, 2004).
1. Introduction

The extent of men's domestic violence towards women in New Zealand is a concern both nationally and internationally with the Leitner Institute, an international human rights watch group (LCILJ, 2008), and the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) seeking government action on the issue (Human Rights Council, 2009). Approximately one in three New Zealand women experience such violence during the course of their partnered life (Fanslow & Robinson, 2004). Thirty five percent of New Zealand men admitted using at least one form of physical violence against his female partner in his life-time and 21% admitted using at least one form of physical violence in the past year. Fifty three percent had used at least one form of psychological abuse against his female partner during the past year and 62 percent during his lifetime (Leibrich, Paulin & Ransom, 1995). In 2006, 25 out of the 53 cases investigated as murders were recorded as family violence deaths (TAVF, 2007). Of these 12 were women and a male partner or ex-partner killed 10 of these women. More severe forms of violence appear to be associated with traditional values of men's entitlement to dominance and control of women partners (Adams, Towns & Gavey, 1995; Leibrich, Paulin & Ransom, 1995).

About this report

This report is concerned with the ways to engage men in the prevention of men’s domestic violence towards women. It details the findings of a research project carried out with New Zealand men on:

- the obstacles to the involvement of men in the prevention of men’s domestic violence towards women,
- the relationship between men’s ideas about engagement and their ideas about masculinity and intimate relationships with women,
men’s perceptions of current New Zealand population-based approaches to the prevention of men's domestic violence towards women and the obstacles to men's involvement in such programmes

— men’s ideas about the ways in which to engage men in the prevention of men’s domestic violence towards women.

The report begins by introducing the issues involved in engaging men in the prevention of men's domestic violence towards women. The methodology used in the current study is then described, and the findings of the research follow. Finally the conclusions of the study are presented followed by recommendations for future directions.

Background

This research project is focused on the prevention of one form of gender-based violence: men’s domestic violence towards women. Such violence has been described as a form of gender-based violence because men who use such violence draw from traditional ideas of men’s entitlement to dominate women to justify and excuse their behaviour (see Adams, Towns & Gavey, 1995; Towns, Adams & Gavey, 2003). Within New Zealand these ideas are informed by a long western history of misogyny (see Holland, 2006), which is distinctly different from the history of Māori men’s valuing of women (Towns & Scott, 2008).

What is meant by men’s domestic violence towards women?

Men’s domestic violence towards women was described legally as a form of assault and battery and in some parts of the world continues to be called battering. For example, Jacobson and Gottman (1998) described battering as follows:

Battering is physical aggression with a purpose: that purpose is to control, intimidate, and subjugate another human being. Battering is always accompanied by emotional abuse, is
often accompanied by injury, and is virtually always associated with fear and even terror on the part of the battered women. (Jacobson & Gottman, 1998, p.25).

This description captures the intentional purpose of such violence. Men who use such violence are usually able to describe the intention or purpose of their violence although they commonly described their actions as resulting from anger and a loss of control (Towns, Adams & Gavey, 1996). The description of battering as physical aggression with a purpose allows for the inclusion of those forms of emotional violence that effectively control a woman’s actions. If the woman is controlled through emotional violence very little physical violence is required in order to maintain control. A critical feature of such violence is the fear or terror that it evokes in the woman. Whereas many distressed couples engage in acts of aggression towards each other, men’s domestic violence towards women involves violence that evokes fear and ultimately this fear is critically important in the maintenance of the man’s control over the woman. Various forms of control have been observed to be employed by men who use such violence against woman partners including isolation, control of the money, and using the children to control (Pence & Paymar, 1993), stalking (Melton, 2007) and surveillance (Towns & Scott, 2008).

What is meant by the prevention of such violence?
Given the extent of such violence in New Zealand new approaches are being developed aimed at stopping such violence before it starts. Currently early intervention programmes are available to those children or infants considered to be at risk: Family Start is one such programme. Late intervention programmes are available to men who have used such violence in the past through their voluntary participation in stopping violence programmes or through their referral to such programmes through the Family or District Courts. Supportive educational programmes for women who are victims/survivors of such violence are available through the Family Court and through other women’s agencies. Early intervention or late intervention programmes reach individuals or small groups and their impact is therefore limited to small numbers.
Prevention approaches are aimed at stopping violence before it starts. Prevention programmes are designed to reach large numbers of people or population groups and are designed to produce messages that divert people away from behaviours that have the potential to develop into domestic violence. For example, controlling, jealous or possessive behaviours are high-risk behaviours for lethal or harmful domestic violence and they have been identified as commonly occurring in dating violence and in domestic violence. The prevention of controlling behaviours may be one means to get in early in the relationship careers of young adults and prevent domestic violence (Towns & Scott, 2008).

In order to be successful prevention requires careful research on the cultures that support such violence or on the obstacles to effective prevention programmes. Without such research messages may be constructed that actually do more harm than good or alternatively are ineffective. Because population-based interventions are costly there is an imperative to have good research that effectively informs prevention approaches in order that funding is not prematurely employed to promote messages that will be harmful or ineffective. Social science research can help to identify the cultures that contribute to the promotion of controlling behaviours of men towards women and the language that is employed by these cultures (see Towns & Scott, 2008; Towns, forthcoming).

**NZ government initiatives on prevention**

In New Zealand three major population based interventions have been supported by the NZ Taskforce on Family Violence, two designed to engage men in the prevention of domestic violence by addressing the attitudes and beliefs that support such violence. These are:

- Changes to Sec 59 of the NZ Crimes Act to remove the defence of reasonable force for assault of a child.
- The It’s Not okay campaign
- White Ribbon Day.
The first is designed to alter the culture of acceptance of the physical disciplining/assault of children. The latter two campaigns address the culture that supports men’s domestic violence towards women.

**It’s Not Okay Campaign**

The *It’s Not Okay Campaign* emerged out of a desire to build a violence-free culture in New Zealand (NZPPD, 2005) and promotes the message to all New Zealanders that family violence is not okay. Campaign strategists used a social marketing approach and had available to them earlier research on the language used by men in New Zealand to support their violence (Adams, Towns & Gavey, 1995; Gavey, Adams & Towns, 1994; Towns, Adams & Gavey, 2003), and the language used by women who had been the victims of such violence (Towns & Adams, 2000). The use of the term family violence focuses the intervention broadly towards men’s domestic violence towards women, women who use violence towards men, the actions of distressed couples towards each other, the violence of adults towards children, the violence of adult children towards adults in the family and the violence of family members towards the elderly. A second stage of the programme has adult men who have used violence talking about their progression towards stopping their violence. This second stage focuses on men in the family, and employs mentors who talk about their movement away from violence. Another logo *It is okay to ask for help* accompanies the campaign. A secondary impact of the campaign is the message that is given to victims, who are commonly told by the perpetrator that they are to blame for the violence. The message that such violence is not okay has reportedly been effective in bringing more victims/survivors into women’s support programmes alongside the increase in men seeking help voluntarily.

Alongside this campaign a community action approach funded through the Community Action Fund was introduced by the New Zealand government. This branch of the campaign funded community organisations to introduce population-based interventions targeted at community identified target populations such as businesses or listeners of radio stations etc. This fund effectively introduced the concept of population based prevention programmes to organisations that had predominantly
been involved with intervention. Key events, such as the deaths through violence of community members, formed the catalyst for some population-based interventions such as marches against family violence or against violence generally.

The context for the introduction of the *It’s Not Okay Campaign* was the Labour government and its first woman Prime Minister Helen Clark. The gender-neutral approach of this campaign through the use of the term family violence was an attempt to avoid the backlash and potential political fall out that would have eventuated if the focus had been placed on men’s violence towards women and children, where most harm is caused. However the gender-neutral approach means that the gendered nature of men’s domestic violence towards women has not been overtly addressed although it can be read into some of the mentors’ messages. There is the potential to more effectively address this issue at later stages of the campaign.

**White Ribbon Day**

White Ribbon Day is the second population-based intervention directed towards men’s domestic violence towards women initiated by the NZ Families’ Commission with the Ministry of Social Development. The Campaign originated in Canada following the massacre of fourteen women at a Polytechnic by a man who espoused anti-feminist messages. Canadian men concerned about such explicit gender-based violence towards women drove the White Ribbon Campaign. It has been taken up by a number of countries around the globe including New Zealand. Kaufman (2004) described the rationale for the White Ribbon Campaign as follows:

> The White Ribbon Campaign embodies the belief that, in most countries, the majority of men do not use physical or sexual violence; that we have been silent about that violence, and through the silence have allowed the violence to continue. The campaign uses the white ribbon as a symbol of ending this silence and as a public promise by a man never to commit, condone, or remain silent about violence against women. (p.23)

There are distinct differences between the Canadian campaign and that initiated in New Zealand. These are listed below:
White Ribbon Day in Canada

- Initiated following a massacre of women by a man
- Driven by men to address men’s violence towards women
- Wearing the white ribbon signals a commitment to avoiding all forms of violence towards women and treating women with respect.

White Ribbon Day in New Zealand

- In New Zealand State initiated – driven by Families Commission and the Ministry of Social Development.
- Designed to mobilise men to address men’s violence towards women
- The message that the white ribbon commits the wearer to refrain from all forms of violence towards women is not widely known.

In New Zealand prison inmates make the white ribbons distribution cards for the day, and police officers assist at the distribution points. Nevertheless, much of the community prevention work on the day is organised by stopping violence organisations, predominantly women, and by women’s organisations. There is likely to be a substantial difference between a campaign that is mobilised by men on the ground from one which is imposed on men by government organisations.

Anecdotal reports are that some men in New Zealand refuse to support the campaign because it focuses exclusively on men’s violence towards women. There are also reports of men’s rights organisations aggressively protesting at white ribbon distribution sites in ways that women prevention workers have found intimidating. These anecdotal accounts suggest that in New Zealand there has been a backlash to the campaign, identified elsewhere as a potential problem when attempting to engage men, and more work needs to be done to effectively engage men.

Internationally, there is a recognised need to engage men in the prevention work on violence against women however, the engagement of men in action to prevent gender-based violence has been identified as an area that requires more research and care in the development and implementation of programmes. Pease (2008) described the following backlashes responses to targeting men’s violence towards women:
First there is an attempt to disassociate violence from men and masculinity through constructing attempts to discuss men’s violence as “male bashing”. (p.11)

The second form of backlash responses by men focuses on women’s violence against men and frames violence in the home as a ‘two way street’. (p.11)

These responses suggest that engaging men in the prevention of such violence may be a more complex task than expected.

**Why research engaging men in prevention?**

This project emerged out of a conversation with the principal researcher (AT) and a man who was with her and other women on a table distributing white ribbons to men on White Ribbon Day. The table had a number of pamphlets supporting the day and posters with a man directly looking at the reader and stating “Mate it’s not okay”. I (AT) became aware very early on that the man with us was quite uncomfortable with his task and asked him if handing out white ribbons to other men was a difficult thing to do as a man. He replied that it felt a bit like a betrayal. I was interested in this construction and sought more feedback from Brian Gardner, the head of the National Network of Stopping Violence Services. He too had felt uncomfortable about the potential response from other men when wearing a t-shirt with the message of the day. In addition, in my observations and experiences of teaching and training of practitioners, attempts to address the violence that some men use towards women are not uncommonly constructed as an attack on all men. I was also conscious that when speaking to the communities working in the area of violence towards women and children few men were present. Out of the discussions with these good men came recognition of a need to research more about masculinities and prevention if we are to engage men to work against men’s domestic violence towards women or battering.
The current state of knowledge

A comprehensive review of the literature on engaging men is available in a paper by Pease (2008). He identified the tensions and difficulties that occur when attempting to engage men in the prevention of men’s domestic violence towards women. There have been various ways in which men’s involvement in the prevention of such violence has been attempted. Pease argued that some of these attempts have been at the cost of women’s attempts to address the gender issues associated with such violence: For example Pease makes the following points about the messages employed to engage men:

- On constructing prevention for men as a win-win situation for men:

  In eliciting men’s support for gender equality on the basis of men’s interests, concerns and problems, we need to ensure that women’s struggle for gender justice is not compromised. (Pease, 2008, p.7.)

- On constructing solutions that involve degendering the problem e.g. by gender mainstreaming in Australia:

  The reality is that gender mainstreaming and targeting men has led to women’s services being cut back. (p.8)

  Because gender mainstreaming created a space for men to claim victim status, men’s rights activists used it to argue that Australian men were victimised by Commonwealth policies in the areas of family law, domestic violence and health care. Gender mainstreaming thus inadvertently created support for men’s rights discourse about men as victims and led to a retreat by the Australian government under John Howard to move away from gender equality. (p. 5)

In New Zealand one of the solutions to these difficulties in engaging men has been to promote strengths-based constructions of men. In these approaches research and messages are promoted that relate to men’s strengths. Strength-based approaches are designed to counter criticisms from men’s organisations that campaigns that
attempt to address men’s violence towards women paint men in a negative light and denigrate men and masculinity. Pease (2008) however criticises this solution:

Challenging dominant forms of masculinity is seen as challenging the essence of what it is to be a man. Furthermore challenging privilege and institutional power is also seen as promoting a deficit perspective on men. Thus, *what is missing in much violence prevention work with men is a conceptual framework that adequately explains the links between men, masculinity, patriarchal culture and gendered violence* (Ferguson et al. 2003). (p.12) [Italics added]

**Why is masculinity relevant to the prevention of domestic violence?**

An important objective of this research project is to understand more about the links between men, masculinity, masculine practices and gender-based violence prevention particularly men’s domestic violence towards women. There is now a strong body of evidence that indicates men who use violence towards women draw on traditional masculine values of male dominance and entitlement to justify and excuse their violence (e.g. Adams, Towns & Gavey, 1995; Lebrich, Paulin & Ransom, 1995) to support controlling behaviours (Garcia-Moreno, Jansen, Ellsberg, Heise, & Watts, 2005) and to silence others from intervening (Towns, Adams & Gavey, 2003). Such findings suggest that some forms of masculinity or masculine practices may be employed to justify and excuse men’s violence towards women. In order to make sense of how to work towards the prevention of such men’s domestic violence towards women knowledge of the ways some men employ masculinities to account for such violence and to situate the identities of themselves and others in relation to such violence and violence prevention is essential.

**What do we know about the construction of masculinities?**

The term masculinities rather than masculinity captures the work that will be done here. Lang (2002) stated:
The plural form “masculinities” conveys that there are many definitions for being a man and that these can change over time and from place to place. This plural form also suggests that men are constantly negotiating differing positions within social hierarchies – and this multiple positioning affects men’s relationship to injustice and violence.

Work on gender and masculinities has burgeoned in recent years with a journal specifically devoted to the topic of *Men and Masculinities*. There are also some substantial texts on masculinities, which review all known aspects of masculinity. A review of this literature will not be repeated here; rather some key concepts will be introduced.

**Hegemonic masculinity**

The term hegemonic masculinity (Connell, 1995) was coined to describe the forms of masculinity that are dominant influences on men within a context of large scale gender change (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). For example, some traditional masculinities that privilege the man as the provider, the strong one, the leader, the protector, the dominant one in the relationship, the one entitled to make decisions or the head of the household may be understood to represent such a hegemonic masculinity (Lang, 2002). Lang described such forms of masculinity as promoting violence in men who must be prepared to demonstrate their leadership capabilities through use of physical force or aggression if necessary. He argued that within such forms of masculinity there are “policing mechanisms” that subject men to the scrutiny of other men to ensure that they protect their masculine identity from any potential threat and to ensure men comply with the values of these dominant masculinities. Men who do not perform to these policed hyper-masculine standards are not considered to be “real men” (Ferguson, Hearn, Holter et al, 2004). Lang (2002) argued that it is “masculinity’s stratifying of difference” that produces “misogyny, homophobia and racism” and violence in these contexts, such as gender-based violence, is a means of asserting and maintaining relationships of power consistent with those represented by such dominant masculinities. Violence has been found to
be high in those societies that promote masculine bravado and that suppress men’s expression of fear whereas violence was low in those societies where the expression of fear was permitted (Howell & Willis, *Societies at Peace*, cited by Ferguson et al, 2004, p.39).

**Complicit masculinity**
Connell (2005) noted that many men do not practice the behaviours associated being “real men” expected in accounts of hegemonic masculinity, but they benefit from it. He referred to “complicit masculinity” as that masculinity practiced by men who approved of hegemonic masculinity, benefited from its practices, but were not able for structural or material reasons to realise hegemonic masculinity in their own practices. Nevertheless they may engage in hyper-masculine behaviour (violence and aggression) in order to emulate the expected behaviour associated with hegemonic masculinity.

**Subordinated and marginalised masculinities**
Connell (2005) argued that those men who are aligned with subordinated and marginalised masculinities are also likely to engage in hyper-masculine behaviour as an expression of masculinity in frustration at their own lack of privilege and in order to express the idealised or hegemonic masculinity denied to them by social or economic structural conditions. He argued that those men who are privileged or who benefit from structural arrangements do not necessarily have to express their masculinity through violence as they are already benefiting from existing social and structural arrangements.

**Inclusive masculinities**
Eric Anderson (2009) argued that hegemonic masculinity is under challenge from inclusive masculinities, which are less sexist, racist and homophobic, and considers these forms of masculinity to be on the rise and challenging the ‘orthodox’ or hegemony of traditional masculinities.
Imagined positions

Wetherell and Edley (1999, 2008, 2009) suggested that the concept of hegemonic masculinity needs to be far more textured and that the response by men to dominant masculinities is multiple and varied, dependent on the context, sometimes involving rebellion against dominant values and representations, sometimes involving imagined positions. Wetherell and Eldey (1999, 2008, 2009) argued that most men positioned themselves as ‘ordinary’ men, and they argued that ‘ordinary’ masculinity was therefore the most prevalent and ‘true’ hegemony. Some men were described as articulating hegemonic masculinity as involving caricatures or stereotypes rather than masculine images or practices with which they would align themselves.

Being ‘Cool’: NZ masculine identities and violence prevention

Recent work with New Zealand young men (Towns, forthcoming) suggests that there are many masculine identities available to NZ young men and that these are situated within overarching discourses of what it is to be cool, driven by the language associated with the influence of consumer representations and what it is to be The Man. Within this language there were commonalities to some representations of the practices of masculinity. These were identified as

- Competition or one-up-manship
- Status
- Loyalty to men

The positioning and treatment of women was secondary to these masculine practices. Young men spoke of challenges to the status of a man - particularly through competition over a girlfriend - as provoking violence and they spoke of not openly challenging other men without anticipating violence. These findings have ramifications for the prevention of battering where programmes involve engaging men to challenge men or speak to men who use violence or who treat their wives/girlfriends and children poorly.
Recommendations for engaging men in prevention

Key principles for engaging men in the prevention of men’s domestic violence towards women were provided by Pease (2008) in his review:

- Linking prevention to the promotion of gender equality
- Maintaining a feminist analysis as the central hub of violence prevention.
- Working with non-violent men to involve them in violence prevention
- Increasing men’s family involvement and family work
- Making links to the social justice movements
- Ensuring that prevention work is context specific – e.g. different men will require different focuses
- Interrogating masculinity
- Evaluating men’s prevention work against these criteria.

From this list Pease is clearly positioning the prevention of men’s domestic violence towards women as a gendered issue and stating that gender should be addressed rather than ignored in any intervention. Similarly the World Health Organisation has identified gender transformative programmes as effective in preventing gender-based violence (WHO, 2008).

Kaufman (2004) suggested the following principles for involving men in gender equality:

- Keep the primary focus on ending discrimination against women and girls, achieving gender equality and equity and promoting human rights of women.
- Work through men’s fear.
- Use the language of responsibility and avoid the language of blame.
- Create and nurture groups of men.
- Mobilise the voices of men to speak to other men and boys.
- “Create a politics of compassion” and encourage men and boys to express their emotions.
- Find specific entry points to reach target age groups.
- Evaluate men’s attitudinal and behavioural changes and new initiatives.
The Goals of this Research Project

This research project is concerned with the ways in which men construct masculine practices and masculinities associated with men’s domestic violence towards women and the prevention of such violence. It draws on the work of social constructionists, feminist or pro-feminist researchers, influenced by post-structuralism, who represent gender, social identities and values as actively constructed through language and conversations, which are subject to dominant discourses (conglomerates of language: figures of speech, metaphors, phrases, forms of expression that coalesce around a central overarching theme). Such work recognises that there is no single one way of being, that people’s representation of themselves, their beliefs attitudes and values and their constructions of their identities will vary according to the context in which they find themselves.

The aim of this study was to find out more about the interplay between masculinity and engaging men in the prevention of men’s domestic violence towards women. As such the goals of this research were as follows:

- To understand more about the relationship between masculinity and the prevention of men’s domestic violence towards women.
- To understand more about masculinity and the obstacles to engaging men in population based prevention campaigns.
- To determine men’s perceptions of current population-based interventions designed to prevent men’s domestic violence towards women.
- To identify men’s ideas about the best ways to engage men in population-based interventions designed to prevent men’s domestic violence towards women.
Structure of this report

Following a description of the methodology used in this research the findings of the research will be presented as follows: (a) The ways men describe masculinity and relationships with women within New Zealand culture; (b) the ways the participants relate ideas of masculinity to domestic violence; (c) accounts men give of masculinity and the obstacles to the involvement of men in the prevention of domestic violence; (d) men’s accounts of current prevention programmes; (e) ways men describe overcoming the obstacles to engaging men in prevention campaigns. The final sections are the conclusions and recommendations.
2. Methodology

This study used qualitative research to investigate New Zealand men’s masculinity and the relationship between men’s domestic violence towards women and engaging men in the prevention of such violence. This approach allowed the researcher to address the above goals of the research. In particular the research was concerned with identifying the masculinities and associated values and beliefs that interconnected with men’s domestic violence towards women and that might be obstacles to men’s involvement in prevention campaigns or that might facilitate their participation in such campaigns. In this approach language is key and is understood to provide a means of identifying the values and beliefs that are associated with the expression of masculine practices and masculine identities. Immediate aims of the research were to:

- Identify and analyse the language that was associated with men’s expressions of masculinity and within the New Zealand context
- Identify and analyse the language that was employed to describe the association between masculinities and men’s domestic violence towards women
- Identify and analyse the language employed to describe the obstacles to men’s involvement in the prevention of men’s domestic violence towards women
- Identify and analyse the language that participants employed to describe mass media campaigns aimed at the prevention of family violence and men’s domestic violence towards women.
- Identify men’s recommendations for engaging men in future campaigns.

Safety and Confidentiality

The study received ethical approval from the Northern Regional Ethics Committee. All men received an information sheet and a consent form (see Appendix A) and the study was explained to them prior to involvement. The principal investigator (AT) was present or available to all groups to assist with consent procedures and Ala’imalo Lua Maynard, of Samoan ethnicity, was present with the groups of Pasifika men to ensure
cultural safety and to provide cultural support. All participants were informed that they could withdraw from the focus group discussion at any time. Participants were informed that safety procedures would be followed if there were any concerns about the immediate safety of anyone. All participants received information about local support agencies and AT and the interviewer Dave Neilson were available at the end of the sessions if participants required further information or assistance. In reporting the results names and some minor details have been changed to ensure the confidentiality of the participants. Events, locations and other details, which might identify the participants, have not been included in the analysis.

**Participants**

Participants were 28 ordinary men who took part in a total of six focus group discussions. Most participants were groups of men who were known to each other. Men were recruited through men’s organisations, church groups, and through word of mouth. Details of participants’ backgrounds and ethnicities are in Table 1. Men were not selected for any background of domestic violence but rather were men from the general population living within the Auckland region and with a range of occupational backgrounds. Eighteen men identified as of European or New Zealand European ethnicity and ten identified as of Pasifika ethnicity. Men were only recruited into the study if they were comfortable speaking English, in order for them to participate comfortably in the focus group discussions, and were aged between 18 and 65 years. All participants were provided with a $20.00 petrol voucher to help with their transport costs.

**Procedure**

Following informed consent procedures focus groups were held with up to five men. On one occasion a sixth man arrived for the group and as he was known to the group

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1 New Zealand Standards Guidelines on Family Violence (NAS 8006:2006)
Table 1. Participants’ Background Information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Relationship status</th>
<th>Children</th>
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<tr>
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<td>Artist</td>
<td>Engaged long-term</td>
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<td>Ben</td>
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<td>Builder</td>
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<td>3</td>
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<td>Wine merchant</td>
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<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Company director</td>
<td>De facto</td>
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<td>Mental health worker</td>
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<td>NZ European</td>
<td>Software developer</td>
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<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ian</td>
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<td>NZ European</td>
<td>IT Technician</td>
<td>Married</td>
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<tr>
<td>Maru</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>Samoan</td>
<td>Artist/Youth worker</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ioane</td>
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<td>Tongan</td>
<td>Part-timer</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Manager</td>
<td>Separated</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Samoan</td>
<td>Bartender</td>
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<td>Irish</td>
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<td>Artist</td>
<td>De facto</td>
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<td>Zak</td>
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<td>NZ European Pakeha</td>
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<td>Married</td>
<td>3 adult</td>
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<tr>
<td>Trevor</td>
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<td>Network engineer</td>
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<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warwic k</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>NZ European</td>
<td>IT technician</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
and the participants gave consent for him to be present he was included in the focus group discussion. A semi-structured interview format was used to maintain the focus on the research questions. The focus group was facilitated by David Neilson, who is of NZ European and Fijian ethnicity and is an experienced men’s group facilitator. AT, a female clinical psychologist of twenty seven years experience was a co-facilitator except for one group which she was unable to attend. In the approach used here the facilitators took the position of naive inquirers expecting that the men would have access to much more knowledge than they had on the topics under discussion. The men were asked to discuss their understandings of:

- how men were expected to be in relationships with women,
- how ideas of being a man might interact with men’s domestic violence towards women,
- the obstacles to involving men in men’s domestic violence towards women,
- how they had found existing campaigns aimed at the prevention of family violence and the prevention of men’s domestic violence towards women and
- their ideas about what might be the best ways to involve men in any future prevention campaigns on men’s domestic violence towards women.
The focus group discussions were audio-recorded using digital recording equipment and recordings were transcribed\(^2\). Transcriptions were then read and analysed using discourse analysis (see below). Various forms of media, which might have contributed to the language in the texts, were read observed and listened to in order to inform the analysis.

**Influences**

A form of discourse analysis, which has been described elsewhere (Towns & Adams, 2000), was employed here. The approach is informed by Potter and Wetherell’s (1987) use of interpretative repertoires and Wetherell’s (1998) later work on linguistic resources and positioning. Edley’s and Wetherell’s work on masculine identities and on masculine psycho-discursive practices (Wetherell & Edley, 1999, 2008, 2009) was also influential. The approach in this study was informed by Gavey’s (2005) work on critical realism and feminist post-structuralism (Gavey, 1989), which provides for an analysis of power informed by Michel Foucault’s work and for the distinction between real events and constructed accounts through talk. Antaki, Condor and Levine’s (1996) work on identities and the ways identities are represented in talk and the work of Davies (Davies & Harre, 1990) on positioning, agency and subjectivity (Davies et al, 2006) were also influential. Recent work with young New Zealand men on common trajectories across masculinities was also influential (Towns, forthcoming).

In the approach used here the texts were read for masculine practices, masculine identities, power practices and values evident in the talk. The language and texts associated with these practices, values and identities were then grouped according to the research questions and were analysed for common forms of speech such as figures of speech, phrases or messages that allowed the speech to be clustered into consistent forms of language that addressed the research questions. Of importance in this form of analysis is the work that the language does in the focus

\(^2\) There was a technical glitch with one group which meant that most of the session was not recorded. Extensive notes were taken immediately after this group discussion and used in the analysis.

_overcomes the Obstacles Page 34_
group discussions to work up the values, masculine identities or power practices that the men are portraying and that might point to effective ways to engage men, obstacles to engagement, and that might point to processes of change. The language employed by the men and the associated values that the language evokes allows the masculine practices and masculine identities to be identified.

The analyst was AT who brings a woman’s reading to these men’s text. With this form of discourse analysis there is an acknowledgement that different readings may occur with different analysts, that the researcher will bring her particular biases to the readings, and that she will be informed by the influences that she brings to these readings. There is an expectation that the analyst will outline these influences explicitly as I have done above. All of the participants were informed, through the information sheet, that the principal researcher involved with this research on masculinity was a woman. Funding did not extend to readings by others who might bring a Pasifika interpretation to the texts or who might provide a man’s perspective. AT had discussions with Brian Gardner and Dave Neilson to clarify her thinking as issues associated with the analysis arose.
3. Findings

The findings of this research are described in five sections: masculinity and men’s relationship with women; masculinity and men’s domestic violence towards women; masculinity and obstacles to prevention; existing prevention programmes; and overcoming the obstacles to the prevention of domestic violence.

Masculinity and men’s relationships with women

Participants were asked to describe their understandings of how men were meant to be in relationships with women. From these discussions emerged some ideas about masculinity and men/women relationships within contemporary New Zealand culture.

Being the man – masculinities

In the following Trevor described the dilemmas he encountered in determining the ways he ought to practice masculinity, or be a man, within a relationship with a woman:

Trevor: I think men [Dave: Yeah.] are, men are expected to- more and more to be this soft feeling new age um- guy you know that’s all sensitive to a woman’s need, though I think a lot, they want us to be women. [laugh] [Dave: Right.] [Sean: Yeah.] that’s what it seems like, they want us to think and act and relate like their women friends. [Dave: Right.] [Unidentified participant: Mm.] And um- I spose ah- this might be going off the question a little bit but it’s like going back to my upbringing, my father wasn’t there most of the time. [Dave: Yeah.] I mean he was still- marriage but it was a- a violent alcohol type relationship, [Dave: Right.] and I didn’t- have any role models for a father figure as such so, I grew up not knowing what it is to be a man. [Dave: Yep.] ... and um- that went in to my relationships and I sort of would- try to be whatever the woman in the relationship wanted me to be so [Dave: Right.] basically I- went through my life growing up being confused. [Dave: Gotcha.]
Trevor’s describes the expectations for men to be “this soft feeling new age guy” “that’s all sensitive to a woman’s needs”. His use of the word “soft feeling” evokes the counter phrase “harden up” commonly employed by other men to encourage men to avoid being constructed as “soft”, or too gentle or emotional. The phrase “new age guy” evokes images of a beaded and linen dressed man interested more in incense and organic food than the traditional activities that might be associated with men. In the following phrases “they want us to be women” and “they want us to think and act and relate like their women friends” his use of “they” positions women as other than men, as the source of this attempted positioning of men into identities which he depicts as problematic for men. His use of the word “they” works to pit men in opposition to women. The list “to think and act and relate” evokes an appropriation of men’s different ways of being: men must think like a woman’s friend, they must act like a woman’s friend and they must relate like a woman’s friend. In these two phrases Trevor evokes ideas of women denying men their masculinity by turning men into women. In this first few sentences women would appear to be constructed as the ones who are the cause of men’s problems in relation to making sense of how to be a man in a relationship.

In the following account, however, Trevor moves away from the possible interpretation that he is blaming women for men’s problems by making a personal revelation about his own upbringing. In the second part of this account he depicts his father as unavailable: he “wasn’t there most of the time” and his parents’ marriage as “a violent alcohol type relationship”. This euphemistic representation of his parents’ relationships leaves considerable ambiguity about who he is referring to as being violent, to whom this violence was directed, and who had a problem with alcohol within this marriage. His subsequent statement “I didn’t- have any role models for a father figure as such” allows the reader to infer that his father’s lack of presence or the model represented by his father of what it is to be a man was not the role model that Trevor wanted to take up. This statement explicitly suggests that boys require male role models for how they are to be father figures but omitted is any reference to whether men also require role models for how they are to be in a relationship with an intimate woman.
These early constructions of Trevor’s upbringing allow him to reveal the impact on the development of his emerging male identity: “I grew up not knowing what it is to be a man”. This phrase opens up the possibility that there is a way to be a man: that there are certain practices that make a man. The phrase suggests that what it is to be a man is known to some if not most men and those men who are not raised by good and available men have missed this transferred knowledge. Trevor’s comment “I sort of would-try to be whatever the woman in the relationship wanted me to be” and “basically I- went through my life growing up being confused” are further statements about the impact on his masculine identity of his upbringing. In the first of the statements his lack of a clear male identity is constituted as contributing to his trying to “be whatever the woman in the relationship wanted me to be”. In this construction a lack of a firm male identity means that masculine practices are subsumed or sublimated into the woman’s desires. In the latter statement Trevor uses the word “basically” to suggest a summary statement and his use of the statement “being confused” suggests a further impact on his clarity about what are masculine practices and leaves ambiguous whether he is referring to confusion about practices within a relationship with a woman or more generally.

This notion of confused masculinity resonates with work by academic researchers on masculinity in the 1980s and 1990s, which depicts men as in crisis over what it is to be a man. More recently such work has been criticised for disembodied masculinity: for talking of masculinity as though it was separate from the practices of men (McCarry, 2007). In the following Finn depicts men’s confusion about masculinity as realised by men’s interactions with their women partners:

Finn: Talking to guys [Dave: Yep.] we get a lot in the man groups- blokes walk in here cos they get angry, they get hurt, they get sad, they get upset, they don’t know what their partner expects of them. ‘Do you want me to be gentle?’ ‘Well actually I want to be tough,’ be tough but I’m being too tough! You know? [Darryl: Mm. Mm] ... I think they’re probably a much deeper issue, we have no freakin idea what it means to be a man in this society [Unidentified participant: Mm]. And you go to Germany, you go to Canada, it’s the same! [Dave: Sure.] And only probably where there’s a very strong, I was
going to say macho male streak is in Spain, perhaps Argentina or Africa if you like, there’s a real sense of, right or wrong? That’s what a man is. Most of us haven’t got a clue.

In this excerpt Finn begins by making reference to “man groups” evoking the idea of groups available for men only. His reference to the reasons men attend these groups suggests that these groups are available to help men: “blokes walk in here cos they get angry, they get hurt, they get sad, they get upset ...”. His use of a list can be interpreted as emphasising the range of emotions men who come to these groups experience.

By ending this list with “they don’t know what their partner expects of them” he links the list of emotional distress men experience with their uncertainty about how they should be with their partners. His use of the degendered term partner to refer to the woman allows him to refer to a wife or a girlfriend and it also allows him to avoid explicitly pitting the discussion as a difference between men and women in the presence of a woman facilitator. His use of spoken words allows him to illustrate the conflicted nature of the interchange between the man and his partner: “‘Do you want me to be gentle?’ ‘Well actually I want to be tough’”. With the following statements “be tough but I’m being too tough!” he represents the man as reasonable but unable to please no matter what he does. Although there is no explicit reference to the man’s partner as the one speaking, the way in which the interchange is constructed works to place the partner as the one who is unreasonable here. In these representations she is depicted as asking for toughness then criticising the man when she gets it.

Finn’s statement that there is a “deeper issue” allows him to provide an opening for his analysis of what is going on for these men. By stating “we have no freakin idea what it means to be a man in this society” he draws on the accounts mentioned above, of there being a crisis of masculinity, to represent this deeper issue. The interpretation may be made that he is referring to men being in crisis but his use of “we” is vague and could refer to men, women or people generally. By the use of emphasis “no freakin idea” he makes reference to confusion about how men are meant to be. His use of “this society” suggests that he is referring to confusion in New
Zealand society although again his use of “this society” is vague and could be interpreted as referring to broader European dominated societies or multi-cultural societies. His on-going mentioning of similar problems in Canada and Germany is compatible with a broader interpretation.

Finn makes reference to a “very strong” “macho male streak” as providing a “real sense” of “what a man is”. His use of the word macho draws on hyper-masculine representations of men. For example, a common picture of male models in the New Zealand magazine *Mr* has them photographed in shades of grey, standing with their legs astride and hands on hips and looking aggressively upwards. There is an incongruity in these representations of commonly slender male models, which indicates that being macho is in the portrayal or the stance rather than in the physical reality. Promotional pictures of the New Zealand sports icons, the All Blacks, have them showing their macho strength by standing bare-chested and exposing their well-developed muscles. Finn employs qualifiers throughout this statement, which have the effect of tempering this representation of masculinity. These qualifiers are evident in his use of “only probably”, “I was going to say”, “right or wrong?” and they have the effect of leaving uncertainty about whether he agrees with the representation of men as macho as an ideal portrayal of masculinity or not. His final statement “most of us haven’t got a clue” employs the pronoun “us” to position himself as someone who is as confused as others.

From this rendition Finn’s comment could allow one to infer that he is looking for a single dominant representation of masculinity however the following excerpt suggests that he holds a more complex idea of masculinity than this. His comments follow a question from the woman interviewer that seeks to clarify whether masculinity is understood to take a single form or to be understood as a multiplicity of forms.

**Alison:** ..how do we understand the various forms of masculinity in NZ, there must be more than one and if there’s only one that seems to be clear, how do we create more or is a part of being a man that there should only be one masculinity? So I mean I’m just-
Finn: I think it’s rubbish. There are many kinds of masculinity. [Alison: Mm.] I mean, again it is just so [Unidentified participant: Mm.] close to my heart. And some of the finest men- well I’ll go back and tell a story. When I, when I first joined the armed forces my first day we spent an hour and a half waiting out on this piece of concrete, you know, waiting for, to be picked up you know like, by the instructors and one of those guys was a monster who scared the shit out of us. I worked with him for X years on and off. And I remember him, we had a lad get badly, very badly hurt and, and, and he kept him alive, spent you know, 8 hours odd holding him, talking to him softly, you know? Then I saw him with his family. Man, that was a gentle man. So I think there are lots of capacities, I guess, archetypes in us? [Unidentified participant: Mm.] And having said that being a man-

Garth: Do you think there are just facets that you show to different groups, maybe [Finn: Yeah.] one group is expecting, not, not, overt, you know you’re not, I’m not saying there’s just an expectation to be a certain way, with other groups you can be another certain [Finn: Yeah.] way.

Finn’s reaction to the question is a strong one: “I think it’s rubbish”. This strong response appears to directly contradict my (AT’s) question, which is complex enough to have allowed a variety of responses, and it may well have been interpreted as intimidating and silencing by a less experienced female interviewer. His response may be interpreted as suggesting an emotive reaction to this question on masculinity posed by a female interviewer. The response is vague enough “it’s rubbish” to represent some confusion about just what Finn is constructing as rubbish. His comment “Again it’s just so close to my heart” may be understood as an explanation for a somewhat surprisingly strong reaction to the question and is a statement that acknowledges and opens up the emotionality of the issue “close to my heart” for this man.

One interpretation of the forthright challenge “it’s rubbish” is that he is challenging the idea that part of being a man is that there is only one representation of masculinity and this interpretation is supported by his comment “There are many kinds of masculinity.” Finn employs an anecdote to illustrate the idea of masculinity
as multiplicities rather than a singular entity. The anecdote draws on the dualities of masculine practices evident in a man he knew. In his statement “a monster who scared the shite out of us” he represents the man as large and frightening, while also employing an account of his great compassion with an injured man and gentleness with his family: “he kept him alive, spent you know, eight hours odd holding him, talking to him softly, you know? Then I saw him with his family. Man, that was a-a gentle man.” His use of the phrase “So I think there are lots of capacities, I guess, archetypes in us?” represents masculinities as “archetypes” and his use of the phrase “in us” suggests that these “capacities” reside within the person rather than that they are understood as overt practices that might be considered to make up various masculinities.

Garth offers an alternative interpretation: that “there are just facets that you show to different groups”. In this interpretation masculinity involves portrayals that vary depending on different contexts. In his following statement “I’m not saying there’s just an expectation to be a certain way,” he negates the idea that men will adjust their behaviour to conform to the norms of a group. With the following comment “with other groups you can be another certain way” he opens up the possibility that the context might free men up to show different aspects of their identity or be “another certain way”. This latter rendition suggests that particular groups enable men to engage in different masculine practices. Finn’s comment “Yeah.” Is supportive of this interpretation.

**Being the provider**

A traditional role for men in relationships was to be the provider and some men who use violence towards women draw on this role to justify their dominance of wives and girlfriends (Adams, Towns & Gavey, 1995). In these texts from New Zealand men, not selected for any violence, the role of the provider emerged as a strong theme. This provider role was drawn on to explain how masculinity works in relationships although many women in New Zealand now contribute to the family income through their work. In the following the relationship between masculinity and being the provider in the relationship will be introduced. The contribution of masculine practices
associated with being the provider and the connection with men’s domestic violence to women will be discussed more fully in another section (see below).

In the following Harry speaks of his wife’s expectation that he be the provider.

Harry: Yes, I’ve never identified with it because I was brought up by a solo mother. [Unidentified participant: Yeah.] [Unidentified participant: Mm.] didn’t have a male provider, so it’s not something I identified with as a youth growing through, but now I have a wife who’s demanding of me to be the provider in my life, to discover something that I’ve never even [laughs] experienced this is interesting. [Alison: Mm.] So it’s been an interesting thing for me to think about.

In this extract Harry uses contrasting representations to distinguish between the identities that he grew up with and that which he depicted as imposed on him by his wife. In the first part of this extract he attributes his lack of identification as the provider with being raised by a solo mother and the absence of a male provider in the household. In the second part of the extract he employs the phrase “I have a wife who’s demanding of me to be the provider in my life” to indicate that there is now an expectation that he become a provider and this expectation is from his wife. The use of the word ‘demanding’ constructs his wife as placing pressure on him to provide. This extract opens up the inference that it is male role models who lead young men to expect to be the providers in a relationship with a woman while also demonstrating that wives or girlfriends can place expectations on men that they need to be the provider. For example Euan stated that his wife had said she felt sorry for him because now that he was a husband he would have to work to provide for the rest of his life. He attributed this expectation to her cultural background as a Māori women who had grown up with the model that the men worked and the women stayed at home. Frank, a solo father, stated that when he had asked his ex-wife for help with school fees she had said that as a man she understood it was his role to be the provider.
Some men spoke of men’s role of the provider being an unspoken expectation that men adhered to. In the following the reality of contemporary New Zealand life is contrasted with the traditional expectation that men are the provider:

Dave: Would that idea that Ben is talking about as the male being the provider though, you know, would that still fit in to the kind of typical scenario for how Kiwi relationships are put together?

Alison Or expected to be? [Dave: Yeah.]

Alex: The expectation might be there but I don’t think the reality is there [Dave: Yeah] not at all, not any more.[Dave: Yeah.] not since the 1980’s. I think that’s long gone, people need two incomes to get a mortgage [Dave: Oh yeah.] I think it’s just too difficult otherwise [Dave: Yep.] So I think the practicalities of day to day life might get in the way of that- dream- [laughs]

Callum: Maybe a sort of a [Alex: -slash nightmare?] subconscious default but I think most people work out what’s going to work for them.

Alex: Certainly I come from a family like that, [Dave: Yeah.] my parents were like that [Dave: Yeah mine too.] my father went out to work, my mother stayed at home, and she was very proud of that [Dave: Yep.] fiercely proud of it.

Alex’s response to the interviewer’s question constructs a distinction between the traditional expectation that men be the provider and the reality of contemporary New Zealand family life. Drawing on contemporary history “not since the 1980s” he argues that economics “people need two incomes to get a mortgage” has worked to counter the male provider role. He uses a vague reference to infer the associated economic pragmatics “the practicalities of day to day life” to argue that the man as the sole provider is no longer the reality. His use of repetition “I don’t think the reality is there” “not at all” “not any more” “Not since the 1980s” emphasises this point. Callum draws on the pragmatics of the relationship and flexibility to explain the ways in which the roles of provider are played out in contemporary New Zealand life “most people work out what’s going to work for them”. Haden also drew on flexibility when he spoke of the way being the provider changed from the beginning of the
relationship, when he portrayed men as the ones expected to pay for dates, to more shared responsibility as the relationship became more permanent.

By using the phrase “that-dream slash nightmare” Alex, in the excerpt above, contests the idea that the role of the man as the sole provider in a relationship is one to be valued by all men. Callum’s reference to a subconscious default suggests that men may unthinkingly fall back on the traditional male provider role as being the man’s role in a relationship. This notion of a “subconscious default” or of a “mould” was employed in many of the men’s accounts to describe traditional influences that men needed to work against if they wanted to move beyond the practices of their fathers or male predecessors (see below). Alex description of his parents’ roles provides an explanation of how the man as the provider worked in practice in his parent’s family “my father went out to work, my mother stayed at home”.

In the following account Finn’s links masculinity issues for men with women’s proven abilities in roles that were traditionally male provider/protector roles:

Finn: .. I think there’s a massive issue among Western men not really having a compass bearing about what it means to be a man? [Dave: Right.] Um, I think, you know we’ve had 40 years I think of women if you like re-establishing themselves in different degrees of validity? [Dave: Yep.] and whilst you say men are still the provider very much here, I think there’s quite a strong-certainly in business, ... there’s a very, very powerful tide I think of women proving they’re either as a- adept at a lot of the business management roles as men have ever been if not better? [Unidentified Participant: Mm.] Um amongst the military.

By laying out “what it is to be a man” alongside the renaissance of women Finn takes up the link between the male provider role and the competence of women to be the provider. He makes reference to “women ... re-establishing themselves in different degrees of validity” and his reference to “forty years” suggests that women have been working on this “re-establishment” for a long period of time. By linking the group’s representation of men as the providers to women’s competence in business and the military he suggests that women are now as competent if not more so than men in the
provider role. While not stated explicitly the juxtaposition of masculinity issues with women’s increasing competency as providers allows the inference to be made that the role of women as competent providers, within realms traditionally considered to be men’s, constitutes a challenge to traditional masculinity roles.

In the following extract the authority that goes with being the provider is more explicitly articulated:

Sean: as you say, the one who earns more, I mean, she dictates the rules to a certain extent. [laughter] [Viv: Yeah.] So financially that- that’s a weapon gone, [Viv: Yes, yes.] you know? [Dave: Right.] and I’m- and I- that’s- that’s what I’m- I’m just sort of [Viv: Mm.] just thinking about it you know.

Sean’s representation of the person who earns the money as being the one who “dictates the rules” suggests that the being the provider gives a person authority in the relationship. With his use of the pronoun “she” he indicates that a woman who earns more can be the one with such authority. His representation of this as “financially” “that’s a weapon gone” suggests that traditionally men could employ money as a means of control of the woman in the relationship and that when a woman earns more the man is no longer able to use money as a means to control her. The term weapon, however, is a stronger representation than simply a mechanism of control and suggests that such a role can be employed to do harm or injury to a woman, or as a source of punishment, and when women take a provider role this financial weapon is no longer available.

Harry situates the issues for the man as the provider within contemporary consumer culture:

Harry: And ah, some of the power issues are, really structural in our society, like there’s so much, like the consumer culture. Money. You know it’s, power is really, really associated with just having money, disposable money. Um and keeping- you know labels. Um and if you haven’t got the access, ready access to plug in, you know your wallet into whatever you want, there’s a lot of frustration for people. [Dave: Right.] Um, and particularly if there’s, this
In this account Harry opens up the “power issues” and the consumer culture as a means to articulate matters that affect men as providers. He describes power as “really structural” suggesting a hierarchical notion of power “in our society”. By describing power as “really, really associated with just having money, disposable money” he appears to be articulating a concept of power/money for men that is associated with providing status. Previous research with young men in New Zealand found that status was associated with masculinity (Towns, forthcoming). Harry’s use of the phrase “disposable money” suggests that having money to dispose of rather than simply having money provides a demonstration of power or status. His use of the term “labels” again draws on recognised designer fashions as demonstrations of success. His reference to the consumer society and to having “the access, ready access to plug in, you know your wallet into whatever you want,” situates this structural association of power and money within a consumer marketing ideal. There is an implication in this statement that men need to demonstrate their “ready access” to money to have status within this consumer culture and he makes problematic this representation with his link to the difficulties with realising these ideals “there’s a lot of frustration for people”. He emphasised this associated difficulty with the word “particularly” and with provider expectations. This discussion occurred within a context of men as providers and his reference to the provider expectations may be interpreted as referring to men as providers.

**Traditional New Zealand man**

The role of provider was traditionally that of men within western cultures. In the following Zak employs roles to describe the influence of traditional masculinities on husband/wife relationships in his family:

**Zak:** I come from a rural background? [Dave: Yeah.] and two of my great grandfathers actually cut their farms out of bush [Dave: Right.] in NZ and um their wives actually came from overseas, came to- into a situation where they
were starting to cut these farms out of bush ... And they were pretty rugged times, you know, they- they had very, very distinct roles. [Sean: Mm.] [Dave: Right.] and, and the women didn’t get involved in the business decisions, and the men didn’t get involved in the home decisions [laugh] [Dave: Yeah.] you know it was like, children and cooking and cleaning and all [Dave: Very traditional roles.] that sort of thing was very, and you know, they had to do it out on the rocks and the stream, they didn’t have all the mod cons [Dave: Sure.] and, and, you know they tell us the stories and, and- But they were- it was very interesting but they actually had a tenderness towards their, their wives, you know.

Zak uses the phrase “they had very, very distinct roles” to emphasis the difference in gender roles in this pioneering culture where men “cut their farms out of bush” and women “came from overseas” to “pretty rugged times”. He articulates the distinction in roles with the phrase “and the women didn’t get involved in the business decisions, and the men didn’t get involved in the home decisions”. In this construction the provider status of the man is clear – business decisions associated with money and finance are his whereas “home decisions” associated with “children and cooking and cleaning” were hers. His statement “he was in control” maintains a description of the man as the traditional authority in the home despite the women’s contribution. His addition of the comment “but there was also some very good team work going on you know” indicates that he recognised the value of his grandmother’s contribution and contests the notion that women were not an integral part of this male provider role.

As if to counter a romantic interpretation of this life Zak works up the idea that life was hard for both his grandfather and his grandmother, but that despite this difficult life there remained a quality in the relationship that was not compromised by the stress of living. Zak depicts the difficulty of the life for women in this role with his description of the domestic tasks: “they had to do it out on the rocks and the stream, they didn’t have all the mod cons”. In contrast to the difficulty associated with this life Zak represents the relationship between his grandfather and grandmother with the phrase “they actually had a tenderness towards their, their wives, you know”. When asked to elaborate on what he meant by tenderness Zak said the following:
Zak: It’s sort of never leave the home without um- saying goodbye even if they were just going out to do some jobs for the morning. [Dave: Sure.] And that was in the morning and they’d come home and they’d give their wife a peck at night when they came in before they even went to have a shower or bath or anything like that you know. [Dave: Yeah.] And if they were to go off to town or anything like that it was always they would say goodbye. [Dave: Right.] Um and- and there was um very noticeable eye contact in that when they came in and like, shearers and um, hay makers and sometimes we’d have fifteen to twenty people at the table [Dave: Gotcha.] hoeing in you know and the women had been working really hard to get a table full of food and it was demolished in a very short period of time, and, and you know, but the husband down the end of the table, you know, he was in control but there was also some very good team work going on you know [Dave: Yeah.] and they, they somehow knew, you know, when the meals were to be ready and [Dave: Right.] all of that sort of thing and, because it was clockwork, you know? .... Very distinct roles but, but there was a lot of team work went on [Dave: Right.]

Warwick: It’s like a mutual respect isn’t it? [Unidentified participant: (?).] between- [Zak: Yeah.] [Sean: Mm.] I think we’ve lost that these days.

Zak employs certain common courtesy practices to describe what he meant by tenderness, the greetings that his grandfather gave to his grandmother, the eye contact that he made with her prior to sitting at the table with his work crew. Zak’s use of a lengthy description of the work that was done by his grandmother to ensure that her husband was supported in his work places a certain value on this work.

Warwick’s comment “It’s like a mutual respect isn’t it” constructs this traditional relationship with it’s distinct roles as offering a place for mutual respect that is not available today: “I think we’ve lost that these days.” The latter phrase signals a level of nostalgia for the traditional roles where there was distinct clarity about what a man’s and woman’s place was. Later Zak contests the representation that these distinct roles were always healthy when he spoke of his mother’s loneliness about
being left out of business decisions during the recession years when there was the potential his grandfather to lose his land - the phrase “over his dead body” signalling the possibility of suicide in these hard times.

Ben’s description of the traditional New Zealand man was of a “Barry Crump” type of “pioneering “man:

Callum: I suppose that’s- that’s the traditional description of masculinity [laughter] of aloofness or- non-caring or- hard.
Alex: It is to my father and to Jake the Mus. [laughter & agreement]
Callum: Right.
Alison: So the Jake the Muss would be the picture of the non-caring hard sort of man.
Alex: Of modern, Kiwi, NZ culture.

In contrast to the tenderness described by Zak of his grandfather Alex and Callum work up another representation of the traditional New Zealand man as a man of “aloofness”, “non caring or hard”. This description evokes ideas of a traditional man being unemotional and removed, lacking compassion, and with the reference to Jake the Muss of *Once were Warriors*, even violent to his wife or girlfriend. Grant spoke of the representation of masculinity described by a rugby icon and by his father, both constructing men as always having an unemotional response to any event whether sadness or anger. In New Zealand this ideal masculinity is portrayed through representations of the emotional toughness and strength of rugby and rugby league players, men who can cope with the physicality and pain of competition on the rugby field and who are able to control the emotionality through their personal ‘discipline’.

In the following the participants contested the “Jake the Muss”/ Barry Crump representation as one of reality for all contemporary New Zealand men:

Dave: How does that idea fit with you guys? You know that- when you think of that dominant idea or that one idea of how um- men should be in relationships in NZ?
Callum: Well I suppose that’s the picture that’s painted for us on TV and film. [Dave: Yeah.] As the stereotype. [Dave: Yep.]

Callum portrayed this construction as an imagined reality through reference to media representation through TV and film “that’s the picture that’s painted for us on TV and film.” The traditional man is further represented as imagined in the following:

Callum: I don’t think anyone takes that terribly seriously as the concrete must be mould.
Ben: Yeah, I’ve got friends where I suppose the guy has stayed at home now, he’s who’s at home looking after the kids and she’s going out to work. [Alex: Mm.]

Callum’s statement “I don’t think anyone takes that terribly seriously suggests that, at least amongst the men that he associates himself with, the traditional representations of the man are not considered to be identities to whom they would aspire. His use of the phrase “the concrete must be mould” allows him to articulate such traditional roles as a fixed representation that men would have to adhere to. Ben’s described a practice of a contemporary man “the guy has stayed at home now... looking after the kids and she’s going out to work” as an example of contemporary practices that go counter to these traditional constructions of masculinity.

Amongst others of these European New Zealand men some of the language employed was suggestive of nostalgia for more traditional forms of masculine practices:

Sean: there’s just this big silence over how you’re supposed to behave in a marriage that came to our generation, which means that- you know, we- we sort of had to just kind of trip over it I suppose. And so then you’ve got this enormous influence that comes in around the world and as you say, feminising it and you’re wanted to be the women’s best friend- And then I- and lately I think there’s been a little bit of an understanding that, that actually doesn’t work. [Trevor: Yeah it’s starting to come back?] And guys have to be guys and now there’s the encouragement that blokes be blokes again. [Dave: Right.] And,
and women be women again and we all get along ok you know.[laugh] [Dave: 
Right.]

Sean’s broad sweeping statements “this enormous influence that comes in around the world” “feminising it” makes vague reference to the influence of feminism without articulating who is being influenced. His statement “that actually doesn’t work” again is not specific about what doesn’t work but has the effect of countering any positive influence of this “feminising”. In his following statement that “blokes be blokes again and women be women again” he evokes a nostalgic representation of past ways of men being men and women being women without actually articulating what is meant by these distinctive roles. His final statement “and we all get along okay you know. [laugh]” suggests an romantic representation of these men’s and women’s practices which perhaps he recognises as idealised with his laugh at the end.

**Countering the romance of traditional roles**

In the following the interviewer takes up this idea of the idealised traditional masculinity that some of the participants had articulated:

Dave: Yeah, I wonder if that’s kind of the, there’s some resurgence in there about locking onto that idea of there’s a nice clean distinction of when men were men and they went away and they fought and they gave their lives in absurd conditions [laughs] but they did it for NZ and they did it for the people at home and that ah- nice clear definition of masculinity that sits there with those men.

Alex: Mm. Mm.

Callum: I don’t see it that way because I see those guys out there as in horrible conditions totally fearful of their [Alex: Cannon fodder.] environment and they were obedient to the point of doing what the state said to do [Dave: Yep.] and we have a lot to thank them for in that we are a free nation but um-

Alex: I think that’s the point that I’m getting at is that it’s the conditions that you need to engineer in a culture to get men to go into a paddock in appalling conditions and be totally af- afraid and mutilated, how do you engineer that? [Dave: Keep going eh?]
Alison: Do you think there are some men that actively coach their sons to be tough and hard?
Alex: Yeah yeah. My relative.
Alison: As a protective thing in case of the possibility of war in the future, having to be part of a war?
Alex: Yes, I think you should definitely have a focus group in my provincial town. [laughter]

Callum works to counter any glorification of men’s past roles. A number of the men spoke of the influence of going to war on men in the past and how this impacted on men today. For example, this group spoke of men being raised to be “gun fodder” and in this excerpt reference is again made to men being “cannon fodder”. This description graphically captures a sense of men being trained to be killed or to face the possibility of being gunned down. Callum contests the glorifying of the role of men in war by describing the context of war: “horrible conditions”, and the impact on men in these conditions “totally fearful of their environment”. By stating “we have a lot to thank them for in that we are a free nation” he counters any argument that he is criticising these men for their participation while creating an image that does not glorify these war practices.

In the following discussion the climate that is required to produce men who will be obedient to the state to the point of going to their death is worked up. Callum’s statement “they were obedient to the point of doing what the state said to do” situates this form of masculinity as a hierarchical one that involves obedience to structural power influences. By stating that they did what the state said to do he evokes these men’s practices as driven by hierarchy or dictated by the whim of the state and therefore out of their own individual control. Alex takes up this point. His statement “it’s the conditions that you need to engineer in a culture” opens up the cultural climate that needs to be created in order for men to be able to go to war or to “to get men to go into a paddock in appalling conditions and be totally af- afraid and mutilated”. AT with Alex constructs the practical implications of war for how men raise their sons. In this construction some men work to harden their sons up emotionally in order for them to have the qualities needed to survive any potential
war context. Alex’s reference to his “provincial town” suggests that such actions apply particularly to men raised in provincial New Zealand.

**Traditional roles and cultural traditions**

Some men spoke of the influence of traditional hierarchical masculine practices from their country of origin on the ways their new immigrant fathers acted towards women and children in the home. In the following Maru described the context for his father’s authoritarian practices in the home:

Maru: There’s a lot of cultural things that are tied to that because you know my dad had, had a lot of say over- um- decisions, even to this day he still has a lot of say, you know. Um you know, when you tell him, ‘oh no we, let’s discuss things and that [Dave: Yeah] you know before you make a decision that affects the whole household’ you know, a couple of days my dad will just make a decision without us. And it’s just, you know that authority he has and it stems from um, I guess probably the cultural aspect of the fa’a Samoa and [Dave: Yep.] the matai system [Dave: Yep.] and we had as Samoans. And it’s very hard to, you know, **have a voice** when you’re kind of young.

Matu described the Samoan hierarchical system that attributes masculine authority in the following:

Maru: I think you have to like trace that back to the- to the islands, [Dave: Yep.] and just, just the whole matai system. [Dave: Right.] ... - it works like like if you’ve got your own family, you know you’ve probably got your dad, your uncles, so they make decisions with your family then you’ve got, then you’ve got your village, [Dave: Yep.] you know, and then it goes bigger. And bigger. So I wonder if things like- yeah. And, I mean those decisions are mostly made by, you know by the men. [Dave: Right.] You know, ah, I know that um when we have sort of like different, when we have things like funerals, I know a lot of the women probably are kind of aum- always at the back making cups of tea and stuff like that, they’re not always in the forefront [Dave: Yep.] but I know [big breath] I know that has changed slightly. Um-
Dave: Yeah, how’s that- sort of you’re always one step ahead of me, I was wondering how has that changed?

Maru: Yeah, um – oh well basically kind of like it just depends on what ah, um on the kind of role that the women are given [Dav: Yep.] yeah like I know um, ah, like I’ve got a aunty, she’s a um- ah, I guess, I guess you could call her- what would you call her? She’s very versed on um Fa’a Samoa cos she’s also very, I guess in English you would call her probably, ah- an artist or an artistic person [Dave: Right.] you know and um- um- and she’s- and she- and she will kind of like, and she was given a matai title. [Dave: Yep.] because she knows a lot about you know our- um- about those cultural- you know- things.

In Maru’s account male authority occurs within the Samoan family, within the village and within the wider society in the Islands. Maru’s description of the roles of women at funerals allows him to demonstrate the secondary roles that Samoan women might take within this particular traditional cultural representation. This account allows Maru to situate the influences that occur for some Samoan men who arrived as new immigrants to New Zealand where decision-making is more egalitarian and democratic. His earlier portrayal of his father allows him to represent the assumed entitlement that his father brings to decision-making and he situates such behaviour within the traditional expectations that some men from Samoa have regarding decision making. Maru employs a description of his aunty to show how such traditional roles have changed or might be different in more contemporary society. He employs cultural and artistic knowledge as a means to represent the qualities that allowed his aunty to be given a chiefly or matai title thereby providing her with a level of authority that he had previously articulated as traditionally the man’s.

Summary

Many of the men portrayed the provider identity as an important defining feature of masculinity for them in their relationships with women although some spoke of the importance of this role as unspoken rather than overtly discussed with their partners. Some men spoke of this role as the source of tension when there were consumer pressures on them to provide that they were not able to fulfil. Some participants

Overcoming the Obstacles Page 55
represented traditional masculinities as associated with male dominance and authority in the home and as associated with financial decision-making. While some men spoke with nostalgia of these historically clear gender identities others portrayed the Barry Crump/Jake the Muss identities as media representations of traditional New Zealand men to be avoided. Some men spoke of the expectation within these traditional masculinities, that men would go to war, and the historical and contemporary impact on men including the closing down of their emotional expression.
Masculinity and men’s domestic violence towards women

This section works up the link between masculine practices or masculinity and men’s violence towards women partners. The first section follows through on the previous comments by men on the link between masculinity, war and violence towards women. Next, masculine practices associated with being the provider and the link between violence towards women is discussed. Finally, the association of masculinity with practices of being powerful, discourses of powerlessness and regaining power through violence is explored.

Patriarchy, colonisation and men’s violence

In the previous section the traditional roles of men and the influence on contemporary masculinity within relationships was discussed. In the following Evan links colonising practices and the use of force through to the use of force in intimate relationships:

Evan: I just think it’s such a difficult thing because in our culture and I look at the larger picture of our culture we have- we- we- we live in pretty much an imperialist society you know where, where the British colonials decided to come here, whether it was me or who the fuck it was, it was someone’s idea that we could come in, take land and people can- you know, people, and this happened in European culture, it happened in Māori culture, it happened in Africa, it happened everywhere where- ‘you’re not going to come, you’re not going to be with us, alright, fuck you, we’ll kill you. And then you won’t have a choice.’ And this has happened throughout time and it continues to happen and this cultural imperative continues to this day. And until we all realise that actually there’s more- um- sustain this buzz word, sustainability is about sustainable relationships on every level. It’s not about forcing your imperative, your ideas on someone else, it’s about realising that we are all in this together, and we need to work together to create sustainable relationships whether it’s business relationships whether it’s the environment, whatever, [Unidentified participant: Mm.] and, and it’s about
really, a much bigger thing at the end of the day, and so I think- a lot of those men are just playing out- um acts which have been played out in our society for, for a long time and the women are playing out [Alison: Mm.] those same things as well, they’re trying to get their point across forcefully. [Unidentified participant: Mm.] Where it just doesn’t work, they don’t have control. [Alison: No.] You know. So for me it’s about power ... that whole power versus force and we need to recognise that actually we need to create more harmonious relationships, as hard work as it is, as idealistic as it might seem it’s the only solution. The only real solution to anything. [Dave: Right] [Unidentified participant: Mm.]

Evan begins by associating “our culture” to “imperialist society” and to British colonials. With these phrases he associates himself, through the use of “our” and with the phrase “whether it was me or who the fuck it was” with the practices of coming “in” and taking land. With the phrases “come in” and “take land” he evokes the colonising practices of British colonial imperialists who used sovereign power or the use of violence to get what they wanted. By bringing in other cultures “this happened in European culture, it happened in Māori culture, it happened in Africa, it happened everywhere...” he counters an interpretation that he is only referring to the influence of a British colonial practices but rather to colonial practices generally, although Britain was the dominant colonial influence in New Zealand. By using a spoken voice he evocatively illustrates colonial practices: “‘you’re not going to come, you’re not going to be with us, alright, fuck you, we’ll kill you. And then you won’t have a choice.’” With these phrases he captures the use of sovereign power to impose the colonisers will on the colonised. By using the phrase “this cultural imperative continues to this day” he relates these historical colonial practices to contemporary New Zealand society. His use of the phrase “you won’t have a choice” captures the effect of violence on victims of violence – the over-riding experience of the loss of choice, or any ability to choose how to act, on their lives.

Evan identifies the masculine practices associated with these colonial practices in his statement “a lot of those men are just playing out- um acts which have been played out in our society for, for a long time”. With this phrase he situates men’s
violence as mimicking colonising practices. Within this context he identifies women’s attempts to address associated issues as also problematic because of their lack of control: “and the women are playing out those same things as well, they’re trying to get their point across forcefully. Where it just doesn’t work, they don’t have control.” In representing these ideas he makes a distinction between force and power and his previous references to the use of force to claim control appears to make problematic the use of force. Of interest here are his careful attempts not to single out men as the problem but by rather to equally attribute responsibility to women “playing out those same things”. His acknowledgment that women “don’t have control” suggests that he understands the differences in the power relationships between men and women when men’s violence is the issue.

Evan introduces the idea of “sustainable relationships” to counter the form of relationship he has previously described. Whereas colonising practices involve “forcing your imperative, your ideas on someone else” sustainable relationships involve “realising that we are all in this together, and we need to work together”. With his final statement he elaborates on this idea of sustainable relationships “we need to create more harmonious relationships, as hard work as it is, as idealistic as it might seem it’s the only solution.” His use of repetition of “only solution” and the emphasis on the word only work to signify the importance of harmonious relationships as the answer to the use of violence to control.

**Being strong and powerful – having status**

The distinction between power and force raises the question of the importance to men of power and how this is played out in their relationships with women. In the following Harry describes power as an entity within a person:

Harry: I think ah, Finn mentioned earlier and it’s sort of been touched on a couple of times the issue of power as a raw thing that flows through you? And the coroll- opposite of that, powerlessness, there’s a lot of things in our society where the men, you were saying for instance, that are in advertising and it’s all belittling, [Finn: Mm.] that’s diminishing the male power [Dave: Right.]
and in that regard it’s, I think there’s a background of that being diminished in feeling the powerlessness, the frustration that comes through, depression that can flow from this [Finn: Yeah.] and it’s ah, I’ve experienced depression a lot and I’ve, didn’t identify with it for a long time, but I’ve realised a lot of it was about frustration, about not being able to express myself in a way that I felt was powerful. [Dave: Right.] Um. Safely without having to [laughs] [Dave: Yeah.] do that.

In Harry’s account power is constructed as “a raw thing that flows through you?” suggesting that power is contained within the person. This notion of power allows him to describe powerlessness as the “corollary” or “opposite” of this description. In this construction power is understood as an entity within that is either there or that can be taken away by the actions of others. For example, this representation of power allows Harry to describe how power can therefore be diminished by “belittling” and he uses as an example certain representations of men in advertising. This idea that men may be diminished of power allows him to represent the impact on men as “frustration” and “depression”.

In his final comments he appears to construct power in a different form. By his reference to “not being able to express myself in a way that I felt was powerful” he represents power as relational rather than as an entity held within. Expressing oneself involves interacting with others and it is through expressing his frustration “safely” that he depicts bringing about a change. He refers to the expression of his frustration as being the act that “felt powerful” and this representation of power returns to his earlier representation of power as an entity within. His use of the phrase “without having to do that” is vague but one reading of this phrase is that he is referring to the avoidance of the use of force or violence to gain a sense of power.

In the following Kevin links physical violence to men’s desire for power and status or pride:

Dave: .. where do you reckon that violence against women comes from? [Maru: Yeah.] This is a general, general question eh, anyone can jump in here [laughs] Yeah I’m just kind of interested where ya- where ya-
Kevin: I guess there’s um- some- some sort of stuff comes from TV? You know, from what you watch on TV and you know, I think ah, beating up women and, and makes you strong. Yeah- there’s that sense of pride you know? [Dave: Yeah.] And kinda that image shows that, you know. Cos he can beat her up. He has more power over her. [Dave: Right] So you, you think, oh wow that’s cool, I might try that you know?

In response to the interviewer’s question Kevin, a young man, identifies the media influences from TV as promoting men’s violence towards women, as did some other participants. New Zealand TV has a predominance of crime drama commonly involving serious assaults, murders or serial killing of women by usually male perpetrators. Kevin’s reference to TV and movies, where women are beaten, as influences is telling given this context. Kevin identifies the impact on men of using violence towards women: “beating up women and, and makes you strong. Yeah- there’s that sense of pride you know?” By constructing the act of beating up women as making “you strong” and referring to “that sense of pride” Kevin depicts men as gaining masculine qualities of strength and status by engaging in such violence. With the following statement “Cos he can beat her up.” Kevin’s use of the word “can” makes reference to the greater strength that men have and the capability they have to use it effectively against women. A man does it because he can. The statement “He has more power over her” links this physical strength to power and the use of power in this context suggests a sovereign power or one used to exercise control from a hierarchical position. There is in this statement an inference that a man’s potential to use violence positions him as powerful. Kevin’s final statement suggests that the opportunity to gain power might be considered cool by some young men “So you, you think, oh wow that’s cool, I might try that you know?” John contests the construction that such behaviour is learned solely from media representations:

John: But it’s not the norm. [Maru: Yeah.] [Kevin: No.] It isn’t the norm. It’s got to be reinforced in the home [Maru: Yeah.]
In this statement he argues that the home influence reinforces the climate for the development of violence towards women.

In the following the interviewer asks about how men move from milder forms of action to the use of physical violence:

Dave: I’m quite interested in kind of where the hammer fits into us as men, like, you know, the hammer I’m talking about violence, violence or abuse, so I’m ...

Ben: See, I always think well you know, the guys that just have inherent strength you’re always going to have the potential for it. You’ve always going to have the capacity I suppose but as you say when you talk about kind of conversation, for me that’s why I value the conversations I have with my wife and working through things and I have a kind of check, like you saying about having checks you know and I, when I sense my kind of internal kind of stress levels go up over kind of work or you know finances and I know sort of release that I really need to start talking about that [Dave: Right] and I know I need to start talking about that with my wife or in the shed with my mates.

With the statement “I always think well you know, the guys that just have inherent strength you’re always going to have the potential for it. You’ve always going to have the capacity I suppose” Ben draws on masculinity representations of men’s strength and links this strength to the potential for violence in a rendition similar to Kevin’s. Men can potentially use violence because they have “the capacity” to. His use of the pronoun “it” is vague and avoids stating that this inherent strength is in contrast to that of women. Whereas some men might gain from the exercising of this greater strength, for Ben, this recognition of his capacity for violence is a reason to have “a kind of check” on his “stress levels”. In this account he overcomes any potential for violence by taking action: “talking about that with my wife or in the shed with my mates.”
Being a new immigrant and powerlessness

Some participants were sons of new immigrants and spoke of their fathers’ use of violence within a context that is evocative of powerlessness:

Maru: But I guess I know during that time period um it’s not like- um- during those times they were actually quite difficult for a lot of Pacific Islanders ah- you know- especially- you know- they’re ah- because a lot of them had to um work probably like three jobs [Dave: Yeah.] you know? Just to support- you know? And there’s also like a loss of that kind of- they were in a different environment from home, um, different surroundings- [Dave: Yeah.] um- and they had to ah- yeah and um they weren’t- I guess, I know when I was younger I was kind of look- looked as an outsider [Dave: Right.] you know, coming to a new country, I couldn’t really speak, I couldn’t speak English [Dave: Right.] at that present time, so I was just about finding who I was. I know when my dad arrived here, you know, he um- you know he ah- he was pretty much ah- he had a very cultural ah- upbringing [Dave: Yep.] you know um- he- and a lot of that kind of um- kind of surfaced I guess in- when um things got pretty um- stressful in that, in that time ah, there’d be a lot of anger, um- [Dave: Yeah.] ah- and a lot of ah- yeah, yeah and probably a lot of physical, [Dave: Sure.] and also verbal. ....

Maru’s references to the difficulties for new immigrants of having to hold down three jobs, not being able to speak the language, different environment and being “looked as an outsider” are all descriptive of the lack of influence that new immigrants have. His mention of his father’s cultural background “he had a very cultural ah- upbringing” draws on the Samoan culture to explain his actions, (see above) in which men made decisions for the family and were part of a male dominated hierarchical system within the village and beyond (see above). By referring to this background and context he offers an explanation for his father’s behaviour “there’d be a lot of anger” and “probably a lot of physical, and also verbal.” With these euphemisms he evokes physical and verbal violence. One reading of this text is that his father’s violent reactions were linked to a sense of
powerlessness and the associated challenges to traditional masculine practices, through immigrating to a new culture that had different social structures and values.

**Being the provider**

In the following the men work up the ways in which the masculine ideas about being the provider can produce men’s violence towards women. For example, in the following Trevor described the role of provider as influencing his responses:

Trevor: I think inherently a man has this role of a provider um- [Sean: Mm.] and you know if financially things are falling apart and um- stuff like that, it really puts a man- it gets down [Dave: Right.] [Sean: Mm.] and I’m feeling that a lot at the moment [Dave: Yeah.] in my relationship and I’ve got a wife who- well, we’ve both been bad with money but, um- spending is a thing, and women love spending. [laugh] [Sean: Right.] But um- you sit there and you can see this happening or you hear your wife, ‘Oh we need this and we need this and we need this and we need this’ and- as a man, well speaking for myself that really gets at me and that’s- drives me down and further into the- into the darkness so to speak. [Dave: Right.] And I’ve been there, angry. [Sean: Mm.] And wanting to lash out [Dave: Yep.] um and in times past I have lashed out. Um and it’s um, and it’s that, it’s because deep down I feel a failure because I can’t provide. [Dave: Right.] Because all the financial problems, all the shit that’s coming down [Dave: Yep.] is coming down because I can’t provide as a man. [Dave: Right.] Because I’m not fulfilling my part as a man in the relationship [Dave: So that yeah.] and that points towards- and that drives and down and down [Dave: Down and down and down.] and finally- I mean you, you put this stuff down [Dave: Yep.] because you’re expected to carry on and do your job and bring the money home so you don’t worry about it push it down, push it down and where does it go? If you’ve got no outlet for it, where does it go? Finally [Sean: That’s right.] it breaks [Dave: Yeah.] and it comes out [Sean: That’s right.] and that’s where guys suicide, I mean I’ve thought of it [Dave: Yeah, yeah absolutely.] you know, I’d be better off, my family would be better off without me because they’d get all this money [Dave: Sure.] from my
Overcoming the Obstacles

insurance, you know? [Dave: Yep.] The world would be better off without me cos I can’t provide as a man. That goes through my mind.

Trevor’s depicts men as the provider and states that “if financially things are falling apart and um- stuff like that, it really puts a man- it gets down”. With the phrase “if financially things are falling apart” he references problems with money and his vague use of the phrase “and um- stuff like that” makes inferences to associated problems over which the man has no control. He summarises the impact with two vague references to what happens to “a man”. With the first “it really puts a man” there is an inference that the man becomes the subject of the influence of another. With the second “it gets down” the use of the pronoun “it” allows the man to make a vague reference to emotions without referencing whether it is the man who “gets down” or whether other people in the household do.

Trevor provides an example from his own situation. Initially he begins with the statement “I’ve got a wife who-” which suggests that he is about to introduce his wife to explain his provider problems but his following statement positions him as someone who is prepared to take some responsibility for their situation: “well, we’ve both been bad with money but, um- spending is a thing”. By using “we’ve” he includes his own actions with being “bad with money” and “spending”. With this phrase he appears to acknowledge a part in their financial predicament but he moves back to referencing his wife again by a general statement about all women: “women love spending”. With the latter he situates women as different from men in this regard: women are the ones who are spending and who enjoy doing so. His use of the pronoun “you” in the following comment: “But um- you sit there and you can see this happening” is a vague reference to those who are not so enamoured with spending. The phrase situates people referenced by the pronoun “you” as other than women, and therefore men, while not explicitly stating that it is men to whom he is referring. At the same time the use of “you” allows Trevor to associate himself with such people so that the listener understands that he is describing his own responses. This group are positioned, in this phrase, as observers watching the spending happening. As opposed to Trevor’s earlier statement in which he had
expressed some responsibility for their financial difficulties, by representing himself with the group who observes such spending he shifts himself away from a culpable position. One reading of this phrase is that by opening up this observer role Trevor positions those who watch these events as not taking control of the situation or as powerless to change it. With the next phrase “or you hear your wife, ‘Oh we need this and we need this and we need this and we need this and we need this’” he explicitly references the requests for consumable items with examples of a man’s wife’s demands. His repetition and use of the spoken work allow him to emphasise these wifely demands and accentuates the extent of them as pressures that the man bears.

Trevor employs the following statement to more explicitly identify with the man’s response to such demands: “as a man, well speaking for myself that really gets at me and that’s- drives me down and further into the- into the darkness so to speak.” By utilizing phrases like “that really get at me” and “drives me down” “into the darkness” Trevor evokes a level of distress or even depression caused by these financial demands. With the first phrase “as a man” he links this reaction to his masculinity. The qualification “well speaking for myself” allows him to acknowledge that he might not be speaking for all men. The following phrases identify another emotional response to these financial difficulties “And I’ve been there, angry.” Trevor identifies anger as a response but he does not specify who the anger is directed towards. The reader is left to speculate on the basis of the construction presented that he is angry towards his wife for making demands and for spending but another reading is that he might equally be angry with himself. Trevor links this angry response to his physical actions: “And wanting to lash out [Dave: Yep.] um and in times past I have lashed out.” By using vague references to lashing out he does not identify who the victim of his lashing out was and whether anyone else suffered as a consequence of this reaction.

Trevor then employs a number of linguistic moves to link his violent reaction to a sense of powerlessness associated with not being able to fulfil his role, within certain constructions of masculinity, as a man and as a provider. In the first of these he identifies a sense of failure associated with being unable to provide. “Um and it’s
um, and it’s that, it’s because deep down I feel a failure because I can’t provide.” With this statement he draws on the position of the provider being an expected role for men (see above) and by articulating that he has not successfully fulfilled this role he is able to portray a sense of failure as a man. He links the impact of the financial problems to his inability to fulfil the role of provider and explicitly references the provider role as one expected of a man: “Because all the financial problems, all the shit that’s coming down [Dave: Yep.] is coming down because I can’t provide as a man.” Finally he generalises from his failure as a provider to his failure as a man within the relationship. “Because I’m not fulfilling my part as a man in the relationship”. With these last two statements he draws on a sense of failed masculinity to account for his responses of depression, anger and violence previously articulated.

Other men also spoke of the diminishing effect the failure to provide had on them. For example Arana stated:

Alison: Yeah. And is the- is the provider thing a big- big thing for you guys here or [Arana: Yeah.] is that- it is?
Arana: I think for me yeah. [Alison: Yeah?] When you- I think- if you don’t provide you feel all- [laughs] you feel a bit small. [laughs] Yeah. [Unidentified participant: Mm.] You know and I don’t know. Just- I don’t know if ah- it can make you wanna- have a long walk and don’t come back. [laughs] You know, cos you can’t provide. Yeah. So yeah.

One interpretation of Arana’s use of the word small and the following statements to describe the feelings of men who are unable to provide is that it draws on ideas about men’s sense of powerlessness to change their situation and to be a good provider when they are unable to provide. Another is that it draws on a loss of the status of man, according to some constructions of masculinity, associated with being the provider within the home when finances are difficult.

In the final section above Trevor employs a common explanation for a man’s violence or emotional response to stress - pressure builds and it explodes – and he links this to a sense of failure as a provider: “because you’re expected to carry on

Overcoming the Obstacles Page 67
and do your job and bring the money home so you don’t worry about it push it down, push it down and where does it go? If you’ve got no outlet for it, where does it go? Finally [Sean: That’s right.] it breaks [Dave: Yeah.] and it comes out”. This is a construction commonly employed by men who use violence to account for their violent reactions towards their wives or girlfriends (Adams, Towns & Gavey, 2005). In the example here Trevor employs this response to account for his depression and suicidal ideation associated with his sense of failure as a provider. In the following Arana similarly expresses the reaction of a man when his role as a provider is challenged:

Arana: When you’re not providing when you have a man you better look out for him.
Alison: So how does that work?
Arana: If you’re not providing and you’re going to work and you’re trying your hardest and a woman nags and nags and nags it’s enough to- makes you want to pick up something and throw it at her just to shut her up cos you know- just some people I’m not saying all people I’m not saying- you know, that can frustrate a man that can frustrate a man to the point where he want to go with another woman, you know. [laughs]

Arana explicitly constructs the man’s failure to provide “if you’re not providing” to his woman partner’s response “a woman nags and nags and nags”. With this latter statement he portrays the woman as continually getting at the man and his link to the statement “if you’re not providing” implicates her nagging as associated with the man’s violence “it’s enough to- makes you want to pick up something and throw it at her” or to his leaving his wife “to the point where he want to go with another woman”. In his account however the man’s physical violence is identified as more instrumentally motivated to “shut her up”. Arana employs qualifiers to indicate that not everyone reacts this way “I’m not saying all people” “just some people”. References to a woman nagging are common justifications employed by men who use violence to excuse their violence. Here the link is made to a challenge to the
provider status of men suggesting that masculine role expectations influence some men’s reactions.

**Provider status and legitimate spending**

For some participants discussions of the provider role raised the issue of what was considered to be legitimate and illegitimate spending and the justifications for men to use violence if the woman spent the money on items or activities that were not considered to be legitimate. For example, Rhys challenged the idea that Pasifika families alone would excuse violence if the woman illegitimately spent money the man earned:

Rhys: I think it’s the island culture. [General agreement: Island culture.] Not only island like-you think that if the same thing happened in a European family, if the father’s working very hard, they have kids and he’s the only person working and then you have a woman who spends the money that he’s working for for the family on the casino on housie and all these other things [Rhys: Yeah.] don’t you think that he would get angry to an extent where he’d possibly hit his wife? Because-

Within this group of Pasifika men Rhys stated that the role of the provider/spender was explicitly articulated as gendered: the man was the provider, the woman the spender:

Dave: Yeah, it was a- it was a second part of the question, so if we’re talking about the Island culture- [Rhys: Mm.] is- is- is part of being a man that you work and hand over the money at the end of the day. Yep. To- to your partner. That you don’t actually manage it within the house so it goes over to you- [Overlapping talk. Rhys: From what I hear from my dad]. Dave: Yeah.

Rhys: From what I hear from my parents that’s what it sounds like like dad works [Dave: Okay.] mum spends.

Dave: Gotcha. Right. [Arana: Yeah.]
This representation of roles was one articulated here by the men in this group and was not uncommon amongst many of the groups. Whether this is the constructed reality rather than the actual reality is another issue. For example, many Pasifika women work too – and some younger Pasifika men have spoken about not handing all their earnings over in order to allow them to have money to enjoy some time with their male friends (Towns, forthcoming).

Arana’s comments suggest that with the provider role comes the authority to lay down rules and regulations on how money is spent:

Arana: I notice that the problems do happen like that cos men have like ah-guidelines and rules, and they want the woman to do all that he had put there? If she goes outside of that thing, that’ll upset a man straight away. [Dave: Right.] You know. Forget your make up, you know. You know. I notice that with me when I give money to my missus I want her to do those things, as soon as she steps out I think she’s disrespecting me. Well that’s how I [Dave; Got ya.] I look at it. [Dave: Got ya.] She- you know you’re trying to make sure you have enough money like what you said [Rhys: Mm.] for the week, [Dave: Yeah.] you know I mean, if she really wanted the- something you know for herself she should talk to the husband. [Dave: Right.] Not just, go ahead with whatever and just say ‘oh-’ it’s like you’re disrespecting him.

Dave: So- so when the money’s being handed over are also guidelines and rules for how to spend the money. [Arana: Mm. Rhys: Mm.] Yeah.

Arana: I- I know for me [Dave: That’s for you.] that’s for me as a guy- [Dave: Yeah.] I don’t know how a woman looking cos a woman and a man look at things differently so- yeah. Dave: Yeah.] That’s from my understanding.

In this excerpt Arana begins by saying “problems do happen like that”, making a reference to an earlier discussion about how men and their wives or girlfriends manage money problems. His next statement allows him to provide an explanation for why these problems occur: “men have like ah- guidelines and rules, and they want the woman to do all that he had put there?” This statement allows him to articulate men’s expectations of women partners and the authority men have over women more generally within relationships. His use of “the woman” indicates that
he is referring to specific women here rather than all women. By saying “men have... guidelines and rules” he identifies these guidelines and rules as produced or at least owned by some men and with his following statement “they want the woman to do all that he had put there” he articulates the expectations that these men have of women partners. These rules come with the understanding that the woman will follow them. The man’s authority over the woman and his expectations of the woman in this account are further reinforced with Arana’s next statement “If she goes outside of that thing, that’ll upset a man straight away.” With this reference to the possibility of the woman not complying with the man’s rules or going “outside of that thing” Arana signals the effect on men “that’ll upset a man straight away.” The position taken with these statements reflects a certain understanding of being a man in a relationship: that the man has authority over the woman; that this authority comes with rules and guidelines; that the man expects the woman’s compliance with these rules; and that failure to comply operates against this authority and will upset the man. These preliminary statements serve to set the scene for his account of how these rules and guidelines work with the couple’s finances.

With his next statements Arana more specifically references the role of the male provider: “I notice that with me when I give money to my missus I want her to do those things”. An easy assumption to make is that with the handing over of the money goes the handing over of authority and control of how that money will be spent. Arana’s statement here runs counter to this assumption as he indicates that when he gives money to his wife “I want her to do those things.” The later statement is vague but with the context set earlier it appears to make reference to his earlier mention of “guidelines and rules”. In the question from the interviewer he confirms that this interpretation is correct. This interpretation is reinforced by his statement “as soon as she steps out I think she’s disrespecting me.” The phrase “steps out” draws on the common adage “to step out of line” and as such makes a loose reference to stepping out of the guidelines and rules referred to earlier. It signals a violation of authority. This interpretation is further reinforced by the statement “I think she’s disrespecting me”. Arana draws on the expectation that
people in authority will be treated with respect and to not comply with authority is to accord them a lack of respect.

Arana then draws on the reasonableness of his actions and invites the support of other group members with the statement “you’re trying to make sure you have enough money like what you said [Rhys: Mm.] for the week.” By making reference to the money required for the week he draws on the need to ensure that the basic essentials are paid for and that this is not an unreasonable expectation. His authority over the money is further indicated by representing his expectation of her should she want to step outside these rules “if she really wanted the- something you know for herself she should talk to the husband.” By referencing his expectation that she consult with him over spending on “herself” he signals his authority over how money is spent. Once again this statement draws on the reasonableness of his expectation: that it is not unreasonable to expect her to talk to him before spending on items for herself when there is a family to look after. Arana opens up the possibility that his interpretation of provider authority might be gendered rather than a universal expectation with his final comments: “I- I know for me [Dave: That’s for you.] that’s for me as a guy-“ and “I don’t know how a woman looking cos a woman and a man look at things differently”. With this comment he situates his interpretation as possibly open to contestation by women.

In the following the group attribute the authority to spend money as specific to the gendered nature of men/women intimate relationships:

Alison: Is that- is that the same for other [Rhys: But it’s-] people?
Rhys: -almost like-
Alison: No, not for you. No.
Jordan: No. That’s for a relationship but if you’re- if you’re home with your mum and you’re giving money to your mum [Arana: [laughs]] you don’t tell her how to spend it. [laughter]
Rhys: You just give it. [laughter] ‘Here’s my card.’ [laughter] ‘I love you.’ [laughter]
Jordan: Yeah. So you’re-That’s just-
Alison: So that’s a certain sort of authority [Jordan: Another level.]
Jordan: Like a level thing. [Alison: - that’s not there in a relationship.] Level thing.

Overcoming the Obstacles Page 72
Arana: Yeah. [laughs]

The group contrasts the expectations of men in Pasifika families to hand over the money without rules and regulations to mothers in comparison to what might happen in intimate relationships between men and women. A similar lack of any control of spending would be according to most mothers of European ethnicity who were receiving board money from a son. By using the phrase “level thing” the participants demonstrate that mothers have authority over how money is spent unconditionally as a comparison to the woman in a relationship with a man who does not.

*Women as providers diminishes the status of men*

Given the male authority ascribed to the provider role the adherence of many of the men in the groups to this role as one they maintained was a male role is not surprising. In the following the impact of women earning more than men was discussed:

Maru: .. when I’ve spoken to a few of, of my colleagues at work ah, you know they— one of the issues is, is that um you know, a lot of the time you know, men have kind of in, have women in the lead and um, but when a woman kinda like become the leader you know, and if she has a better job you know she’s- you know she’s the sole provider and you know and that kind of like um, kinda like disempowers men. [Dave: Right.] You know what I mean? You know, it takes away that, like his role sort of thing? And um, sometimes that— you know, you can get frustrated you know- when he’s out socially and, you know and you know someone’s maybe mock- ‘Oh so you, so you’re missus is a big [Dave: Yeah.] manager or a lawyer,’ you know, what do you do? And they, you know, and you kind of you know, you know when you get home and then- you know the argument and you- and then it starts to fester. I know that- I know that- I know a lot of men do feel, feel that, you know um. Even though there’s a, I know it’s you know they um, they won’t say [Dave: Right.] you know. I know a lot of men do um- feel disempowered when ah

*Overcoming the Obstacles Page 73*
Overcoming the Obstacles Page 74

their spouse or their partner kind of um, takes that, that role. [Dave: Yeah yeah.]

In this account Maru constructs the position of women as leaders, with better jobs, and as sole providers as problematic for men “that kind of like um, kinda like disempowers men”. In this construction some men lose power when women hold better jobs and become the sole providers. This construction of power draws on the idea of power as residing in the man - much as authority might be held by him - and women’s roles as providers, leaders, or with better jobs disrupting the man’s power. Maru makes reference to the loss of role “it takes away that, like his role sort of thing” that goes with the loss of provider status. This phrase raises questions about the role of a man if he is not the provider within certain constructions of masculinity and it signals the level of investment some men who adhere to such masculinities have in this role.

In this construction by Maru a woman having this role appears to be enough to create a status problem for such men, however Maru goes on to attribute this loss of status as in part promoted by others. With his following statement, “when he’s out socially and, you know and you know someone’s maybe mock- ‘Oh so you, so you’re missus is a big manager or a lawyer,’” Maru employs the social context to situate the comments made by others. His use of the word “mock” prior to this spoken comment differentiates the comment from one that might be made as a point of discussion. The employment of the word mock allows him to construct the comment as a reflection on the man’s comparative provider status, a reflection that would not be made by men who do not hold this role as central to their status as a man.

The impact on the man and the potential for an aggressive response in the home is portrayed with the following comment: “when you get home and then- you know the argument and you- and then it starts to fester”. With vague references to getting home, “the argument” and “it starts to fester” Maru opens up the possibility of the man bringing his questioned status back into the home and associated arguments. The phrase “it starts to fester” suggests an increasingly rotten impact on
the man of relationship problems, and that this impact is related to the provider status is more fully constituted with the following statements of disempowerment related to the women’s role. Maru’s comment that they “won’t say” suggests that this status disempowerment won’t be shared with his wife or woman partner.

In the following Maru links this reaction more explicitly to masculinity:

Dave: Is that cos of the um, their- is it because of their friends expectations of where they should be as men or is it because of their own expectations of where they should be as men or-

Maru: Yeah I think probably- for one I think it’s just you know their- their own expectations. [Dave: Yeah.] Sometimes you know you- you know um it’s kind of going back and oh- you know um- you know you um- you know like, that saying you know, it’s the man of the house. [Dave: Right.] And you- you know [Dave: Right.] and you, you provide and everything like that, you know and ah- I think he always kind of feels like he’s the one that need to fulfil that role.

In this excerpt Maru works up the notion that with the loss of the provider role goes the loss of authority in the home for those men who adhere to more traditional ideas about masculinity and masculine roles. By agreeing with the interviewer’s initial question Maru situates such reactions with ideas about masculinity but then identifies the man’s “own expectations” with such ideas. This phrase captures the idea of some men monitoring themselves in order to ensure that they comply with such expectations of men as providers. That these expectations may have originated elsewhere is developed by Maru in the following comments “it’s kind of going back” and “it’s the man of the house”. The first of these comments may be interpreted as a reference to traditional ideas. In the second these ideas are more fully articulated with the adage of “the man of the house”. This latter phrase captures traditional ideas about the man’s role in the house: the provider and the one who holds authority in the home (see Towns, Adams & Gavey, 2003). Maru more explicitly references the provider role and the man as “the one that need to fulfil that role” in his later statements.
While some men still held to the traditional provider roles others did not consider women’s careers or women in a primary provider role as a threat to this role:

Dave: So, so there is that, there is that, you’re talking about a generalised expectation that, that even, even today in, I guess modern times, the man will be the provider?

Sean: Absolutely. [Dave: Yeah.] That’s as solid as a rock out there still, I actually don’t think it’s lost its ground [Dave: I’m just putting that out there.] I don’t think it’s lost a ground, I know that guys really feel that they have to do that [Dave: Right.] [Unidentified participant: Yeah.] and that’s very strong still in society I think [Dave: Yep.]

Trevor: Maybe it’s the only thing we’ve got left to hang on to?

Viv: But ah unless unless of course your wife is a brilliant career woman who, who- who um- you know happens to earn more money than you. So-

Trevor: But does that still take it away from being a man.

Viv: No it doesn’t, no but [Trevor: Do you feel that way?] there’s less pressure [laugh] [Unidentified participant: Yeah that’s right.] [Sean: It’s interesting-]

Trevor: Yeah but you still feel, does that make you feel less of a man? Because of that?

Viv: Me? Um. Cos the wife earns more? Uummm. Ummm, No. No. Cos I just, cos [Trevor: Mm.] different jobs have different pay rates. [laughs]

Trevor: I suppose there’s an expectation too for where you are- [Viv: And- and-

Viv: -she’s not that far ahead.] [laughter]

Viv, for example, contests the idea that a wife’s “brilliant career” “take it away from being a man” or serves to question his masculinity. Rather he constructs the woman’s income as improving his position. The phrase “there’s less pressure” suggests that by having his wife’s income there are fewer financial concerns. Trevor’s repeated questioning about whether her greater provider status impacts on how Viv feels as a man evokes an emphatic surprised response from Viv: “Me?” With his following statement he seeks clarity of the question “Cos the wife earns more?” before again negating this construction of masculinity for him and drawing
on a commonsense construction of these pay levels to explain “cos different jobs have different pay rates.” With this rational statement he raises the difference in pay rates as simply a matter associated with different jobs rather than having any relevance to his masculinity. His later statement serves as a qualifier to his different representation of masculinity “And she’s not that far ahead.” and might be understood to relieve any too distinct differences between his position on masculinity and that of Trevor and others by creating a joke and some laughter within the group.

**Intergenerational effects**

Many of the men spoke of the influence of their fathers or parents’ relationship on their decisions about the ways they wanted to be as men with their woman partner. Some of the participants spoke of the harshness of their experiences of physical punishment as children, the witnessing of their father’s treatment of their mothers and the influence of their father’s role model on them as men. Some men spoke explicitly of their father’s physical violence towards their mothers. For example in John’s account his father was not a man on whom he wanted to model himself:

Alison: What is it that you didn’t like John?
John: Just the way he didn’t communicate as a father. Cos I mean since, since then I know that you can only learn how to be masculine or you only can learn how to be a man is from another man. And the best thing to do that is to learn it from your father. And my father lacked that. I’ve since learnt that he didn’t enough support system when he came to this country. But it still doesn’t belie the fact is that we have a good working brain that says, I shouldn’t treat my child like this. Or I should develop my sons like this. You know, because I think it’s- it’s intuitive, I think it’s instinctual, I think it’s all of those things that come from a man that you want, to see the best for your child. The best way I could describe my father is he was a prick! He treated my mother terribly and he treated us terribly. And so all my brothers and I
have said that we’re not going to act like this. [Dave: Right. Alison: Mm.] you know, but we know that child psychology has that as a- as a kid grows he’s going to follow, repeat what his father did or within that family circle, unless it gets broken. And so somewhere in that you seek help, thankfully I understood that when I grew to be an adult and I thought, far out, I’m doing the same thing that my father did. How can I stop it? What can I do?

In John’s account men learn how “to be a man” or how “to be masculine” from their fathers. This construction places considerable importance on the fathers in boys’ lives. John constitutes the modelling he received from his father as problematic: “he didn’t communicate as a father” and with the statement “he lacked that” he makes reference to his father providing a role model from which he could learn how to be a man. He later represents his father more fully with the statements “The best way I could describe my father is he was a prick! He treated my mother terribly and he treated us terribly.” While he offers an explanation for his father’s behaviour in his new immigrant status he does not employ this as an excuse for his behaviour but instead makes reference to intelligence and morality as what should have driven his father’s actions: “But it still doesn’t belie the fact is that we have a good working brain that says, I shouldn’t treat my child like this.” The conscious distinction that he and his siblings made about the way they wanted to be relative to the way his father behaved is represented with the statement “And so all my brothers and I have said that we’re not going to act like this.” John’s following statement however suggests that more needs to be done than simply stating this intention.

In the next few statements John employs the intergenerational cycle of such violence to portray the repeated patterns that occur from one generation to the next and the way he worked to break this effect. He portrays the intergenerational impact of such violence on children with the following: “but we know that child psychology has that as a- as a kid grows he’s going to follow, repeat what his father did or within that family circle, unless it gets broken.” He identifies his recognition of this cycle as instrumental in the changes that he made “somewhere in that you seek help” while also acknowledging that his own behaviour had become problematic prior to seeking change: “far out, I’m doing the same thing that my father did”. The influence of this
realisation he portrays as involving recognition of the need to change with the
statements “How can I stop it? What can I do?”

Alex represented the intergenerational messages about how wives and
girlfriends were to be treated as situated in New Zealand culture particularly
“provincial” New Zealand:

Alex: One of my best friends in my home town, back to my home town, his dad
used to discipline the kids with a punch. Not a slap all right but a punch. And
I remember his code was ‘Don’t touch my gun, don’t touch my dog and
don’t touch my wife!’ That just brought that up. [Dave: Right.] Talking about
[Alison: Mm, mm.] unpredictability. There’s another kind of very predictable
set of rules out there somewhere um- in NZ culture which is appalling.

Alison: So the ‘Don’t touch my wife’ what do you think that meant? Would that be
like-

Alex: Quite literal ‘Don’t pat my dog, don’t touch my gun and don’t touch my wife
in any way!’ And I suspect that was almost ‘Don’t talk to my wife.’ [Dave:
Yeah.] You know- very strict rules.

In this construction the model of masculinity a father gave to his son and his son’s
friends was represented with the association between the way in which this man
disciplined his son and the messages he gave about his wife. Alex depicts the
discipline of this child as “with a punch” and he emphasises the distinction between
this form of discipline and milder forms of discipline with “Not a slap all right but a
punch.” With this construction he depicts this man as a hard, harsh man who is not
moved by the status of a child and who uses abusive acts as a form of discipline.

With the use of spoken language he portrays the messages this man gave about his
wife: “Don’t touch my gun, don’t touch my dog and don’t touch my wife’. In this
construction certain messages are portrayed about the status that a man’s wife has
and that these messages are indelibly imprinted on young men is evident in that Alex
remembers them many years later. They portray the woman as a valued possession
but in the listing place her as the least of the three valued possessions – after the
man’s dog. She becomes an item to be protected from others as is his gun and his

Overcoming the Obstacles Page 79
dog. Alex distances himself from this representation of a man’s wife with his depiction of this statement as a “very predictable set of rules” “in NZ culture which is appalling”.

In the following Callum spoke generally about indelible imprint of the past representations of masculinity:

Callum: I think subconsciously you perhaps model relationships on your parents or what you grow up with [Dave: Yeah.] so that’s the way things were done when you were being influenced and learning about the world. [Dave: Yeah.] and you can engage your mind a bit more and say oh I think times have moved on and I’m after more of a friend as partner or- whatever. Someone to raise a family with or- [Dave: Yeah.] .. But um- if you don’t think about it then probably your subconscious wanders back to those examples you have given.

Callum’s distinction between the “subconscious” reaction of a man and that which he might have when he engages his mind allows him to distinguish between the two courses that the development of a man within a relationship might take: that which occurs if he simply allows himself to drift back into the type of relationship his parents had and that which he might have if he “engages his mind”, recognises that “times have moved on” and makes a conscious decision about how he wants to be. Other men spoke of this subconscious position as a “mould” or a “default setting” that they needed to consciously work against (see below). This account of the influences of these past representations is consistent with the ways in which power is understood to work through discourses, or through messages or language that, consciously or unconsciously, orientate people’s actions (Gavey, 1989).

Some men spoke of their father’s influences positively. For example Sean spoke of his father as a positive influence, supporting him by attending sports events, working together with him on do-it-yourself projects and encouraging him to enjoy himself as a young man growing up. Some men spoke of realising the gaps in their father’s parenting and ensuring that they behaved differently towards their sons. Some men spoke of the positive influence of their mothers on how they were
as men, guiding them on the expected behaviour that they should show towards women.

**Summary**

The men described the ways in which certain masculinities contributed to violence towards women. Some of the men portrayed status and feeling powerful as important within certain constructions of masculinity and some portrayed interactions with women partners or family members contributing to men feeling powerless and leading to men’s violence. Some of the men spoke about the difficulty with fulfilling the provider role, or perceived criticisms of a man’s provider ability, or women having greater provider status, contributing to a man feeling powerless and potentially reacting with violence or seeking to assert his authority with violence. This finding has particular implications for men living in financial hardship and may account for the greater level of men’s violence towards women during recessions or times of economic uncertainty (WHO, 2004). Some men described the powerlessness of being a new immigrant, influences of traditional masculinities and cultures on their fathers’ authority as new immigrants to this country, the cultural differences in the practices of masculinity between their old and new countries and the resultant violence that they and their mothers experienced from their fathers. Some men described the impact of intergenerational domestic violence on men who had witnessed or experienced such violence, the determination to be different, and the need for assistance to move away from these past “moulds” or “default settings”.

*Overcoming the Obstacles Page 81*
Masculinity and obstacles to prevention

This section discusses three ways in which the language associated with certain masculinities worked to create obstacles to the prevention of men’s domestic violence towards women. In the first section the association between masculinities and the impact on men’s expression of emotions will be described as an obstacle to the prevention of men’s domestic violence towards women. Secondly, certain masculine values associated with loyalty to other men will be described here as an obstacle to the involvement of men in the prevention of such violence. Finally certain gender values that promote or that allow men to condone violence towards women will be presented as an obstacle to prevention work.

‘Men don’t talk about emotions’
For men to discuss problems in their relationships they will need to feel comfortable about talking about difficult emotional issues. In the previous section I introduced the ways in which certain masculinities governed the ways in which men were expected to show emotions. In this section the relationship between masculinity and emotional expression is explored more fully. Cultural expectations associated with the expressions of strong emotions may act as an obstacle to men seeking help from friends or others. For example some of the ways in which men accounted for men not talking about men’s violence towards women were as follows:

- Joseph:  Oh it’s- it’s personal eh.
- Rhys:  Yeah it’s taboo you don’t talk about [Jordan: It’s- ] that.
- Jordan:  -secret. Secret squirrel. Don’t wanna embarrass yourself or you don’t wanna-
- Evan:  it’s not culturally acceptable as well which is to talk about that sort of thing?
- Jordan:  It’s just judging eh. Once you go up there and you say this is what I do this is I- I beat up my wife and- [Rhys: Yeah.] they judge you. Straight up.
They judge you straight up for what you just said or- [Dave: Yep.] the reason why you did it- I don’t want to talk to you-

- Darryl: Well, I’d say there’s a criminal element about it potentially you could be labelled a criminal for the rest of your life, job prospects, friends, relatives [Finn: Yeah.] all of that is quite strong.
- Finn: Well there’s shame there? [Dave: Yeah.]
- Zak: It’s two emotions isn’t it? Shame and guilt. [Sean: Mm.] [Warwick: Mm.] Shame and guilt fail to bring- [Viv: Ah well-] keep those things in secret [Sean: Mm.]

These representations of men’s talk of such violence will be explored more in the following through the association that such talk has with emotional expression and masculinities.

*Emotions as weakness: identity portrayal and status*

In the following the participants described the link between the expressions of emotional problems and masculinity:

**Alison:** I mean I was interested in what you were saying though that it is okay to talk about anger as an emotion for a man but other emotions- if you talk about other emotions it’s not masculine.

**Jordan:** Cos I can talk to my wife to my wife about fights that I’ve had, like with my dad or my brothers or like that but when it comes to personal stuff I can’t. It’s just like oh can’t talk about that- it’s too personal? Like she’ll think-

**Rhys:** It’s portrayal. It’s how you want to be seen. Like I know my dad’s very emotional. But all my other cousins are like ‘man, I’d hate to have your dad.’ Like he looks like he- he doesn’t show it- everyone thinks that my dad is the worst out of them all. I know I’ve seen my dad cry in front of me, he- he doesn’t mind showing that to me cos- my family, my mum everything, but to everyone else they- they don’t see that side of my dad. Like they see this stoic, then this- this- you know- this mean man but he’s- so it’s how you wanna been seen? As well?
Alison: Mm. So how you want to be seen does that interfere with, being able to talk about about you know difficult things like violence in families.

Rhys: I think it could. If [Jordan: Like a weakness eh?] you want- Mm?

Jordan: Like a weakness.

Rhys: Yeah. It’s [Jordan: I’m showing my weakness to everyone else.] like- If everyone- if everyone all my cousins everyone sees my dad as this mean guy then my dad goes up and talks about family violence I mean what the- Huh! It’s- I’d be baffled by that. It’s-If you don’t wanta be seen as weak then you wouldn’t do something that can, possibly put you in that category.

Jordan described the difficulty he had with emotional expression. Following a statement that he could talk to his wife about fights with family members he said “when it comes to personal stuff I can’t. It’s just like oh can’t talk about that- it’s too personal”. With these comments he portrays other emotional content as too intimate to disclose. This statement raises questions about whether talk of aggression is consistent with certain masculinities whereas talk of more intimate details is not. Rhys’s following comment “It’s portrayal. It’s how you want to be seen.” opens up the possibility that the difficulty that Jordan and some other men have with emotional expression is associated with masculine identity. By using the phrase “it’s portrayal” and rewording this construction as relating to the image a person wants to portray he opens up the possibility that this lack of expression of emotions is associated with the depiction of a certain masculine identity.

Rhys uses contrast to illustrate his ideas about identity portrayal and by employing his father as an example he more explicitly references masculinity. He describes the portrayal his father makes of himself as a man within a safe close family environment and the portrayal of him experienced by others outside this inner circle. In the former situation he depicts his father as able to show a range of emotions in the close family environment with his statements “Like I know my dad’s very emotional.” And “I’ve seen my dad cry in front of me, he- he doesn’t mind showing that to me cos- my family, my mum everything”. In contrast he depicts another representation seen by others “But all my other cousins are like ‘man, I’d hate to have your dad.’” His employment of spoken words in this statement allows
him to provide a clear construction of the representation that others have of his father. With another statement “everyone thinks that my dad is the worst out of them all” he positions his father relative to some vaguely represented others (“them all”) and constitutes him as “worst” on a dimension with these others. He summarises the construction that others have of his father with the statement “Like they see this stoic, then this- this- you know- this mean man”. This representation of his father as “mean” and “stoic” allows him to suggest that his father portrays a more staunch even aggressive representation to others. Finally in this segment with the phrases “so it’s how you wanna be seen? As well.” He constitutes these contrasting images that his father portrays as part of the masculine identity that his father wanted to show to others.

The participants work up the impact that a certain masculine identity portrayal would have on men speaking about “difficult things like violence in families.” Jordan makes repeated reference to “weakness” and his statement “I’m showing my weakness to everyone else” links talking about such topics as the portrayal of a weakness to others. This statement draws on the oppositional quality to reference men: strength is a quality associated with this form of masculinity rather than weakness, which is denigrated. Rhys elaborates further by again using the example of his father. He represents the contrasting image that talking about such difficult topics would provide to others who had a clear image of his father as “this mean man”. With his final statement “If you don’t wanta be seen as weak then you wouldn’t do something that can, possibly put you in that category.” he depicts talking about difficult emotional topics as a weakness and therefore excluded from the conversations of men who wanted to portray themselves as other than weak. In this rendition certain masculine identities are intimately tied up with emotional expression. Talking about problems and portraying one’s self as other than one’s expected masculine identity is represented as producing confusion “I’d be baffled by that”.

Ben contested the representation that talking about emotional matters was constructed in Western cultures as problematic for men. He constituted it as distinctly associated with New Zealand culture. In his account certain contexts
provide a climate for intimate conversations about emotional matters. For example in his account the pub climate in England, with cubicles for easy talking, facilitated intimate conversations among men. In contrast pubs in New Zealand were depicted as more like booze barns that did not provide a climate for intimate conversations (see below).

Garth spoke of the difficulty of trying to talk to a friend about his violence towards his woman partner and linked this to the masculine identity he had chosen:

Garth: ... of course he knew that it was a bad thing to do and he’d, the stink thing was I knew that he’d grew, grown up in a family where he, his mother had suffered that and he wasn’t into it. [Darryl: Yeah.] But- also- so I knew that he was sort of caught in this trap where he probably didn’t like it but he was um- caught in it anyway but also at the same time he was um, I spose developing his- ah- place in the world, what sort of person he’s gonna be and the person he chose to be was a very staunch bogan basically, I spose, drug dealing bogan, who um- yeah- that’s not rea- that was- it was just too much of a conflict between I think where he was- wanted to be but-

In Garth’s construction his friend was aware of the impact on women of such violence by witnessing his mother’s experience and was morally aware “it was a bad thing to do”. He depicts his friend as “caught in this trap” and with this phrase portrays his friend as unable to break free of a pattern of behaviour that he had condemned previously.

Garth portrays his friend’s difficulties in talking about his use of such violence as associated with his chosen masculine identity. He evokes the idea of identity with his statements “developing his- ah- place in the world” and “what sort of person he’s gonna be”. These statements evoke ideas of identity options for young men: that young men determine their place in the world by reference to the possibilities available to them. Garth situates the problems his friend had with “the person he chose to be”, his employment of the word “chose” acknowledging an active decision that his friend had made. Garth depicts that chosen masculine identity as “a very
staunch bogan basically, I spose, drug dealing bogan”. When asked to elaborate on what he meant by a bogan Garth and the group work this identity up further:

**Alison:** Well what did you mean by, what do you mean by bogan?

**Garth:** Hard out heavy metaller, drinking, drugs um- yeah, just staunch but not in a sports way, in a different sort of way, in a- in a- you prove yourself by being the most out of it and still handling it. [Unidentified participant: Mm.] sort of thing rather than um [Unidentified participant: Yeah.] [Harry: Last one standing?] yeah, that sort of thing [laugh]

In Garth’s account such an identity precluded his speaking about his behaviour: “that was- it was just too much of a conflict between I think where he was- wanted to be..” In this construction the representation of talk of his behaviour towards his girlfriend as “a conflict between where he was – wanted to be” suggests that such talk would not be considered to be “staunch”.

In another excerpt Garth employed contrast to depict the difference in engaging his friend in conversations after he had firmly established himself in this identity as opposed to prior to this situated identity when he was more readily accessible to such conversations. In his construction it was easier to talk to his friend when he had not firmly situated himself within the culture associated with the bogan identity he later chose.

*Men are shut down emotionally*

A number of the men linked some men’s ability to talk about emotional topics with the intergenerational impact of war on men.

**Trevor:** I’m gonna put a theory in here, [Sean: Mm.] the war. [Sean: Yeah.] World wars. [Sean: Yeah.] You’ve got thousands, hundreds [Viv: Mm.] and thousands of men [Sean: That’s right.] went away fought in the most atrocious conditions, [Sean: Yeah.] saw the worst things that anyone could ever think about, they came back and in those days [Sean: (?)] they were expected to just carry on in being a husband [Warwick: Yeah.] a work mate
and all that, and they were shut down. [Sean: They were, they shut down.] and we wear, we’re wearing [Sean: That’s right.] the backlash from that, you know, because, it’s like you said, you know you, grandfathers and all that [Sean: Mm.] and the mentoring and all that, and then you had this generation of men went away to war [Sean: Mm.] and came back just totally shut down, I mean, how could you go through what they went through? [Sean: Mm.] There was nothing for them, there was no counselling, nothing [Sean: Mm.] and that shut down has been going on to the- to us now [Dave: Interesting-] it’s been passed on.

In Trevor’s account men who went to war saw “the worst things that anyone could ever think about” and on coming back from these conditions were expected to carry on as usual. He captures the impact on men with the phrase “they were shut down”. One reading of this phrase is that, with the use of a vague reference or euphemism, he makes reference to men being emotionally shut down without mentioning the word emotions. The failure to mention the word emotions would be consistent with the representations that some of the men made that to talk about emotions explicitly was not consistent with certain masculinities. Another reading is that he is referring to men talking about intimate personal matters. Personal matters might also be emotional matters and his use of a euphemism may allow him to reference both.

_Not talking means pressure builds and it breaks_

In the following account Trevor described the impact on men when they could not talk about what they were feeling with trusted men or others:

Trevor: There’s no place to actually go- that’s where groups like this are good ... but the most general public haven’t got that [Unidentified participant: Mm.] you know, general public living in the lower social economic areas [laugh] even in these areas- have got it, there’s- there’s that expectation and men bottle it up, and bottle it up, and bottle it up and then when it does finally break, it’s inherently the family that wears it. Cos they’re the closest ones to it.
Trevor depicts the impact on men of not having a place to express emotions as pressure building and then breaking: “men bottle it up, and bottle it up, and bottle it up and when it does finally break...” By repeating “bottle it up” he evokes the impression of pressure building and the phrase “when it does finally break” depicts the effects of this excessive pressure as involving a breakage. This construction of the impact on men of excessive unexpressed emotions is similar to that of men who used violence towards their partners (Adams, Towns & Gavey, 1995). His statement “how do we give men an outlet for that?” depicts men as requiring an outlet for such powerful emotional expression.

Trevor states “it’s inherently the family that wears it.” and in this construction the family becomes the focus of the impact of the man’s emotional break. He offers an explanation for their victimization: “cos they’re the closest ones to it”. There is much that is uncontested in this construction and that raises questions about certain masculine values that might provide legitimacy to this form of stress release. In particular there are questions around why some men who are experiencing stress consider that loved ones provide a legitimate place for a man’s violent reaction to such stress; why some men do not take responsibility for finding solutions or seeking out the many opportunities available to them to get the support they need to address emotional or stressful issues; what can be done to ensure that the family does not become the legitimate place to “wear it”; in particular what can be done to ensure that all men feel safe talking to close friends or family members about such matters without resorting to violence.

*Men lose it when provoked*

Given the commonly employed explanation that pressure builds for men and then breaks out how men account for their aggressive responses is important. In the following account Darryl described strong emotional responses when angry and sought explanations for his violent act towards his girlfriend:
Darryl: .. for me I think that there’s- there’s times when men lose it and we talked about, you have a rage, I’ve done it, you know, I’ve lost the plot. And- I know it’s not acceptable, to like- you know- half strangle my girlfriend but- and straight afterwards I’m like, ‘fuck I’m so sorry’ [Dave: Yep.] [Unidentified participant: Mm.] didn’t mean to do that, I feel terrible, sorry, sorry, sorry’ [Unidentified participant: Yeah.] you know, you know it’s not right, it’s- watching a message on the TV, it’s not right. But it’s like, where the fuck did that come from? [Dave: Right.] That’s the question that bugs me, I’m like- where did that- that’s not who I want to associate myself with. [Dave: Who is, yeah-] Where did that rage come from, what, what provoked- [Unidentified participant: Mm.] [Dave: Yeah.] So there’s that moment [Dave: You seem to be-] but then [Dave: Sorry.] there’s also I imagine the more like- habitual domestic abuse which [Unidentified participant: Mm] is, it’s a- a- it happens often. And I- I imagine that’s where you guys are aiming most of the stuff at. Which is something I haven’t had much experience of. [Dave: Yeah] Growing up. I haven’t. [Dave: Yeah.] But I’m wondering, because for me it’s [laughter] there’s that you know momentary loss of control ..

Although many of the participants did not associate themselves with men who use violence towards their partners some of the men spoke of the physical violence that they had engaged in towards girlfriends or wives. In this account Darryl’s opening statement “there’s times when men lose it” a and the associated “you have a rage” provide an opening generalisation about all men that makes a vague reference (“it”) to men losing control of themselves emotionally. This association of losing it with having a rage allows him to draw on the assumption that a rage involves a loss of control rather than that rage is employed instrumentally to stop another from engaging in behaviour or saying something that the man does not like (see Towns, Adams & Gavey, 1996). These opening statements allow him to position himself as unexceptional when depicting his own actions as a loss of control “I’ve done it” “I’ve lost the plot”.

Darryl makes reference to the physical violence he used towards his girlfriend quite explicitly with the statement “half strangle my girlfriend” while acknowledging
his awareness that this act was wrong. This brave reference, in this context, to a physical act towards his girlfriend from a man not selected for any physical violence, and other participants’ references to acts of physical violence towards wives and girlfriends, raises questions about the extent that men within the general population understand the risks and the potential for harm of such physically violent acts. Strangulation has been identified as one of the high risk factors for lethality through men’s domestic violence towards women (Glass et al., 2008). While exposing the extent of such violence Darryl repeatedly represents his knowledge that such an act was wrong with the statements “I know it’s not acceptable” “you know, you know it’s not right,” “it’s- watching a message on the TV, it’s not right.” By acknowledging his awareness of the immorality of this act he positions himself as a moral man who accepts what is and is not morally acceptable in relation to men’s violence towards women. Further representation of himself as moral and reasonable are in his subsequent reaction to this violence towards his girlfriend: “fuck I’m so sorry didn’t mean to do that, I feel terrible, sorry, sorry, sorry”. He employs spoken talk of his verbal response as if to his girlfriend to demonstrate a moral and reasoned reaction to his response. These representations of a moral and reasonable man sit uncomfortably with his act of physical violence towards his partner and his failure to seek help to change, particularly given that he makes reference to his awareness of the New Zealand family violence awareness campaign “It’s not okay” which directs men where to go to change “It is okay to ask for help”. Men who are physically violent towards wives and girlfriends have been shown to employ certain language to represent themselves as reasonable (Gavey, Adams & Towns, 1994).

Given Darryl’s awareness that his action was morally reprehensible how he seeks an explanation for his actions may provide important information about the values that some men draw on to account for their behaviour. In the following statements Darryl works to position his actions as not part of his desired identity and to separate himself from a stereotypical representation of a violent man. His statement “But it’s like, where the fuck did that come from? That’s the question that bugs me, I’m like- where did that-” positions him as bewildered by this unexpected reaction. With the following statement “that’s not who I want to associate myself
with.” He more explicitly situates his masculine identity as different from that of a man who might use violence, a language act also employed by men who had attended a stopping violence programme (Towns, Adams & Gavey, 2003). With the repeated utilization of “where the fuck did that come from? “Where did that rage come from,” he constitutes the rage he experienced as out of the ordinary, unexpected, and unaccountable: a surprising and unusual reaction. These statements also position him as someone seeking an explanation for his behaviour, as an intelligent analytical man, while offering an explanation for his strangulation with the word “rage”. He then makes a vague reference to provocation “what, what provoked-” and with this statement shifts the responsibility for his acts from himself to something or someone else that provided provocation. There is an implication in these statements that a man who does not identify himself with such acts must require provocation to engage in them.

A number of the men employed provocation as an explanation for men’s violence towards women, one involved murder, and they were surprisingly uncritical of other men’s use of this justification to account for their violence.

Sean: ... but I mean I’m just thinking about a, a guy who talked to me about you know he, he hit his wife [Dave: Yep.] was arrested, put inside overnight, imprisoned and, and um you know, all that sort of stuff, absolutely goaded by his wife [Dave: Sure.] because she wanted him to hit him [Dave: Yeh.] because she [Unidentified participant: Right.] knew that she could get him in prison and then she could, she knew she could get this stuff and this sort of thing and that sort of stuff [Dave: Yeah.] and you know and, and I, and I um, I spose I, I had- ... I had some empathy with him [Dave: Yep.] and I’m only hearing one side of the story [Dave: Yep.] but I mean the poor guy you know,

Such accounts raise the issue of collusion for primary prevention campaign organisers who seek to encourage men to talk to other men about such violence. When some men seek to justify their behaviour towards others by drawing on the language of provocation how can other men be encouraged to support such men.
while refusing to be drawn into accepting their justifications for their actions, which may justify or minimize their violence (Kropp, 2004)?

In the above excerpt Darryl worked to distinguish his actions, which he portrayed as a momentary loss of emotional control, from those of a stereotypical violent man. In his account he situates his actions as momentary “So there’s that moment..” and proceeds to contrast this momentary action with a pattern of violent behaviour: “there’s also I imagine the more like- habitual domestic abuse which is, it’s a- a- it happens often.” With this phrase men’s domestic violence towards women is constituted as different from a momentary loss of control\(^3\). His subsequent statements make a vague reference to prevention campaigns “I imagine that’s where you guys are aiming most of the stuff at.” and separate his violent act in the moment from the “habitual domestic violence” that the campaigns are “aiming” at. This distinction is deeply problematic when the act is one that could have been lethal. With the next phrase he continues to articulate a distinction between himself and a stereotypical violent man who engages in habitual domestic violence ““Which is something I haven’t had much experience of.” The following phrase might be understood to qualify this statement by drawing on discourses relating to the intergenerational transmission of such violence: “Growing up. I haven’t.” With this phrase he positions himself as a person who was not exposed, at least as a child, to such violence. The phrase leaves open the possibility that as an adult his experience is different. His final statement again makes explicit the comparison he has been working on: “because for me it’s [laughter] there’s that you know momentary loss of control ..” and again positions his actions as a momentary loss of emotional control rather than as habitual violence. Previous research with men who have been violent towards women partners found similar attempts by such men to differentiate themselves from men who use more extreme forms of violence (Towns, Adams & Gavey, 2003).

\(^3\) Darryl’s construction of his action as a momentary loss of control should be understood as a construction and not necessarily representing the reality of this situation for his girlfriend.
Alcohol use legitimates emotional expression/loss of control

Within discourses that do not allow for men to express strong emotions other than aggression some men constituted alcohol and recreational drugs as providing legitimacy for men to lose emotional control:

Harry: .. something like recreational drugs and alcohol give us that ah permission to lose control, and for men I think that’s something that is really, really important and it’s not honoured in our society in a way, like for instance, with women, have periods and they get hysterical and these sort of things, and it’s the time of the month where you’re allowed to lose your mental-um-plateau or like dip into like an- a different place and be like out there a bit. [Dave: Right.] But mentally you’re, we’re not supposed to do that. [Dave: Mm.] As men, we don’t have the space where we, monthly we can go, I’m losing it, I’m howling at the moon. [General agreement] Because my hormones are out of control.

Harry employs a comparison between women’s and men’s expressions of emotions to indicate a lack of legitimacy associated with men’s. He draws on women’s menstrual cycles “women, have periods” “and it’s the time of the month” to portray an accepted time for women’s expressions of strong emotions: “you’re allowed to lose your mental-um-plateau or like dip into like an- a different place and be like out there a bit.” His use of the phrase “As men, we don’t have the space where we, monthly we can go, I’m losing it, I’m howling at the moon.” to provide a comparison with women. He employs a highly gendered word “hysterical” to articulate women’s loss of control, which might be interpreted as denigrating such strongly emotive behaviour. Men are usually not referred to as being hysterical.

Harry employs a number of phrases that suggest certain limitations on men’s behaviours by certain masculinities, which are permitted when alcohol or other drugs are used. The phrase “give us that ah permission” suggests that, at least within certain masculine representations, strong expressions of emotions or loss of control are not permitted for men unless they are drunk or under the influence of recreational drugs. The phrase “we’re not supposed to do that” raises questions
about the masculine values that are enacted to ensure that men monitor themselves in order to refrain from strong emotional expression. These phrases are consistent with understandings of the technologies of power (Foucault 1988) in which self-surveillance works to limit the options available for certain actions. Certain masculinities, for example, may work through the constructed messages of acceptable and unacceptable practices, which are then enacted by those who identify with these masculinities and who self-monitor their actions to comply with these expectations. Acting outside these masculinity expectations may be constrained by language that labels such actions as effeminate or not masculine. Harry’s statement “and for men I think that’s something that is really, really important and it’s not honoured in our society in a way” associates the use of alcohol and drugs as providing legitimacy to men’s emotional expression, which suggests that in the form of masculinity he is describing here there is no other accepted means for men to express strong emotions.

In the following Zak opens up the association between alcohol and drugs and men’s domestic violence towards women:

Zak: Yeah, you’ve also got booze and drugs that come into it to eh.

Trevor: Oh absolutely, let’s not go there. [laughter] I mean that [Dave: Yeah.] but that- but you can say that as well but I think a lot of it too is um- when you get into the drugs and alcohol it just loosens you up enough to let some of this shit out that you’ve had inside [Unidentified participant: Yeah.] for so long [Unidentified participant: Yeah.] you know?

In Trevor’s account drugs and alcohol are constituted as a means of releasing tension, a lubricant “it just loosens you up” that frees a person to let out unsavoury content. Trevor’s following statement allows him to describe the effect of alcohol while making reference to the previously discussed pressure release of emotional expression “let some of this shit out that you’ve had inside for so long.”
Alcohol use creates harmful emotional expression

Sean’s comment contests these constructions that alcohol use is a positive means of emotional expression:

Sean: I think that’s where the alcohol kicks in, if people are drinking then the reserve that they have to- rather than just slam a door, um, is actually to, actually be physical.

Alcohol use by perpetrators of men’s domestic violence towards women has been associated with more harmful injuries to women victims (Fals-Stewart, 2003; Thompson & Kingere, 2006) and it has been associated with lethality through such violence (WSCADV, 2008).

Contesting men don’t talk about emotions

Ben contests the construction that men don’t talk about personal or emotional issues:

Ben: I kind of relish being able to kind of hear what’s going on with other friends and stuff like that and being able to yeah to share some of the stuff which I ... mm, I think I’m just the wrong person in the wrong room, okay?

Dave: No- [laughter]

Alison: Does that happen?

Ben: Yeah it does sometimes. I suppose having come from the UK you would go out to a pub in the UK in a quiet corner and there’s room for people to come and meet and chat whereas the pubs in NZ are – yeah they’re just beer swilling hole like you know- um- watering holes [Alex: Mm.] really, by and large, they actually don’t provide any kind of environment where people are kinda going to relax or feel [Alex: Mm.] as if they’re got any kind of comfort or any arena to actually do that- um- [Alison: Mm.] so part of my thinking was as I say, I mean I do my own kind of space down the end of the garden, the cabin down the end of the garden and I just thought it was a bit of a trial, and I thought oh well I’ll see who would like to come out because if none of the guys ‘oh great spending an evening in here’! you know [Alison:
Mm] and so OK I’ll cook on the old pot belly stove – and it’s really quite surprising the conversations that will come out [Alison: Mm] but um- also it’s very interesting seeing the kind of interplays depending on who’s there and sort of the depth of kinda conversation or whether they- they just stick to you know like headline politics or something like that, you know? [Alison: Mm.] not contrived in any way but I want to think you – you know– if you have the arena to chat about those sort of things then quite often people will.

Ben positions himself as someone who relishes “being able to kind of hear what’s going on with other friends and stuff” and who also as someone who enjoys being “being able to yeah to share some of the stuff …”

In Ben’s account the climate for personal discussions among men is created by the environment around them. He portrays the environment of the English pub as promoting the opportunities for men to share: “you would go out to a pub in a quiet corner and there’s room for people to come and meet and chat”. His portrayal of the space as a “quiet corner” evokes a place for conversation where people can be heard and his use of the phrase “there’s room for people to come and meet and chat” portrays an inviting space to meet and talk. In contrast he portrays pubs in New Zealand as “they’re just beer swilling hole” and “watering holes” which evokes a space where the purpose is purely for people to consume alcohol. His use of the word “hole” is evocative of beer or alcohol being poured in a vacuous space, where location is measured by alcohol consumption rather than as a site for meaningful conversation. His use of the word “just” serves to limit the construction of these pubs to this description. By contrasting the possibilities for other activities within these environments “they actually don’t provide any kind of environment where people are kinda going to relax or feel as if they’re got any kind of comfort or any arena to actually do that” he opens up the requirements for men to disclose while also depicting “beer swilling holes” associated with New Zealand pubs as acting to exclude these possibilities. In this construction of New Zealand pubs he portrays an environment that does not encourage intimacy. Interestingly intimacy has been described by Adams (2008) as a protective factor that works against alcohol
dependency. Advertising by the alcohol industry in New Zealand suggests that it works to counter intimacy and by so doing promotes more alcohol consumption (Towns, forthcoming). Ben constitutes the “cabin at the end of the garden” as an inviting space he created for conversations with men. This construction suggests that men talking about intimate topics is not precluded by masculinity “if you have the arena to chat about those sort of things”.

Similarly John contested the notion that men don’t talk about emotional topics:

John: It’s interesting to hear you guys thing about your mates and what you didn’t show emotional thing. I didn’t give a toss [Dave: Right.] If I wasn’t feeling good, I’d say so [laughs] and they would feel, they would say the same. [Dave: Right.] you know? ‘Well that’s crap John you know blah blah, blah.’

John constituted this ability to talk to his mates as about having good mates who are prepared to challenge and with whom he does not feel afraid to talk about not “feeling good”. Sean’s depicts men as simply requiring the right man to talk to:

Sean: You’d have to pick your person eh though. [Trevor: Mm.] I, I’ve, I have a really crazy situation that happens in my work and I, I’m a sales rep, just call around different places [Dave: Right.] so I’m just crashing in on guys all [Dave: Yep.] over the place you know? And it’s surprising how many guys just go puh and I’m talking sometimes even on the first time that I’ve ever met them. [Dave: Sure.] Within an hour ,um, the guys are just talking about you know the hassles they’re having in their marriage and all that sort of stuff and it’s just- I don’t know, maybe it’s just the way I come across, I don’t know.

In Sean’s construction, as a sales representative who moves “around different places” he provides a safe person for men to disclose “hassles they’re having in their marriage”. This safety is portrayed by his representation of some men disclosing “even on the first time that I’ve ever met them.”
disclosures raises questions about whether masculinity portrayals are less problematic silencing influences on a one-on-one basis than they are within certain groups of men.

**Loyalty to your mates**

The ways certain masculinities work to promote loyalty between men has implications for messages designed to intervene with men’s domestic violence towards women. This section discusses particular discourses that emerged from the texts associated with men’s constructions of loyalty to their mates.

In the following the interviewer asked the participants about what would happen if they challenged a mate about his violence, an action promoted by some population based campaigns:

- Alison: Would, would, if you challenged him would it, what, what would happen if you did?
- Ioane: Probably wreck the whole system the- ah- the bonding.
- Alison: Wreck the system? [Ioane: Yeah like you know-] the bonding? [Ioane: Yeah the bonding and all that.] mm.
- Ioane: And yeah-

Ioane’s constitutes a challenge to a mate as something that “would wreck the system” “the bonding”. In this portrayal a challenge would break the bonding between mates and bonding between mates is constituted as “the whole system”. The phrases “bonding” and “the whole system” are employed to denote special friendships between these young men. In this construction a challenge is unlikely to occur if it interferes with these friendships.

The impact of challenging a mate about his treatment of a girlfriend is explored further in the following:

- Alison: Like if you didn’t like, if you didn’t like one of your mates, the way he treated his girlfriend, do you, if you’re uncomfortable about it, cos-
Ioane: Yeah really uncomfortable about it. Cos you would never, never tell your mate that. Or anyone.

Alison: Would you challenge- would you challenge him?

Ioane: Nuh. [laughs] Not really.

Alison: What would stop you from doing that?

Ioane: Nothing pretty much. If your mind set on it you would go and do it? Yeah, [Alison: So how-] you just wait until you get snapped or something I guess. That’s where all the- the beef starts. Beef’s another word for fighting, anger or stuff.

Ioane’s earlier construction: “Cos you would never, never tell your mate that. Or anyone.” suggests that speaking to one’s mate or anyone else about such behaviour runs counter to the practices associated with his mates at least within a certain form of masculinity with which he aligns himself. When pressed to describe the obstacles to talking to a mate about his behaviour towards a girlfriend Ioane’s statement “nothing pretty much” suggests that there are no obvious obstacles to challenging a friend about such behaviour in contradiction to his earlier statement.

If confrontation runs counter to accepted masculine practices associated with certain groups of mates then what is the climate required for confrontation? In this young man’s account if a man decides to confront a mate about such actions he would do it. He depicts the contextual requirements for such a confrontation with the phrase “you just wait until you get snapped or something I guess.” His use of the phrase “get snapped” draws on common constructions of men’s use of violence as involving a loss of control in which they “snap”, “explode”, “break”, or “erupt” (Towns, Adams & Gavey, 1996). The phrase “just wait until you get snapped” provides a new take on this construction – that a man does not simply snap out of control but that there is a build up before a man snaps: a potential waiting period. The interpretation that the phrase refers to impending violence is supported by Ioane’s following statement in which he makes reference to “beef” starting and describes beef as “fighting, anger or stuff.” The use of the word beef to denote fighting suggests a meaty brawl involving blood and muscle. The inference is that a challenge to a mate will be a violent confrontation. John described being beaten up
as the outcome of a confrontation with two young mates when he challenged their potential ill-treatment of a young woman. The inference is that, at least within certain constructions of masculinity, men need to prepare for violence if they want to confront certain mates about their violent practices towards women or if they want to practice actions that counter such violence.

**Language of loyalty**

Some men constituted a challenge by another man as requiring a violent response and a failure to respond to a challenge was depicted as discouraged by the group:

Ioane: Yeah nowadays we call that ‘drop nuts’ [Maru: Dropping- dropping it. It’s a-]

Alison: Say that again? Drop-? [Maru: That’s what the youth say. They- they say dropping it.]

Ioane: Yeah. Oh (?) say- Now they say- [Alison: Oh. What does that mean?]

Alison: Tell me about that. [laughs]

Kevin: Oh that’s like ah, when you’re being challenged and you back down from it.

Alison: Oh, and its ‘dropped nuts’ [Ioane: It’s the new word.] is it?

Ioane: Yeah.

Dave: Yeah.

Alison: Oh, Okay, I’ve never heard of that [laughs] [laughter] That must be a real male thing! I mean I haven’t heard of that before! [more laughter] And- [Ioane: It’s round eh.] and is that when you back down when you’re chall- you’re challenged?

Kevin: Yeah, yeah, yeah and you can tell too, they, they shout at- they shout at you, ‘Oh drop nuts, scared’ you know.

In this account Ioane introduces a phrase employed by some men when a challenge is not taken up: “drop nuts”. This phrase could be interpreted as referring to a man’s masculinity by use of the colloquial “nuts” – nuts being a colloquialism for testicles. The phrase “drop nuts”, in this interpretation, suggests that a man is dropping his masculinity or not being masculine if he fails to respond to a challenge. This interpretation is supported by Kevin’s description of the phrase “Oh that’s like ah,
when you’re being challenged and you back down from it.” His later association of “drop nuts” with “scared” suggests that the phrase is employed to denote cowardice, suggesting that failure to meet the challenge is denigrated as cowardice within these young men’s representations of masculinity. The phrase appears to question a mate’s manliness if he fails to respond to a challenge. Maru attributes this construction to “youth” “That’s what the youth say,” and in doing so situates the phrase with certain forms of young men’s masculinity. Other phrases employed to promote loyalty to the mates have been described elsewhere (Flood, 2008; Towns & Scott, 2008; Towns, forthcoming).

In the following the group works up the impact of the phrase on men who are challenged by their mates to respond:

Dave: It’s almost a um- it’s almost a challenge to get back into- [Ioane: Mm.] if you were, if your mates were doing something [Ioane: Sort of like encouraging you to-] and wanting you to join in it’s something they might say. [Ioane: Encouraging you to fight?] Yeah.

Alison: Oh goodness.

Ioane: To go back and yeah settle the score.

Alison: So- and- and so that, is that kind of is that term used to sort of put men down that- that challenge is it? [Ioane: Yeah.] [Kevin: Yeah.]

Ioane: And it builds violence in- [Kevin: Yeah it builds inside.] inside. [Kevin: And you just don’t- don’t care.] And at one point it will just snap. You get to a point and then you’ll just snap eh like?

Alison: And what happens then?

Ioane: Well, when you snap you just lose it. [Kevin: Yeah] You don’t know what you’re doing.

Alison: You do it what they- they all want you to do?

Ioane: Yeah, yeah you pretty much give in-, give in then to temptation.

Kevin: Yeah.

Alison: So that’s- there’s quite a lot of pressure then- you know on some men then to really do as the group says?
John: Yeah, I- I think what men need is better mates. [Ioane: Yeah.] You know, that’s my experience. Better mates can steer you one way, or bad mates can steer you another way.

Dave constitutes the phrase as encouraging loyalty to the mates’ values or to the actions the mates want a man to engage in. In Ioane’s construction the phrase “builds violence inside” and men “snap” and “lose it”. His depiction of men as giving “in to temptation” suggests that, at least within the form of masculinity depicted here, if a man wanted to go contrary to his mates’ expectations he would be driven by this phrase to do what his mates wanted him to do. In this rendition mates employ certain language to produce compliance and the effect of this language is to produce loyalty to the mates’ values. While one man may seek to act differently he is forced to comply with his mates’ expectations as otherwise his status as a man is questioned - he is constructed as lacking manliness. In John’s construction “better mates can steer you one way, or bad mates can steer you another way.”

**Fear of challenging other men**

Given the notion that loyalty to certain mates’ values appears to preclude men from challenging others in some forms of masculinity how do men go about raising a man’s violence towards his partner? The threat of violence appears to work to bring a man who might step outside accepted practices into line:

Dave: I wonder how easy it is as men to talk to other men- um- about um you know about family violence in their relationships? [Trevor: Bloody hard.] bloody hard? [laugh] [Trevor: Mm.] yeah.

Trevor: I mean I had, I’d find [Trevor: With the neighbours anyway.] [Dave: Neighbours anyway.] I’d find it hard to approach someone [Sean: Mm.] about it [Dave: Yeah.] um, I mean if they approached me. [Dave: Yeah.] And said, look, I’ve got a problem. [Dave: Yeah.] Fine. You know, I can’t stop myself talking, but I- to go and talk to someone with that- I mean it brings up all sorts of fear issues or- [Dave: Yeah.] all that sort of stuff [Dave: Yeah.] how are they going to react [Dave: Yeah.] [Sean: Mm.] everything like that, I-
Trevor distinguishes between a man who approaches him about problems in his relationship and a man whom he might approach to talk about his use of family violence in order to illustrate the distinctive differences in his own response. In the former situation he constitutes his reaction as unproblematic “Fine” “I can’t stop myself talking”. In the latter he constitutes the effect on him as “it brings up all sorts of fear issues” “how are they going to react” “everything like that”. These phrases are employed to raise the possibility of an unpleasant even fear-provoking reaction on the part of the man approached and they portray the potential obstacles to a man talking to another man about his family violence. They serve to illustrate why Trevor constitutes such an approach as “bloody hard”. That some men are constituted as potentially reacting violently to such a challenge suggests that for some men there is a certain sense of entitlement to act towards their woman partners without reproach. Those men who might question such behaviour are aware of the sense of entitlement held by some men and govern their actions accordingly.

The invitation to be loyal to or to collude with the values of certain men who use violence towards their partners was articulated in the following:

Alison: .. so one of the things that you’re saying that sort of stops guys from actually raising it you know with someone they wouldn’t know would be the possibility of actually being hit or hurt- hurt themselves? [Alex: The violence yeah. For sure] and that [Alex: I’m thinking-] sits with you-

Alex: -my friends know if they wouldn’t bring that up [Dave: Right] in conversation because it’s not a ... I wouldn’t have friends who could comfortably bring that up in conversation [Alison: Yeah. I mean could we-] it’s not what I want and I don’t associate with people like that and I know the sort of men who would say, ‘This is how I treat my wife, this is how you should treat your wife’ and you just leave them to it. I don’t..I don’t.. perhaps I would say ‘No. You don’t, no I don’t’ but I wouldn’t get into any kind of, I wouldn’t try to change that person.
Alex depicts men who use violence towards their woman partners as a certain type with whom he does not want to associate. This statement suggests that such men associate with a certain form of masculinity that Alex is readily able to identify. With the statement “This is how I treat my wife, this is how you should treat your wife.” he employs the spoken word to more graphically illustrate the invitation such men make to others to engage in the sort of reprehensible behaviour they use towards their wives or girlfriends. The use of the word “should” is employed to suggest that such men have a singular right way that they consider a man should act towards a woman partner. By articulating his response to such an invitation - “‘No. You don’t, no I don’t’” – he articulates his determination not to collude with such an invitation while also distancing himself from the values of such men. This statement allows him to situate himself with the practices of other forms of masculinity than the ones associated with the type of man he is describing. His final statement “I wouldn’t try to change that person” leaves open a number of interpretations – that such a person would not change if confronted, or given the nature of the man that he has alluded to earlier, that avoiding any further confrontation would avoid the potential for violence.

Alex distinguishes between the sort of man he associates with violence in his previous statements and the sort of man he might associate with the phrase “I wouldn’t have friends who could comfortably bring that up in conversation it’s not what I want and I don’t associate with people like that”. In this construction the men who are his friends are men who do not use violence towards their women partners “I don’t associate with people like that”. With this construction he situates himself as intolerant of men who use violence and positions himself with another form of masculinity. By making this distinction he renders any disclosure of such violence amongst his friends as not only unwanted but unlikely.

In Ben’s construction an approach by him to a man who uses violence towards his wife or girlfriend would depend on the relationship he has with the man:

Ben: I think I’m partly kind of- Partly I think I would want to acknowledge that I thought the level of influence partly has to do with the kind of level of kind
Ben constitutes his ability to influence a man as associated with “the kind of level of kind of equity I suppose you have in your relationship with that person.” In this account the employment of the word equity might be interpreted in a number of ways. It might be employed to refer to a relationship with a mate or friend as opposed to another or it might be interpreted to signal equitable strength or competitive standing in a situation that might turn to violence.

By utilising contrast Ben differentiates between men he might successfully engage in conversation and those he might avoid talking to about this topic. He employs the spoken voice to demonstrate how he might approach someone whom he is able to sit down and talk to “‘Hey... I hear that you might be having some problems’”. He differentiates this situation from another by making reference to “my experience” and “my upbringing” having previously disclosed his father’s violence towards his mother. He depicts violence as occurring “at a point where someone snaps” and in this rendition draws on violence as an out of control action. By constituting people who use violence as “in that realm of unpredictability” he draws on the man’s potential for violence and later he more explicitly references unpredictable actions as referring to the use of physical violence “they’re going to
lash out at you.” This potential for violence is employed to explain why “a lot of guys would just .. stand back.” With this phrase he represents the ways men govern their behaviour in response to the potential risk of violence from another man. This potential for violence would work to ensure that men operate within the confines of what are acceptable practices to those who identify with certain masculinities.

**Men’s support of violence prevention as disloyal to the team**

Of importance for this study is how notions of male loyalty are played out when attempts are made in the current campaigns to engage men in the gendered issue of the prevention of men’s domestic violence towards women. Discussions about campaigns that focus specifically on men’s domestic violence towards women revealed a number of linguistic moves that some men made that drew on men’s loyalty discourses.

*Two to tango*

In a number of the focus group discussions the participants worked to defend the construction of men as those responsible for men’s domestic violence towards women by constructing women as equally violent to men:

Viv: And it’s not just guys, it takes two to tango. [Sean: Absolutely.] Sometimes women feel they can get away with [laugh] [Mm.] [Sean: Absolutely.] more at home and they say things to their husbands that they wouldn’t say in public [Sean: To anybody else] [Trevor: Oh absolutely.] [laughs] and they-the things they say may, you know get up the nose of their husband [Sean: Mm.] [Dave: Yeah.] or partner, sorry.

These depictions of men’s violence towards women that involve situating women as equally violent through the use of the adage “it takes two to tango” have been identified in the texts of male offenders who attend stopping violence programmes (Adams, forthcoming). The phrase works to position women as equally culpable and to justify men’s violence through her provocation. Similarly phrases like “get up the nose of their husband” or “it’s like a red rag to a bull” were also found to be
employed by men who employ violence to describe women’s provocation and to justify and excuse men’s violent reactions (Towns, Adams & Gavey, 1996).

Finn’s representation of women as equally culpable appears to be protective of men suggesting an alignment with men’s loyalty discourses:

Finn: And I have a lot of problems I think looking upon this purely as a male issue, to me it is, it is violence in a relationship and there are male- well there are male, male and female, female too. [Dave: Yep.] Any place where you have two creatures who have both similar and differing needs, there’s the potential for conflict on an escalating scale. And whilst we’re focusing on issue, because blokes who damage physically [Dave: Yep] damage happens emotionally as well. [Unidentified participant: Yeah] [Unidentified participant: Yeah] [Unidentified participant: Absolutely] and I think, I think, I’m inherently wary in any situation that purely spotlights it on males in domestic violence because there is a symbiosis going on here. Always whether it’s passive aggressive, whether it’s co-dependence, whatever it is- I’m wondering I’m not a researcher whether we simply get a ‘bad bastard’! and a ‘good woman’? Whether the situation it creates where it is interwoven stories, you know, [Dave: Yeah.] which are dysfunctional in their own right [Dave: Yep.] and there’s a lack of mentoring a lack of support a lack of anything. So what happens is the wrong stuff. [Unidentified participant: Mm. Mm.]

Finn reconstructs the problem of men’s violence towards women as involving a conflict between equals. With these linguistic moves he shifts the focus away from the power relationship that exists when men who are violent towards wives and girlfriends to a two-way encounter between equals.

Men’s violence towards women becomes “violence in a relationship” and the violence is removed altogether with the phrase “a conflict” albeit “on an escalating scale.” The use of the word conflict and the euphemism “on an escalating scale” suggests a level of discomfort with the explicit reference to violence. Finn reconstructs such violence as “a symbiosis” and “interwoven stories” and both phrases again drawing on the notion of an interaction between equals and
repositioning the interaction away from a relationship of power. His utilization of the word “dysfunctional” suggests problems with these interwoven stories but again avoids referencing any relationship of power typical in the context of men’s domestic violence towards women.

The difference in strength between men and women is reconstructed to situate the two as equals through the use of the phrase “two creatures”. His acknowledgement of the context of this research being men’s violence towards women is made through his reference to “blokes who damage physically” but he does not make explicit any reference to the woman as the recipient of this violence and so avoids acknowledging any explicit harm that the woman may have experienced. The situation of the comment “damage happens emotionally as well” after the reference to physical harm that “blokes” do sets up a contrast between these forms of harm and in so doing allows the listener/reader to infer that it is women who are doing emotional harm. Other participants similarly made gendered references to men being physically violent and women equally emotionally violent.

The difficulty with this assumption is that it does not acknowledge that most physical violence that women experience from male partners is accompanied by emotional violence designed to control (Jacobson & Gottman, 1998; Pence & Paymar, 1993) and therefore men are implicated in the use of emotional violence as well as physical violence. The references Finn makes to “passive aggressive,” and “co-dependence” are not explicitly assigned to men and women but are gendered in that they are commonly employed to describe women’s acts rather than men’s.

**Moral status**

Finn constructs the outcome of a campaign on men’s domestic violence towards women as setting up the duality of “bad bastard” and “good woman” and with this reference to who is situated as good and who as bad he raises the issue as one of the moral status attributed to men and to women. In this construction men are ascribed a moral position of bad whereas women are ascribed a moral position of good. In work with young men Towns (forthcoming) found that along with loyalty, status and competition were overarching linguistic resources employed to account for the
values associated with certain forms of masculinity. If these values are important aspects of certain masculinities then men who adhere to more gendered masculinities may be led to constitute the moral status of men as threatened by this explicit statement of the issue as men’s violence towards women. This perceived threat may lead such men to draw on notions of competition and loyalty, associated with these forms of masculinity, to redress this moral positioning. Under this interpretation men become positioned as competing for moral standing with women and men must win this competition by remaining loyal to men and positioning themselves with men in opposition to women to win this competition.

*Loyalty and competition*

Alex more explicitly references the loyalty of men to men and competition with women in his account:

Alison: I spoke to you about how some of these men were actually finding it hard to oppose men’s violence towards women and to work to oppose that? How do you explain that? What do you think I mean you said he was a bit of a dick? [Alex: He’s a dick.] [laughter]

Alex: Well, it’s an us and them isn’t it? It’s a team sport.

In this account the interviewer uses the initial motivation for the study, some men’s discomfort with participating as men in these prevention campaigns, to invite a response from the group. Alex had previously constructed the man described as a dick and again reiterates this construction. With this phrase he speaks of him with contempt by using a sexualised derogatory term.

When asked to elaborate further his statement “it’s an us and them isn’t it” is employed to situate the man’s response as buying into or producing a duality between men and women. His use of the pronouns “us” and “them” suggests that the man is positioning himself with men “us” and against women “them”. This phrase could be interpreted as making reference to a man’s loyalty to men when expecting to participate in a campaign that involves men’s violence towards women and the setting up of a competition between men and women. This interpretation is
further reinforced by his next phrase in which he refers to his response as constructing the prevention of such violence as “a team sport”. With this rendition he situates man’s responses to the campaign as involving a competitive game that is played off between men and women and in which there will be a winner and a loser. Alex’s positioning of the man as “a dick” treats this construction with contempt and situates his own position as one that does not collude with oppositional and competition positions between men and women. His positioning suggests that not all forms of masculinity place such value on gendered competition and men’s loyalty to men.

In the following Viv discusses this same issue of the positioning of men and women when men’s domestic violence towards women is explicitly referenced:

Viv: Yeah I think perhaps, perhaps- you know- it- it um- has been, been overdone ah the ah- the ah- the protection orders and the family court ah- and um- the um- that, that men are the perpetrators and women are the victims and that ah- ah blame its- its- its ah blame game [Dave: Right, right.] and men are to blame um- so there, there, there is a bit of reaction um to that which, which is kind of based on feminist ideology [Dave: Yep.] [Unidentified participant: Mm.] and there is- there is a bit of a um reaction um- reaction to that [Zak: Mm.] um, oh whereas at the man’s programme I know is um- for example the- well it’s men running these groups so it’s men wanting to help- um- [Sean: Yep other men.] men yeah.

Viv situates his discussion of this matter within the family court with his utilization of the phrase “protection orders” - which are provided and enforced through the family court - and with the term “family court”. He makes reference to “it” being “overdone” and his employment of the more explicit statement “that men are the perpetrators and women are the victims” helps to clarify what he means by the more vague pronoun “it”. His utilization of the word “overdone” is employed to suggest an exaggeration of the statement that men are perpetrators and women are victims at least in this context. Family Court statistics indicate that, at least in relation to the seeking of protection orders, men are overwhelmingly the perpetrators and
women the victims (Families Commission, 2009) and Viv’s construction of this issue as one that is “overdone” raises questions about how the gendered nature of domestic violence might be raised without being constituted as constructing all men as perpetrators and all women as victims when men’s loyalty to men is such a feature of certain masculinities.

Viv constitutes this construction of men as perpetrators and women as victims as a “blame game”. His depiction of “men as perpetrators” and “women as victims” draws on the moral status attributed to men and women in the context of the family court. In this construction the perpetrator makes reference to men as bad and the victim makes reference to the higher moral standing of the woman. With the utilization of the word “game” he situates men and women as in opposition to each other as if in a game. The phrase “blame game” again draws on moral status to situate men and women in opposition to each other. With this construction of a game involving men and women, as Alex did above, he evokes the notion of winners and losers: of a competition about the moral standing of men and women who attend the family court.

In comparison to Alex, who contests this depiction of a competition through his denigration of the man who had produced this construction, Viv portrays this “blame game” or depiction - of men as perpetrators and women as victims - as “based on feminist ideology”. He constitutes this construction of men as perpetrators and women as victims within the family court as not based on fact but rather produced by feminists promoting a particular ideological point of view and by this reference implicates them in the blaming of men for violence towards women. His employment of the word “feminists” is undefined and opens up the possibilities that he is referring to women working for women’s equity or alternatively he is referring to women radical activists. He employs the phrase “bit of a reaction to that” to reference the male backlash to this positioning of men and women. He contrasts this difficulty in the family court with his experience of a man’s programme in which men help other men without the involvement of women. With this latter reference he advocates more favourably for an approach that involves men assisting men to change rather than one that might position men as blameworthy or that
involves women. At the same time this position, stated in comparison to one promoted through a feminist ideology, has the effect of suggesting men can better provide services for men who victimize women without feminist surveillance or scrutiny.

This positioning of men and women in competition and opposition to each other and men’s loyalty to men when addressing such violence is further worked up in the following:

Dave: Yeah. I’m um- I’m wondering um why it’s a women’s issue. How- how come family violence is a women’s issue.

Rhys: It’s a- oh.

Dave: I’m just-

Rhys: In- in regards to this it’s almost- I almost see it just as- ah- a man/woman issue and if you’re advocating on behalf of women then you’re almost on their side.

Dave: And what is their side. I’m just- I’m just trying- trying to get an understanding so when we talk cos we are we’re talking about sides eh what is the women’s side of that issue.

Jordan: Getting beaten up. Pretty much.

Alison: Is it a- does it become a kind of- a- win-lose issue.

Rhys: Power struggle?

Dave: Yeah.

Rhys: You always- I- I think the male they always have to be- they always want to know they are, higher than a woman. Like it’s like- I know that’s when a woman tries to rise up they have to rise higher.

Rhys constitutes family violence as a “man/woman issue” and with this construction situates such violence as a gender issue.

With the statement “if you’re advocating on behalf of women then you’re almost on their side.” Rhys positions men and women as on sides and draws on notions of competition and men’s loyalty to men to produce these oppositional positions. In this construction Rhys’s statement positions a man who advocates for a woman’s issue as disloyal to his side: to men. The term “side” once again draws
from the idea of competition and of a team sport and in situating men and women as on different sides he positions men and women as working against each other on this topic. In response to the interviewer’s question Jordan describes the woman’s side as “being beaten up pretty much” which positions women as victims, the unspoken being that the man’s side is as the perpetrator of this act. This positioning of the man as the perpetrator was explicitly articulated by Finn in another focus group discussion:

Finn: I think that a lot of blokes are **terrified** of the whole domestic violence topic because right away they/we are cast in the role of the offender. Before anything happens.

In this construction the positioning of all men in any discussion on domestic violence - which is perpetrator by a minority of men - is inevitably as the offender. This construction draws on the idea of domestic violence as gendered and all men as offenders to situate the moral status of men and women in such campaigns. Finn associates himself with the representation of men as offenders with the correction of the pronoun “they” with “we” and his emphasis of the phrase that situates men as offenders. In this construction the reference to “offender” implies the victim status of another and the use of “blokes” to refer to men implies that this reaction is in response to women being constructed as victims.

In the excerpt with Rhys above the interviewer draws on the notion of competition with her question about winning and losing. Rhys responds by reconstructing this positioning with a question that depicts the encounter as “a power struggle”. With this phrase he works up this team dynamic as an interactional encounter: his use of the word struggle suggesting a tussle or fight. By employing the word “power” he draws on ideas about dominance and authority as being the site of contention. In the later phrase “I think the male they always have to be they always want to know they are, higher than a woman” Rhys uses the pronoun “they” to situate the reaction of men on this issue as related to male dominance or status. Of interest here is that he did not use the pronoun “we”, as Finn did, and so
distances himself from the men who take this position. The statement “I know that’s when a woman tries to rise up they have to rise higher” draws on notions of masculinity, status and competition. Women’s attempts to resist male dominance - “to rise up” - and on some men’s desire for dominance, authority or status “they have to rise higher” are employed to explain the oppositional positioning of men and women in relation to the prevention of men’s domestic violence towards women. He employs the phrase “they have to” to suggest an imperative on such men to take this position. With this statement there is an implication that women’s resistance to such dominance is a threat to the status of men at least within certain constructions of masculinity.

**Contesting men opposing men’s violence towards women is disloyal to men**

In the following John contests the notion that by opposing violence towards women men are being disloyal to men:

Alison: You know, does it feel like it’s a, a, if you stand up and say, no I’m opposed to women um, being beaten by men, if that means that you know, you’re taking a women’s position and you’re being disloyal to men you know what I mean?

John: No, no I wouldn’t see it that way at all. The issue is that you’re opposed to violence towards women. Um. I’m just opposed to violence towards anyone but [Alison: Mm.] but if it’s women then fine, [Alison: Mm.] if that’s what it is I’ll wear a white ribbon no problem. I, I can’t see, I don’t understand how you can put on a white t-shirt and feel disloyal to other men. [Alison: Mm.] I think in our society is that we’ve got to understand that, that violence towards anybody, whether it’s man, women or child um, needs to be taken as a whole and just say that we’re against that. [Alison: Mm.] So any time you throw anything on that says, we’re against it is, just that. [Alison: Mm.] And um yeah. It’s not about us and them, it’s just about, it’s got to stop somewhere. [Alison: Mm.] [Dave: Yeah.]

By stating that he is opposed to “violence towards anyone” John positions himself as someone who is opposed to any form of violence regardless of who it is, but whereas
other men situated their difficulties with campaigns that focused on violence towards women as singling out men as perpetrators. John does not take this position. Rather he depicts a campaign on violence towards women as one of many “if it’s violence against women then fine” the word “it’s” may be interpreted as providing a vague reference to the particular focus of this campaign. With his statement “if that’s what it is I’ll wear a white ribbon no problem” he depicts the campaign as providing an opportunity to signal his support for the antiviolence message. John situates his position as driven by an overarching understanding that violence towards anyone requires opposition and his phrase “in our society is that we’ve got to understand that” allows him to suggest that this position needs to be taken up more generally. With the phrase “So any time you throw anything on that says, we’re against it is, just that.” he situates any opposition to such violence as meaning nothing else other than signalling an opposition to violence.

He distances himself from any representation that he is being disloyal to men by supporting a campaign focusing on men’s violence towards women with the statement “I, I can’t see, I don’t understand how you can put on a white t-shirt and feel disloyal to other men.” The reference to the t-shirt is a reference to the t-shirt advertisement that associated the wearer with the campaign. By his employment of the phrases “I can’t see” and “I don’t understand” he separates himself from the position of disloyalty represented in his later phrase “and feel disloyal to other men”. His final phrase provides a distinction between the two positions: the one represented by those he is positioning as other than him and the one that he takes up. With the phrase “It’s not about us and them” he represents the positions of other men who situate support for the campaign as a competition with men (“us”) in an oppositional stance to women (“them”) on the issue of men’s domestic violence towards women: this is the position that he does not associate himself with (“It’s not about”). With the phrases “it’s just about, it’s got to stop somewhere” he constitutes his position as someone that sees the campaign as simply (“it’s just about”) a site to promote an antiviolence message. The word “somewhere” draws on the campaigns message on men’s violence towards women as one place on which to situate such a message. With this account he situates himself within a different
form of masculinity that does not construct men and women as in opposition to each other on issues that involve gender-based violence.

Societal values on gender

One obstacle to the prevention of men’s violence towards women that emerged from the texts is the link between masculinity and societal values particularly those associated with gender. In the following I list some of the identified societal values in the men’s texts that might work as obstacles to the prevention of men’s violence towards women.

In the following Alex makes reference to provincial New Zealand values as the early influence on the masculine values of kiwi men:

Alex: There’s a curious – my default almost for Kiwi men [Dave: Yep.] is- is where I was raised as a teenager [Dave: Right.] which is provincial NZ [Dave: Yep.] and part of that break was getting the hell out of there [Dave: Right.] because it was just horrifying [Dave: Right.] and-

Alison: What was horrifying Alex? What was horrifying about it?

Alex: The social, cultural, just the attitudes there.

Alison: So what sorts of attitudes were there?

Alex: You name it. [light laughter] Racist. Sexist. Everything. Homophobic. You name it, it was there in spades. It was very easy to identify and it was very easy to leave. And, I think that was part of my rebellion, I was rebelling-rebelling against that – Um. My parents fitted in there really well which I still find deeply horrible. [laughs] Um. And that’s the part of- that’s a part of me which I look at very hard. [Alison: Right.] Cos I know that’s part of my default setting. And I have to be aware that that’s there somewhere.

Alex portrays the masculine values that contribute to men’s violence towards women as situated within provincial New Zealand values. He articulates these as “Racist. Sexist. Everything. Homophobic.” He distances himself from these values through use of the phrases “that was part of my rebellion” “I was rebelling against
that” and “it was very easy to leave.” His reference to his parents “fitting in there” allows him again to distance himself from these values “which I still find deeply horrible.” He employs the phrase “default setting” to refer to a certain fall-back position that he might potentially take up. Through using the phrase “that’s a part of me which I look at very hard” and “I have to be aware that that’s there somewhere” he signals the critical reflection that he must have on his behaviour to maintain his position as other than that represented by these values.

It’s okay to hit women

Rhys articulates the conflicting values present in his family:

Rhys: Oh. I can my parents weren’t um- m- my dad never hit my mum. Um so that might- my ethics is that you don’t hit women. But I know that my-my other family my- i-it’s rather different? That it’s, almost okay for them to say they’re kind of have been it’s okay for them to think that’s what you can do.

Alison: Hit women.

Rhys: Yeah if hit a woman but I ca- I can never look at that and say it’s okay, I can never. Um. I was brought up that way.

Dave: A-and when you say it’s okay is that something that’s spoken? Or is it something that- that you just- [Rhys: I’d say-] like I’m just wondering how that message comes through

Rhys: th- It becomes so desensitized that it’s almost the-the norm you could say the norm.

Dave: Right. Right.

Rhys makes reference to one part of his family as providing values that he adheres to: “my dad never hit my mum. Um so that might- my ethics is that you don’t hit women” while another part of his family he depicting as holding values that allow them to hit women “it’s okay for them to think that’s what you can do.” He portrays these values as embedded in the culture of this family with the statement “It becomes so desensitized that it’s almost the-the norm” and the repetition of “norm”.

Overcoming the Obstacles Page 118
Alex contests the construction by the interviewer that all New Zealand men are taught, “never hit a woman”:

Dave: Oh, every guy that I have come through that I work with says you know ‘I was taught as a young kid, never hit a woman’ [Alex: Mm.] so it’s there, that teaching is there as well as the other stuff. [General agreement.]

Alex: My experience, I was taught not to hit a girl [Dave: Right. Alison: Mm.] which is different.

Dave: Right, that is different yeah.

Alison: Oh. Okay. [Alex: Mm.]

Alex: Because we’re bigger, we’re stronger [Dave: Yeah.] but then, no I was never taught ‘don’t hit a woman’ [Dave: Right.] which is quite interesting [laughter] I’ve never thought of that before. [Dave: Right.] Not at school, not parentally.

Alex differentiates between the lessons he learnt about not hitting “a girl” and that represented by the interviewer, as men should not hit “a woman”. In his representation his teaching was about not hitting girls and this learning did not necessarily generalise to not hitting women. Of note here is that he depicts the reasons for not hitting girls in his statement “because we’re bigger, we’re stronger” but in his account there was no translation of these physical differences in strength into a generalised value that men should not hit women.

Similarly Darryl discounted the adage that men don’t hit women and situated his values within the culture of younger men:

Darryl: I dunno, I, maybe I’m a bit younger than- I dunno, everyone else here, so maybe [Finn: I wouldn’t say that.] [laughter] [Dave: I’d say a lot younger.] [laughter] maybe things are changing, I don’t, I don’t know, I, I, I don’t know, I think a lot of my friends if a girl hit them, they’d hit them back [Dave: Right.] like and we’re sensitive young, you know we’re [Finn: Yeah.] really, hug each other and we have good talks, but not in a like can’t hit women, it’s not they wouldn’t consider it domestic violence, they would consider it a –
[Unidentified participant: A fight.] a conflict [Dave: Right.] where someone’s hurt you [Dave: Right.] and, just like a friend, one of your male friends or a female friend [Dave: Right.] you know, really hurting you [Dave: Sure.] and you go, it’s a reactive thing, it’s I don’t think anyone would plan it or try and get in the habit of doing it, [Dave: Yep. Yep.] yeah.

Within the masculinity culture that he identifies as “sensitive young” affectionate “hug each other” and articulate “have good talks” he portrays such men as not associating with values that say that men “can’t hit women”. Similar to Finn above, Darryl portrays such men as not identifying hitting women as domestic violence “they wouldn’t consider it domestic violence” and reconstructs such violence as “a conflict where someone’s hurt you”. In this rendition gender is removed from the issue of men hitting women with the word “someone” and the word violence is avoided by reconstructing domestic violence as “a conflict”. That this is violence towards a loved woman with all the associated harm and violation of trust is avoided by referencing such violence as no different from that experienced by “one of your male friends or a female friend”. Darryl positions his construction as part of the culture of New Zealand young men with whom he associates.

Some women need discipline
The messages that domestic violence gives to young men and the potential values that they bring to their own relationships is portrayed by Darryl in his account of being a witness to such violence:

Darryl: Look, I remember just, you’ve just brought up a memory for me, I had a memory of, it was my mum was- always lose the plot ..., we’d have horrible fights with family ... it was always pretty much mum causing it. And one year- um- she was pretty much hysterical like a kid sort of having a tantrum, really out of control screaming, being horrible to her sister and everyone was crying and us kids were all traumatised, and my dad slapped her across the face, [Dave: Right.] and she went dead quiet, and I was- I didn’t think of it till now but I- I was impressed at the time. I wasn’t like, you hit my mum, I
was like, ‘Fuck! That worked!’ [laughter] not in a- not like, ‘Wow I’m going to try that or- [laughter] [Dave: Yeah.] Cos I’d forgotten about it until just now [Unidentified participant: Stunned.] I was stunned that it- yeah- she was stunned. It knocked her right out of- not knocked her out but- flipped- it just- she was just- wound, so wound up, that it just- cos, he didn’t- it wasn’t- you know, I’d never seen him do anything like that normally, like- but it was just a slap. And- and it worked.

In this construction Darryl portrays a gendered representation of his mother, which positions her as hysterical and irrational. There is no gendered analysis of what might have been causing this distress, an understandable omission for a child witness to such behaviour. Consistent with a memory from childhood his mother’s behaviour is depicted as childish and requiring discipline with the statement “like a kid sort of having a tantrum”. Darryl represents his father’s solution to such behaviour as a violent reaction: a slap across his mother’s face. The word slap is commonly employed within New Zealand culture to refer to legitimate physical discipline employed by a parent towards a misbehaving child. He emphasises the impact of the slap with his prolonged s sound at the start of the word slapped and with his statement “and she went dead quiet”.

Darryl compares his potential reaction “you hit my mum” with his actual reaction “Fuck! That worked!” This comparison reveals the distinction between a moral stand of outrage that was his potential reaction with his actual one, which aligns himself with his father and against his mother. Legitimate discipline of a child does not require moral outrage. He situates this act by his father as not unreasonable by positioning his act as out of the realm of his normal behaviour and his mother’s behaviour as irrational, hysterical and childish. His construction of this act as “just a slap” employs the word “just” to depict the act as not of particular violence the reiteration of the word slap again making referenced to disciplining a child. The phrase suggests that there are more excessive acts that would more legitimately be labelled as violent or abusive.

His final statement “and it worked” reiterates his recognition of the instrumental value of his father’s violent act in achieving what he, his father and
others wanted. It stopped his mother from engaging in “hysterical” behaviour. Of interest here is that Darryl clearly remembered this incident years later in the context of a discussion about men’s violence towards wives or girlfriends. In his account the message to him as a child was that the use of “just a slap” could achieve a desired end when exercised by a man against his wife or girlfriend. Interviews with men who had used violence against their women partners revealed that many men were able to identify the immediate intention of their act of violence, commonly to stop their wife or girlfriend from engaging in a particular act, and the ultimate purpose: to keep her in line and let her know who was in charge (Towns, Adams & Gavey, 1996). This excerpt would suggest that witnessing such violence, from an early age, will allow some men to position themselves with the perpetrator of such violence and it will allow them to justify the use of such violence as excusable.

Women, provocation and pride/status
For some men their adherence to the moral stance that men’s violence towards women was wrong was made problematic when women’s actions challenged masculine ideas about pride and status:

Rhys: One time it was actually my brother’s girlfriend hit my brother first and so he was provoked and then he started hitting her and then I’ll step in but I dunno who’s in the wrong because she threw the first fight but she’s a girl like do you retaliate when a girl hits you back and everyone always forgets that sometimes the woman is the first person that can make the first mark that can provoke the guy s- but if a guy hits a girl it’s almost always the guy no matter who starts it, it’s always going to be the guy that’s seen as the bad person, cos he hit a girl. So I mean um, I know a lot of women that hit their partners or [Dave: Yeah.] or a lot of girlfriends who hit their boyfriends and almost- do you just stand there and let that happen sometimes? [Joseph: They get away with it.] Yeah. [Arana: [laughs]] Like they’ll think that a bit like ‘do you think you can take me on’ like- is that- like a hit isn’t just a hit there’s so much things attached with a hit it’s I’m challenging you it’s a hit like I can do whatever I want- like you know like I- l- w- you can not it’s-
Jordan: It’s your authority eh?
Rhys: Yeah it’s more than just a hit it’s the action it’s just an action but, what’s behind the action it’s speaks a lot of things.

Rhys works up the moral conundrum for a man in a situation where a woman hits a man first. He begins by situating his brother’s girlfriend as in the wrong with his statement “my brother’s girlfriend hit my brother first”. With this construction the girlfriend is positioned as the perpetrator of violence towards his brother and his brother as the one offended against. The woman in this construction is morally reprehensible. Rhys draws on provocation to justify his brother’s actions “and so he was provoked”. With this reference to provocation Rhys employs an argument that has been employed to justify a man’s violence towards another man within legal history, and one that has become an accepted societal justification for violence (Towns, Adams & Gavey, 2003), to explain his brothers actions. His brother’s response is portrayed as “and then he started hitting her” and suggests that his brother’s response involved more than a single hit. That he “started” hitting her suggests that the hitting was to be part of a series of hits.

The moral dilemma that Rhys experienced is articulated as “and then I’ll step in but I dunno who’s in the wrong because she threw the first fight but she’s a girl”. With his representation of his action “and then I’ll step in” he articulates his moral stand that his brother should not be hitting his girlfriend and therefore he should intervene. He more clearly articulates the cultural adage associated with a man hitting a woman with the statement “if a guy hits a girl it’s almost always the guy no matter who starts it, it’s always going to be the guy that’s seen as the bad person, cos he hit a girl”. With the phrase “a bad person” he depicts the moral status attributed by New Zealand culture to a man who engages in the use of violence towards a woman. Rhys’s moral dilemma is articulated with the statement “but I dunno who’s in the wrong”. He more fully articulates the two conflicting positions that represent the societal values that direct his actions with the statement “she threw the first fight but she’s a girl”. This statement suggests that for Rhys the
cultural value that supports provocation as a legitimate excuse for violence comes up against the cultural value adage that men should not hit girls and these two conflicting adages work to create confusion about how to act in a way that is morally and culturally acceptable. Confusion has been identified as a silencing mechanism that prevents action in the context of men’s violence towards women (Towns & Adams, 2005).

Rhys identifies the issues for men that are associated with such an act by a woman towards a man in his following statements. The messages for men associated with a woman’s hit he portrays with the spoken statements: “do you think you can take me on”, “I’m challenging you” and “I can do whatever I want”. The first of these phrases is represented as spoken by the man. It allows Rhys to represent the impact of such an act on the man and draws on men’s authority and men’s strength to portray such an act as a challenge to a man’s status as a man. It also draws on certain masculine notions of competition to suggest that a “hit” signals to a man a competitive challenge. The second portrays the message that such a hit gives to a man and are represented as if spoken by a woman. These statements allow Rhys and Jordan to draw from men’s gendered ideas about dominance over women and entitlement to authority to represent the act as a challenge to the man’s status as a man and his authority over his woman partner. Jordan later drew from certain masculinity discourses to construct such an event in front of other men as a humiliation signalling that such an act by a woman towards a man threatens the man’s status with other men. This depiction of such an act as a humiliation provides and explanation for why a man, who situates himself within certain ideas of masculinity, must act to reassert his authority.

In a later segment of this discussion the interviewer works with the moral positioning that has been constructed to determine the ways in which to counter these constructions of masculinity that allow the condoning of men’s violence towards women in particular circumstances:
Alison: So there’s that part of it which is ‘Oh she hit me I’m gonna hit her back’ but there’s also what you were saying [Jordan: Yeah.] which is ‘Oh she hit me that’s a humiliation in front of everyone and then how am I gonna react’ but I mean we don’t want men to hit back cos they can do a lot more harm [Joseph: Yeah.] you know what I mean, than a woman does hitting a man [Rhys: Mm. But then she shouldn’t provoke me.] so how you gonna, how you gonna- and even when she does something that might be provocative we don’t want her to- him to hit back so how will you do that without making him feel like if he doesn’t do that then that’s a humiliation. How do you do that, what- what message would you give to a guy around that.

Rhys: Oh. You said humiliation because other people were around [Jordan: Yeah.] I- when it’s one on one I-I wouldn’t be humiliated [Joseph: Mm.] [Jordan: Yeah.] but if it’s around other people you almost feel like oh man sh- you know she just undermined me. [Dave: So what is it-] In front of my [Dave: what is it about-] friends.

Dave: -when it’s one on one then. Because most family violence happens behind closed doors eh. [Arana: Yeah.] So- so what is that about.

Arana: Well cos like I think- like if she slaps me and- like you were saying [laughs] that’s all r- you know it’s not alright but it’s- it’s- you know it’s behind closed doors. If you do it in front of people ‘I’m going to hit you back’. [laughs] ‘You humiliated me’ [Dave: Right.] ‘you make me look like a clown’ you know.

Arana again affirms the extent that certain ideas associated with masculine status and pride, within certain masculinity discourses, allow the justification for men to employ violence against a woman partner. With spoken words he depicts the rational for such a man’s retaliation: “You humiliated me” “You make me look like a clown”. With these constructions Arana situates any retaliation within accounts of masculinity that privilege men’s status and such an act from a woman in front of others is depicted by Rhys as undermining this status. In Rhys account such humiliation is determined by the presence of an audience and so is not present for him behind closed doors. For some participants such an act by a man in public may be justified by masculinity values associated with status.
Behind closed doors you can hurt back

Some participants drew on the social construction that men’s domestic violence towards women is not acceptable within the public arena but is acceptable behind closed doors:

Viv: Basically they’re- they’re ashamed to do- to behave that way in public and anywhere else ah or there’s- there’s too many um- um- there’s a lot of um negative consequences if they behave that way [laugh] in public, but um you know, they can get away with it ah- at home and- and no-one else is around to see- ah- so- um-

Dave: Yeah, I know, I know you said that jokingly actually Viv, you said you can get away with it more at home than you can out in public.

Viv: Um yeah, no, well that’s, that’s pretty obvious thing yeah.

Warwick: What are you getting away with Viv? [laughter]

Dave: Wasn’t directed, wasn’t directed at you. I- I more- I more meant that idea that- that- that um is there a um- because of the factor you can get away with more at home, does that support the idea that violence is ok, in the home?

Viv: Ah, some- in the minds- in the minds of some people, yeah, I’d- I’d say ah- um- um I’d say so.

This representation draws on ideas of “a man’s home is his castle” to represent the privacy of the home as providing a legitimate platform for some men to exercise violence towards women. This idea of the privacy of the home as providing a haven from being held to account within New Zealand culture has been discussed elsewhere (Towns, Adams & Gavey 2003) and it works to prevent intervention when men employ violence against women partners or when violence is employed against children in the home. In his account Viv draws on ideas of the public forum as being the legitimate site for state intervention whereas the private sphere is not.

Trevor situates this notion of privacy as related to childhood violence, retaliation and payback:
Trevor: I think too a lot of it can go back to once again learned stuff from your childhood. Um-you know, family- I was hurt as a child from my family, [Dave: Right.] and when I’m stressed and stuff like that it’s like, I-I fight back. I-I hurt back. [Dave: Yeah.] Or I’ve been known to hurt back and it’s like because I’m hurting I will hurt you and it’s always towards ones you love, it’s like- it’s like pay back or something? [Dave: Right.] Or- or I’ve got to- you know- it- I dunno, it’s like society’s got to see you as okay. But behind those closed doors you’ve just got to let down all your guards.

In this representation the home provides a place for those who have experienced abuse in childhood to “let down all your guards” when stressed. The terms “fight back” and “hurt back” suggest that these actions are always in retaliation and shift the responsibility away from the person exercising such violence to the family member who has ‘caused’ the man to react in such a way. In this construction two presentations emerge: the one that is represented to the world “society’s got to see you as okay” and the one represented “behind those closed doors”. With the former there is recognition that such violence is not accepted as okay.

*You can get away with it at home*

Some of the men represented such violence as occurring at home because men were less likely to be held accountable in this domain:

Dave: So what’s going on behind closed doors then when there isn’t- there isn’t anybody to see what’s going on. Because as I said most of the- most of the family violence is happening- is happening when there’s nobody else around. So what’s happening there between- when the-

Jordan: It’s just- (?). No one will know. [Rhys: yeah.] No one will know.

This representation suggests that such men are aware that such behaviour is unacceptable to others within their communities.
Contesting values that legitimate violence towards women

John draws on certain ideas of masculine identity to represent the values that go contrary to violence towards women:

John: I- I- Because our society is a violent society, its not violent per se it’s just violent because- it’s just- the things around us that help us to be that, to perpetuate that continuing thing. But I’m really sure that, that um- the majority of men want to be that nice person. [Dave: Yeah. Yeah so am I.] You know. [Dave: Absolutely.] But the thing is, there’s the stereotype around that says, we have to be like this. [Dave: Yep.] and so they’ve got, again they’ve got to be strong enough in themselves and true enough to themselves to say ‘Enough! This is bullcrap!’

He positions men as having options available to them in the identity that they take up as men: “most men want to be that nice person”. He draws on the idea of a masculine stereotype to articulate the influences that might draw men away from a position that would situate them within this identity “there’s the stereotype around that says, we have to be like this.” Alongside his earlier references to “a violent society” this depiction of a stereotype articulates the influences that might draw a man into acting violently within certain social expectations. In his construction men can position themselves away from such a stereotype by being “strong enough in themselves” and by taking a stand that does not accept this stereotype. His use of the term stereotype might be interpreted as a reference to a certain hegemonic masculinity that depicts aggression or violence as a masculine quality.

Many of the men made reference to the media as promoting violence. John makes reference to a “violent society” and “the things around us that help us to be that, to perpetuate that continuing thing.” Others spoke explicitly of television programmes and movies that were graphically violent, and of violent video games and the impact on those engaged with these activities. American television crime dramas were depicted as advocating for violence as a solution. Some spoke of the level of acceptance of violence on the sports field – for example on the rugby field.
and in car racing crashes - as providing a vicarious form of warrior violence that was enjoyed by men. Others spoke of other media representations of men as portraying them as more sensitive, some as diminishing men and some as working against a culture of violence as a masculine ideal. These various portrayals were employed to situate these representations as part of the cultural influences within New Zealand that impact on men and the masculinities they take up in relation to women.

Evan contested the idea that to hit woman is accepted in “white European culture”:

Evan: Because my only experience in white, white European culture, it’s not, I mean it’s just not okay [Darryl: It’s taboo.] it’s taboo, you don’t hit, you don’t hit women you know, you know, you just don’t do it, I’d just [Dave: Yeah.] it’s plain and simple [Garth: But it still happens.] [Unidentified participant: Yeah.] [Harry: It does happen.] yeah, it happens but it- [Overlapping talk] there’s certainly no encouragement, I can’t think of anywhere [laughs] the only encouragement is our own loss of control in a- in a situation ... 

In this construction Evan portrays a clear representation that hitting women is not okay and in this representation contests the notion that men within this culture accept such violence. His reference to this lack of acceptance of such violence is limited to white European culture however and in this representation he leaves open the idea that it is accepted within other cultures. One interpretation is that this portrayal is problematic as it draws on notions of superior values associated with white European culture in contrast to others. Another interpretation is that Evan’s reference to white European culture is because this is the culture that he knows and can speak about with authority.

Evan’s construction that such violence is “taboo” again situates such violence as almost spiritually unacceptable and his repeated references “you don’t hit” “you don’t hit women” “you just don’t do it” are employed to make an emphatic statement about how unacceptable such violence is within these particular cultural discourses. The phase “it’s plain and simple” has been referred to elsewhere as an axiom marker employed to position the preceding statement as an uncontested fact,
an unquestionable adage (Adams, Towns & Gavey, 1995). Some interruptions from others work to acknowledge that despite this adage such violence still occurs. Evan agrees with these statements while holding to his position on the cultural acceptability of such violence “there’s no encouragement” “I can’t think of anywhere”. His laugh after this statement may be interpreted as rye recognition of the encouragement he articulates in his final statement, which situates any excuses for such violence within the individual: “the only encouragement is our own loss of control in a- in a situation”. With this statement he positions such violence as associated with the excuse of a “loss of control”.

In the following such violence is associated with a loss of the values associated with mutual respect between men and women. Sean begins by portraying domestic violence as associated with lack of respect for others:

Sean: But at the end of the day it, it’s people not treating each other with respect. [Dave: Oh absolutely.] [Warwick: That’s it yeah.] And that’s really what it comes down to and if the, if you can treat each other with respect then it just doesn’t enter the- it just doesn’t enter it. [Unidentified participant: Yeah.] [Warwick: That’s right (?)] you just have to take it right back to that level.

Warwick: What Zak said, you know with the grandparents that respect, mutual respect eh? We haven’t got it, we’ve lost that [Sean: Mm.] in this society today [Sean: Mm.] we really have.

These participants draw on nostalgia to reference the mutual respect required in a relationship to prevent violence.

Summary
In some men’s accounts some forms of masculinity constructed emotional expression other than aggression as weak and such constructions impacted on men’s ability to talk about emotional matters such as relationship issues with their wives or girlfriends or others. These constructions limited men’s ability to express emotions
other than anger or aggression. The impact on men was portrayed as a build up of emotional tension, because of the failure to speak to others of matters that were troubling them, and a pressure release through violence towards their loved ones. Some men described alcohol or drug use as allowing for the legitimate expression of men’s emotions, otherwise not acceptable within certain masculinities, whereas others described violence as a possible outcome of the use of alcohol when the man was emotionally troubled.

The forms of masculinity that limited emotional expression were described as one of a number of obstacles to the prevention of men’s domestic violence towards women. Loyalty to the mates was evident as an obstacle to any prevention campaign that highlighted men’s domestic violence towards women as some men constituted such a gender specific approach as gender divisive. Such loyalty discourses were evident in the language of some men who depicted a focus on men’s violence towards women as inevitably casting men in the role of perpetrators and women as victims. The depiction by some men of a duality of men-as-bad and women-as-good in prevention campaigns moved such men to talk about women as perpetrators of violence rather than to address the problem of men’s domestic violence towards women. These duality depictions allowed some men to shift the issue from one of men’s domestic violence towards women to a competition over who had the higher moral status as victims: men or women. As such a clear obstacle to any gender transformative campaign will be how to conduct such a campaign effectively within certain masculine ideals of competition, status and loyalty without inviting some men to pit men against women in a competition for moral status. Some men depicted men’s loyalty reactions to such campaigns as arising from their shame and guilt about the exposed violence of some men towards women and children.

Other obstacles to the prevention of such violence were identified as New Zealand cultural values around gender, evident in the language that depicted men’s justifications for violence towards women such as women’s provocation, women not following men’s authority or women nagging. Some participants described the hitting of women as acceptable within certain New Zealand communities whereas others stated that such violence towards women was clearly not accepted. Some
men articulated the arguments that led to such violence being condoned, including that the man’s actions were not the stereotypic forms of domestic violence by men towards women that is represented as serious. Domestic violence was portrayed as carried out by someone other than himself. Privacy discourses were described as legitimating violence within the home and allowing it to remain hidden. Such privacy depictions that draw on a man’s home being his castle have also been found to be employed by men who use violence to support men’s domestic violence towards women and to silence intervention (Towns, Adams & Gavey, 2003).
Masculinity and existing prevention programmes

This section summarises the accounts the participants gave of existing campaigns, in a particular the “It’s not okay campaign” and “The White Ribbon Day” campaign. The “It’s Not Okay Campaign” is a gender-neutral awareness campaign aimed at raising awareness of family violence. The initial phase of this campaign has focused on men’s violence towards women in the family context. The aim of the campaign has been to engage men who have used such violence and to encourage them to seek help with the message “It is okay to ask for help”. The White Ribbon Campaign in New Zealand has involved encouraging men to talk to their mates about their violence.

It’s not okay campaign

In the following a number of representations of this campaign are listed and systematically analysed for the ways in which this campaign has been taken up.

Arana: You know like you guys have commercials they show how you deal with family violence and all that. [Dave: Yeah.] You know to me that’s- cos people watch TV everyday they even listen to the-

Rhys: Not just a commercial.

Arana: As long as you’re putting something out there. Like there- there was nothing there before then to you know actually reach out, cos, when I was a kid there was not a lot of information, you know about going to this and this [Dave: Yeah.] and that you know [background noise] (?) just seeing some of the programmes you know to help you with this rehab and this you know it does help you know. Yeah, yeah.

Dave: So that- that does help kind of-

Arana: Yeah I mean it doesn’t fix the problem [Dave: Yeah.] you gotta have to- you know-

Rhys: Mm. Almost like identifies that there is a problem [Arana: Yeah.] you know what they’re doing is a problem just by putting it out there. [Arana: Oh yeah.] Like-
Alison: And does that open up the conversation.
Rhys: It does - you might see it as just an advertisement for you guys but it does...
Arana: For someone it might be a lifesaver.

In this statement a number of positive messages are portrayed about this campaign. These are listed below:

- “People watch TV everyday” – a positive message about the reach of the campaign and access to the target audience.
- “Not just a commercial” – implies that the campaign is doing more than selling a commodity.
- “there was nothing there before then to you know actually reach out” and “when I was a kid there was not a lot of information” – implies that the campaign is filling an information gap and providing information about where to go for help and that this information was not previously available.
- “just seeing some of the programmes you know to help you with this rehab and this you know it does help you know” – a positive message about the campaign direction towards access to programmes that help with change and a message that indicates that the availability of these programmes is perceived to be helpful.
- “identifies that there is a problem” “what they’re doing is a problem” – positive messages about the campaigns challenge to existing cultures around violence and that it brings the issue into conscious awareness.
- “It does [open up conversations]- you might see it as just an advertisement for you guys but it does...” - positive message about reach and impact beyond the campaign promoters and portrayal of the campaign as opening up conversations.
- “For someone it might be a lifesaver.” – strong and positive message about impact suggesting that it saves lives.

Zak portrays a number of positive features about the It’s Not Okay campaign:
Zak: So some things are starting to change out there [Dave: Yeah.] um [Warwick: But it’s not so much-] and, and is this campaign part of it? You know that all of a sudden the door’s open, it’s on TV, ‘I can actually talk about it now’ [Dave: Yep.] um, you know, John Kirwan’s out there saying that, you know, he’s been depressed [Dave: Yeah.] and other people out there saying, this has happened to me, and, and so the door is open...

- “Some things are starting to change out there” – suggests that there is a culture shift.
- “all of a sudden the door’s open, it’s on TV, I can actually talk about it now” – suggests that the campaign has been effective in overcoming silencing effects and allowed people to talk about the issue.
- “other people out there saying, this has happened to me, and, and so the door is open..” - makes reference to the men who speak about their experiences of violence on campaign advertising and suggests that this allows men to talk more about their experiences.

The following participants have differing experiences of the campaign that allow identification of the motivational messages observers of the campaign take up to work towards change:

Dave: What do you think about the ah- the ‘It’s not ok’ campaign?

Trevor: Personally I get [Viv: Oh.] offended by it, by um them trying to portray it and say it’s my problem and I’m sort of saying, I don’t have any problem with violence, why is it my problem? [Dave: Right.] so you know that’s sort of a [Dave: That’s how it comes across?] angle that it comes to me [Dave: Yeah.] and I get quite offended by it, but- [Dave: Yeah.] um- you know, I think it’s- it is, is a big problem and um- but yeah, I dunno, I take offence to that. [Zak: That’s interesting.] Implied that it’s actually my problem. [Unidentified participant: Mm. ]

Zak: I, I take another view of that which is really interesting, is that I see that um domestic violence in NZ is actually a national problem [Dave: Right.] so I’m part of the nation so if I can um- one, endeavour to model something myself
which is um- within my family, [Dave: Yeah.] um, and inside four walls um is another thing. But then if I’m out in public and I see one of my- fellow men or women struggling with this, cos it’s not only men that are violent by the way-[Dave: No absolutely.] [Trevor: Absolutely.] .... but uh- I, I just think that I am part of the problem because if, if I believe this statement, “All that it takes for violence to increase is for a good man to do nothing.”

Sean: Sure.

Zak: So therefore if I don’t become involved then I’m not helping out my neighbour or somebody else um. If I see for example my neighbour um having real trouble with his ten year old son and- and- and- being violent towards him, I- I would far rather at some stage at the right point, go and, and have a cup of coffee with him or take him down to a burger bar and, and we’ll go out fishing or something like that and- and chat through, you know what- and, and maybe um the struggle that he’s having will come up [Dave: Sure.] and- and- I can be part of the answer. [Unidentified participant: Mm.] Um. So that’s what I see, like, you know, in my training I’ve been out with the police at times and things like that and just seen some of the things that go on and that’s really opened my eyes up. [Dave: Yeah.] [Unidentified participant: Mm.] You know, um, Once Were Warriors is happening out there [Dave: Yeah, absolutely. Yeah.] um [Sean: Yeah.] so, so I, I’ve, see as, as a man that I- I’ve actually got to be part of the answer rather than- silent.

- “Personally I get [Viv: Oh.] offended by it, by um them trying to portray it and say it’s my problem” – a negative message about the campaigns attempts to involve men in action on the prevention of men’s violence; and objection to the inclusiveness of the message about who is responsible for violence that promotes personal responsibility for change.

- “domestic violence in NZ is actually a national problem” – portrays a positive message about the awareness raising intention of the campaign and the campaigns attempts to involve all in the solution.

- “I’m part of the nation so if I can um- one, endeavour to model something myself which is um- within my family” – portrays a translation of the message into personal action within this man’s family.
• “All that it takes for violence to increase is for a good man to do nothing.” - further translation of the campaign message into a motivational message for men’s action.

• “So therefore if I don’t become involved then I’m not helping out my neighbour or somebody else” – translation of campaign message into motivational message for action.

• “If I see for example my neighbour um having real trouble with his ten year old son and- and- and- being violent towards him, I- I would far rather at some stage at the right point, go and, and have a cup of coffee with him or take him down to a burger bar and, and we’ll go out fishing or something like that and- and chat through” – translation of the campaign message into positive and constructive action that involves engaging another man in a supportive conversation about his violence.

• “I can be part of the answer.” – translation of the campaign message into motivational message.

• “Once were Warriors is happening out there” – translation of the campaign message into the need for a change in the culture that accepts violence as the norm by reference to a well-known movie.

• “I’ve actually got to be part of the answer rather than- silent.” – translation of the campaign message into a strong call for action involving overcoming the silencing influences associated with such violence: a motivational statement for being part of the solution.

Viv works up the positive impact of the campaign in the following:

Viv: I – I think it’s good-because it’s partly um, preventative, because it’s um- people who, you know, guys or women who may be doing it, doing domestic violence or, who who- may have lashed out then suddenly told ‘Oh, it’s not ok’ and sort of, might make them wake up and, ‘What am I doing? And maybe I need some help.’ You know, and so that is actually happening, people are voluntarily going to- anger management course or for counselling [Dave: Yep.] like men’s programmes and that have seen an increase and that
sort of thing. So I think that’s got to be a good thing that it’s preventative that um- people are going for help before their partner applies for a protection order or- or [Dave: Sure.] something like that, and- and- um- it-because um- you know- if it, if it gets to that- that level you know, that’s an increased- um- costs- um- for the, for the country, you know if they have to separate ah- [Dave: Absolutely] and all that whereas if it’s preventative and they can do something about it and their relationship, then, you know it’s much better for everyone including the children you know, so- um- no- I um-l- um- hadn’t really thought all that through. [laughter] [Dave: No, no.] Now that I think about that I think it’s very good yeah.

- “I think it’s good-because it’s partly um, preventative” – portrays the preventative intention of the campaign as positive.
- “guys or women who may be doing it, doing domestic violence or, who who-may have lashed out then suddenly told ‘Oh, it’s not ok’ and sort of, might make them wake up ‘What am I doing? And maybe I need some help.’” – positive message about the reach of the campaign and about the awareness raising intention of the campaign that suggests it would be effective in reaching its target audience and raising awareness about their need for help.
- “that is actually happening, people are voluntarily going to- anger management course or for counselling [Dave: Yep.] like men’s programmes and that have seen an increase and that sort of thing.” – portrays the effect as actually realised and effective through evidence of an expected outcome.
- “So I think that’s got to be a good thing that it’s preventative that um- people are going for help before their partner applies for a protection order or- or [Dave: Sure.] something like that” – portrays the campaign as constructive in its preventative function and pre-emptive of the need for protection order applications.
- “that’s an increased- um- costs- um- for the, for the country, you know if they have to separate” – portrays the campaign as reducing a cost to the country through potentially reducing the need for processes of protection orders and separation.
• “if it’s preventative and they can do something about it and their relationship, then, you know it’s much better for everyone including the children you know” – portrays this prevention campaign as positive for the relationship, for everyone and for the children.
• “Now that I think about that I think it’s very good yeah” - strong positive statement about this prevention campaign focus.

In the following the participants work up other potential problems with the campaign:

Trevor: But you, you say, is this campaign- cam- campaign good? It’s only as good as the resources that are behind it [Dave: Mm mm.] and are the resources there or is it just another fly by night campaign?

• “It’s only as good as the resources that are behind it” – portrays the success of the campaign as dependent on the resources available to it.
• “are the resources there or is it just another fly by night campaign” – questions the resourcing of the campaign and the long-term commitment to the campaign

Zak: But I think there’s, there’s a tie up between what you said Warwick about, is this just a- a TV campaign. Is the campaign working out in the community- [Dave: Yeah.] [Warwick: Absolutely.] without- without pay as it were and probably if we go this way it’s working out in the community with lawyers and, and counsellors [Warwick: Mm.] and, and alcohol and drug workers [Dave: Yep.] [Warwick: Yes, yes.] but the difficulty is that society can’t provide all the money to have all the people there all of the time to deal with all of the needs [Warwick: Yeah.] so it’s- it’s- it’s once again comes back to, this is our problem [Warwick: Mm.] not just the health workers’ problem, not just the- you know?
• “is this just a- a TV campaign. Is the campaign working out in the community-
  [Dave: Yeah.] [Warwick: Absolutely.] without- without pay as it were” – raises
  questions about the community knowledge of the effectiveness of the
  campaign and its dependence on voluntary support.
• “probably if we go this way it’s working out in the community with lawyers
  and, and counsellors [Warwick: Mm.] and, and alcohol and drug workers” –
  portrays the campaign as effective with professionals and key stakeholders.
• “but the difficulty is that society can’t provide all the money to have all the
  people there all of the time to deal with all of the needs” – portrays
  recognition of the need for such campaigns through articulation of the extent
  and the lack of professional resources to deal with the extent of the problem.
• “it’s once again comes back to, this is our problem [Warwick: Mm.] not just
  the health workers’ problem, not just the- you know?” – portrays acceptance
  of the campaign message that this is a problem that all New Zealanders must
  address rather than simply those within the helping professions.

White Ribbon Campaign
The White Ribbon Campaign is much more explicitly gendered as it advocates for
men to take a stand on men’s domestic violence towards women and it is therefore
more likely to attract criticism. Gender transformative programmes have been
identified as effective prevention interventions with men on gender-based violence
(WHO, 2008). Given the issues identified in this study around loyalty, moral status
and competitiveness associated with gender-based programmes the way in which
the campaign is delivered will be critical to its perceived effectiveness.

In the following Callum worked up a criticism that some of the participants had
of this Campaign which suggests that there were unintended consequences that
occurred through the campaign messages:

Callum: The more I think of the white ribbon campaign the less I like - At first I
  thought, oh how could that guy feel uncomfortable [Alison: Mm mm.] giving
  out ribbons and then I’m thinking, well, it’s quite patronising really? ‘I’m
wearing a white ribbon, I don’t beat people and I think you shouldn’t either. And I don’t beat people because I’ve got a really happy comfortable life and I don’t get wound up to the point where I need to biff people and you’ve got such a drudgery life that- and so much bad things happening for you that um-’ [Dave: Right] it’s sort of a, almost a superior type condescending thing. It smacks of ah-[Dave: Yeah] because people who, you’re saying that most people who deal out physical violence- um it’s not premeditated and they don’t think it’s a great idea if you sit them down when they’re not feeling angry- [Dave: There’s shame involved in it, yeah.] yeah, and you’re sort of amplifying that a bit probably by wearing a white ribbon. [laughter][Dave: Yeah.]

Alison: So do think it’s sort of building a, a kind of them and us?

Callum: Almost ...

- “The more I think of the white ribbon campaign the less I like-“ – portrays a problem with the campaign for thinking men.
- “I’m thinking, well, it’s quite patronising really?” – situates the campaign as patronising which suggests that it aligns itself with the patriarchal values that it is trying to address when promoting the prevention of men’s domestic violence towards women.
- “I’m wearing a white ribbon, I don’t beat people and I think you shouldn’t either” portrays the campaign as
  - setting up a good man/bad man duality with a patronising message.
  - setting up a ‘them and us’ competitive duality within the community of men
  - setting up men to judge other men
  - positions some men has having a better moral status than other men whose moral status is questioned.
- “And I don’t beat people because I’ve got a really happy comfortable life and I don’t get wound up to the point where I need to biff people and you’ve got such a drudgery life that- and so much bad things happening for you that um-
"” – portrays the duality of men that the campaign evokes and situates the good man as comfortable and in control versus the bad man who “need to biff people” as living in drudgery and out of control.

- “a, almost a superior type condescending thing. It smacks of ah” – portrays the campaign as condescending and judgemental. Another group constructed the campaign as “sanctimonious”.

- “[Dave: There’s shame involved in it, yeah.] yeah, and you’re sort of amplifying that a bit probably by wearing a white ribbon.” – portrays the campaign as amplifying the shame men who use such violence have about their violence towards women.

The following text identified a commonly represented theme associated with the White Ribbon Campaign involving the difficulties with a campaign that could readily be interpreted as setting up a duality between men and women:

Callum: I would, okay I’ll step out here and I could probably say that I think the campaign should be against domestic violence really, not just um associated with one gender against the other. Probably just some stuff you know that I’ve read about some of the silences, you know some of the you know vibes coming from women towards men as well, um. That’s very much an under discussed topic, there’s a certain amount of um- um NZ that I almost find um- um almost bent more towards kind of feminist kind of feminism and and ah focussed on the you know the historical suppression of women and trying to release them from that in that sense which I’d agree with but then as I say it’s almost going the other way and you could arguably say well it’s almost geared to um- um demonise the- yeah the-the men in the society. [Unidentified participant: Mm.]

Dave: So, I wondered when you heard the description of that campaign did it feel like did it feel like a demonising campaign for men?

Callum: Um. No, but when I kind of thought about those other guys kind of reactions I kind of thought well is that what’s dr- is that what’s driving it? You know, is it [Alex: That’s an interesting point. Mm. mm. ] too one-sided a campaign really that actually kind of-
• “I think the campaign should be against domestic violence really” – with this phrase Callum portrays his preference for a campaign that is gender neutral. The use of domestic violence in this form disassociates it from men’s domestic violence towards women.

• “not just um associated with one gender against the other” – this statement portrays a campaign that focuses on men’s domestic violence towards women as pitting one gender against another. The use of the word gender portrays a pitting of a culture against another rather than the use of the word sex which would have depicted this difference as involving a biological difference that does not involve cultural distinctions.

• “some stuff you know that I’ve read about some of the silences, you know some of the you know vibes coming from women towards men as well” – this statement is vague but one reading is that it suggests that some women’s attitudes towards men are problematic.

• “That’s very much an under discussed topic” – portrays room for discussion about this topic.

• “there’s a certain amount of um- um NZ that I almost find um- um almost bent more towards kind of feminist kind of feminism and and and ah focussed on the you know the historical suppression of women and trying to release them from that in that sense which I’d agree” – provides a tentative but positive representation of feminist approaches towards addressing “historical suppression of women”.

• “but then as I say it’s almost going the other way and you could arguably say well it’s almost geared to um- um demonise the- yeah the-the men in the society.” – portrays his experience of feminist/profeminist approaches that address oppressions as potentially as having gone too far and “demonising men”. This reference to demonizing men positions men as a team who experience criticism of some men as implicating all men as perpetrators.
The loyalty problem

The above excerpt suggests that a campaign that explicitly targets men’s violence towards women invites some men, associated with certain masculinities that privilege men’s loyalty to men as a strong feature of masculinity, to react to the campaign by aligning themselves strongly with men and in opposition to women. In the following excerpts the interviewers attempted to unravel the way in which this alignment worked. For example, in the following the interviewer asked whether blaming women was an effective approach to countering the discomfort of men about a campaign that addresses men’s violence towards women:

Alison:  Do we need actually to be saying you know in the rape equivalent, women are wearing too short skirts here, do we actually need to be saying that women are (?) to be blamed to some extent here? Or can we actually address the issue around this?

Alex:  No, I don’t think that’s the issue here [Alison: No.] I think that the issue is that having a- because the majority of domestic violence is men against women making that explicit ‘this is a man’s issue, men beat women’ creates that divide, it makes it explicit. [Alison: Mm.] [Dave: Right.]

- “No, I don’t think that’s the issue here” – discounts the need to blame women when addressing men’s domestic violence towards women.
- “the majority of domestic violence is men against women making that explicit ‘this is a man’s issue, men beat women’ creates that divide, it makes it explicit.” – portrays the campaign on men’s domestic violence towards women as inevitably positioning the issue as a men’s issue that sets up an oppositional stance between men and women.

This representation suggests that any such campaign will need to provide strong countering messages that state that the majority of men do not engage in such behaviour in order to address the potential interpretation that the campaign positions all men as demons.
In the following the group described the ways in which some men might position a man who works on the White Ribbon Campaign handing out White Ribbons:

Rhys: In- in terms of acting as a- someone that hands- the person you said felt insecure about doing that, the first word that would come into most of the guys heads would be faggot. In a sense of he’s going for you know- [Dave: Right.] he’s- it’s a feminine issue it’s why are you advocating for this kind of thing it’s almost pro-women.

Alison: And so what about the actual white ribbon itself. Is that an issue?

Rhys: I mean the white ribbon is- I mean that’s good but it’s the act of what you’re doing? [Jordan: Yeah what (?)] can come across as this guys, a fag. I mean- I mean that’s just the obvious thing that I- I could think of. [Alison: Okay.]

Joseph: Yeah.

Alison: [Rhys: Like-] So- and what would make him a faggot do you think?

Rhys: Advocating on behalf of women?

Arana: Putting him as a weaker- [Rhys: Yeah.] [Dave: Got it.] [laughs] yeah weak. That’s how [Rhys: It’s just- ] some you know like-

Joseph: Like getting your emotions- like letting your emotions take the best of you. ‘Oh I feel sorry for him- oh I feel sorry for a woman who gets beaten up.’ Just that whole emotion thing probably just gets to guys like- don’t show emotion and that.

Alison: So it comes- it hits right at the masculine [Joseph: Mm.] sort of [ Arana: Yeah.] ideas does it really.

Jordan: Like you’re going against men.

Rhys: Yeah. [Jordan: Doing it.] it’s almost like yeah like you’re pro women anti male [Joseph: Yeah.] [Dave: Right.]

Jordan: On the woman’s side not the men’s side.

Arana: Yeah. It’s like you agree with more women’s issues than men’s issues. [laughs]

Jordan: Then you get those guys that are- that do do it but they’re not ashamed and whoever comes they can come and do it oh- like come and- go against it and-

Alison: So what makes them different? [Dave: Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.]
Jordan: Probably more harder or more tougher than other men or stronger in their belief.

- “the person you said felt insecure about doing that, the first word that would come into most of the guys heads would be faggot.” – portrays a certain masculinity as constituting men who are insecure about participating in the White Ribbon Campaign as homosexuals by using a derogatory term “faggot” to describe such men and by drawing on the fear some men have, within certain masculinities, of being constituted by other men as feminine or gay. The use of the word “faggot” is employed to evoke a marginalising of such men from the majority of men.

- “it’s a feminine issue it’s why are you advocating for this kind of thing it’s almost pro-women.” – draws on notions of male loyalty within certain representations of masculinity to constitute the issue as a woman’s one and men who participate as being “pro-woman”.

- “I mean the white ribbon is- I mean that’s good” – portrays the use of the white ribbon by men as unproblematic.

- “Advocating on behalf of women?” – describes such advocacy as contributing to the construction of such men as homosexuals, at least within these masculinities.

- “Putting him as a weaker- [Rhys: Yeah.] [Dave: Got it.] [laughs] yeah weak.” – draws on such masculinities to portray such men who advocate on behalf of women as weak.

- “Like getting your emotions- like letting your emotions take the best of you. ‘Oh I feel sorry for him- oh I feel sorry for a woman who gets beaten up.’” – draws on certain masculinities to describe empathy for a women’s issue as showing an emotional response which is constituted by such masculinities as not masculine.

- “it’s almost like yeah like you’re pro women anti male” – identifies the duality and positions men who engage in the campaign as disloyal to men and working with the opposition – “pro women”.

*Overcoming the Obstacles Page 146*
• “Then you get those guys that are- that do do it but they’re not ashamed and whoever comes they can come and do it oh- like come and- go against it and” – identifies men who can take a stand and are “not ashamed” regardless of who sees them or approaches them.

• “Probably more harder or- more tougher than other men or- stronger in their belief.” - Draws on certain masculinity discourses to position men who are strong advocates as “more harder”, “more tougher than other men” contrary to earlier representations of men who were uncomfortable doing this work as weak. Situates such men as “stronger in their belief” suggesting that they were stronger in their convictions about their position relative to this campaign. This strong advocacy is portrayed as countering any position that they are not masculine within certain masculinity discourses.

**Contesting loyalty**

In the following the participants were asked how some men were able to wear the white ribbon given the representation that such support was anti-men:

**Arana:** I just thought tha- if the person wearing it they’ve got to have an understanding or connection with what they’re doing. [Dave: Yeah.] You wouldn’t just put it on cos you’re [laughs] you know you’re going to look like a sore thumb, you wouldn’t do that unless you had an understanding of what the cause was [Dave: Yeah.] then you might actually put it on. Other than that I wouldn’t put nothing on if I didn’t have an understanding of what I’m getting myself into.

**Rhys:** I think it’s just easier to wear something that says a lot more than talking about it. It’s easier to wear a ribbon than go around saying ‘I’m against blah blah blah you know this is why I believe in it’ it’s easier just to wear something and that’s- all that’s there it is.

**Alison:** Mm.

**Arana:** That says it all. [Dave: I guess though-]
Dave: -by putting that ribbon on I’m saying that I’m pro women which means I’m anti- men [Arana: Yeah, that could-] like how do I- and guys do it eh guys put ribbons on on white ribbon day how do they do that.

Joseph: They don’t care.

Dave: They don’t care. Yeah. So how do they get to that place where they don’t care. You know we’re- cos I can’t imagine a guy cos he’s male putting on something that he thought was anti-male.

Joseph: Cos they’ve seen it.

Arana: Yeah.

Jordan: They’ve experienced it. And they [Joseph: Yeah.] they don’t want it in their life.

Joseph: Yeah they just don’t like it. They don’t like [Dave: Yeah.] violence against women so they put it on. [Dave: Yeah.]

Alison: So if you’re pro women does it always mean you’re anti men?

Joseph: No.

- “I just thought tha- if the person wearing it they’ve got to have an understanding or connection with what they’re doing.” - A statement suggesting that men need to understand the cause and the reason for wearing the ribbon.

- “You wouldn’t just put it on cos you’re [laughs] you know you’re going to look like a sore thumb” - portrays men who wear the ribbon without understanding or connection with the issue as looking “like a sore thumb”. This portrayal suggests that such men would stand out as uncomfortable.

- “Other than that I wouldn’t put nothing on if I didn’t have an understanding of what I’m getting myself into.” - This statement by Arana portrays his position as not limited to the White Ribbon Campaign and may be read as referencing an expectation that a man might have to account for an action that he is taking.

- “I think it’s just easier to wear something that says a lot more than talking about it.” – a positive statement about wearing the ribbon that recognises
the message that the ribbon gives, and that allows the ribbon to position the wearer without the need for a conversation.

• “They don’t care” – a statement in response to the interviewer’s question about how men manage to wear the ribbon given the construction that to position oneself on this issue is constructed by some men as anti-men. The statement represents a certain position that some men are able to take up despite the contradictory and judgemental messages present in some masculinity discourses about their loyalty to other men: that they will not be responsive to criticisms of their masculinity by other men for advocating for women.

• “They’ve experienced it. And they [Joseph: Yeah.] they don’t want it in their life.” – articulates a clear anti-violence message that allows some men to wear the white ribbon with confidence despite anti-male loyalty discourses.

• “Yeah they just don’t like it. They don’t like [Dave: Yeah.] violence against women so they put it on.” – another clear message that allows some men to wear the ribbon despite anti-male loyalty discourses.

• The final statement by Joseph negates the construction that to be pro-woman means to be anti-men. – this is another strong message that allows men to step beyond loyalty discourses.

*Men don’t wear ribbons*

In the following Sean portrays the ribbon as a fundamental problem as the image associated with the campaign:

Sean: I tell you what, whoever thought of a white ribbon must have been a woman. [Dave: Right.] Cos to me the thought of wearing a ribbon, just kind of thinks, huh, it’s just like holding a lady’s handbag [Dave: Right.] for goodness sakes, get out of here. [Dave: Right, right, right.] You know. It’s a thing I want to put down very quickly. [Dave: Right.] [Mm.] So ribbons are associated immediately with feminine stuff. [Dave: Yep.] And a guy, ribbon? Odd. [Trevor: Mm.[laugh]
Dave: It’s a [Sean: Sorry, straight up.] no, no, no [Sean: Straight up, you know.] don’t be sorry, I didn’t put it together.

Sean: If they said I had to wear a chain you know we all wore a chain on our- a chain bracelet on- on- as a thing of showing, hey, we’re against ah [Dave: Yeah.] a, good solid family links and, and against violence of women [Dave: Yeah.] we all stick a chain bracelet on. [Dave: Yeah.] Ask me to put a white ribbon on, pin it to my front, doesn’t feel right. [Trevor: Yeah.]

In this representation the following issues about the White Ribbon campaign were identified:

- “I tell you what, whoever thought of a white ribbon must have been a woman.” Portrays the white ribbon that men are expected to wear in the campaign as a feminine initiative.
- “Cos to me the thought of wearing a ribbon, just kind of thinks, huh, it’s just like holding a lady’s handbag [Dave: Right.] for goodness sakes, get out of here” – a critical and negative comment about the expectation that men wear a ribbon that situates the ribbon as feminine and similar to a woman’s handbag. Positions a man’s reaction to the ribbon as reacting against the association with wearing a ribbon.
- “So ribbons are associated immediately with feminine stuff. [Dave: Yep.] And a guy, ribbon? Odd.” – explicitly constructs the ribbon as associated with femininity and a guy with a ribbon as odd.
- “If they said I had to wear a chain you know we all wore a chain on our- a chain bracelet on- on- as a thing of showing, hey, we’re against ah [Dave: Yeah.] a, good solid family links and, and against violence of women [Dave: Yeah.] we all stick a chain bracelet on.” – advocates for a more solid object consistent with masculine accessories and that links family values with opposition towards violence towards women.
- “Ask me to put a white ribbon on, pin it to my front, doesn’t feel right.” – reiterates an incongruity for some men between their association with masculinity and wearing a ribbon.
These criticisms suggest an adherence to masculine items of identity that are disrupted by the white ribbon. In the context of a campaign aimed at targeting misogyny such disruptions may be appropriate but may also have a counter effect on the engagement of those men who identify strongly with masculine images.

Both Warwick and Zak speak supportively of the campaign in the following. Warwick begins by responding to a question about whether he has any problems with a campaign that is explicitly about violence against women by men:

Warwick: Well, not for me personally [Sean: No it wouldn’t be any issue for me.] I have no issues about- you know, violence against women. Yeah, I agree with the- the ribbon side of it [laughter] but um-

Zak: I’ve got no problem with the campaign. [Dave: Yep.] No, that was a problem with what I wore for the campaign [Warwick: Yeah.] [laughter] like it wouldn’t be pink [Dave: Right.] [laughter] Viv: No.] [laughter]

- “Well, not for me personally [Sean: No it wouldn’t be any issue for me.] I have no issues about- you know, violence against women.” - with this statement both Warwick and Sean do not identify with men who have a problem with the White Ribbon campaign’s actions on violence against women.
- “Yeah, I agree with the- the ribbon side of it” – supports the previous argument that Sean made that there is a problem with the wearing of a white ribbon for some men.
- “like it wouldn’t be pink” – identifies clothes items that disrupt certain masculinities as potentially problematic.

There are people like you – there is a way out

The campaigns are supported by Trevor with his following comments:

Trevor: ... it’s like- if the camp- campaign opens the eyes of some people, that there are other people alike it’s like the- they’re the one with John Kirwan and that with mental and stuff, that, the big thing is, if you know you’re not- not
alone. [Viv: Mm.] [Dave: Absolutely.] like a lot of people are like this in their relationships um- [Dave: Yep.] but they think, you know, ‘there’s something wrong with me, why do I do this?’ [Dave: Yeah.] And, and they don’t think anyone else does it [Dave: Yeah.] whereas a campaign like this is actually bringing it to the forefront that, hey- there are other people like you [Viv: Oh, they’ve only-] and- and there is a way out so-

• “... it’s like- if the camp- campaign opens the eyes of some people, that there are other people alike it’s like the- they’re the one with John Kirwan and that with mental and stuff, that, the big thing is, if you know you’re not- not alone.” – positive message about the awareness raising message of the campaigns that - similar to the mental health campaign with John Kirwan - they give a message to men that they are not alone.
• “like a lot of people are like this in their relationships” – statement that the campaign raises the message that a number of people behave this way in their relationships and overcomes the isolation that some perpetrators might be feeling in relation to their actions.
• “but they think, you know, ‘there’s something wrong with me, why do I do this?’ [Dave: Yeah.] And, and they don’t think anyone else does it” – message, alongside the previous statement, that the campaign is addressing some of the stigma associated with using violence in a relationship.
• “a campaign like this is actually bringing it to the forefront that, hey- there are other people like you [Viv: Oh, they’ve only-] and- and there is a way out so” - strong positive message about options for addressing the situation for men who use violence towards women.

Summary
Existing mass media campaigns that the men were aware of were generally supported: some men finding the prevention messages that such campaigns gave raising the awareness of such violence, that it is not acceptable, and filling an information gap about where to seek help. The “It’s not okay” campaign was well
received and some men were able to articulate the objectives of the campaign, which were to raise awareness of family violence and to de-stigmatise help-seeking. Some men were able to articulate the difficulties that some men might have with the White Ribbon campaign, which specifically addresses men’s domestic violence towards women. Some men criticised the campaign for setting up a duality of good men and bad men. The comments on the campaigns allowed a number of motivational statements for change to be identified that could be employed in any subsequent campaign to engage men, for example “All that it takes for violence to increase is for a good man to do nothing”; “I can be part of the answer”.
Overcoming the Obstacles

Participants were asked to identify the ways in which to address the language associated with certain masculinities that might stand in the way of the prevention of men’s domestic violence towards women. In the following the ways in which the men spoke of change will be described and discussed.

**Moral scrutiny**

Some of the men in this study described being raised in backgrounds where the messages were that masculinity involved violence towards women and children. There were men raised with fathers who were violent towards them and/or their mothers or who were raised in communities where such actions were accepted. These men interrogated and negotiated the forms of masculinity that invited them to be violent and the expectations to behave with such dominance and control within their families. These men employed language that captured the stages of interrogation and negotiation required to change. The men who talked about change situated such change as possible when men undertook moral scrutiny of their own actions. The following points list the processes of change identified in the language of some of the men:

- Identifying fairness and justice as values that apply to all regardless of gender and age
- Taking a moral stand and doing what’s right
- Thinking independently and taking responsibility for thoughts and actions
- Making good choices
- Breaking the silence
- Moving to another level with thoughts and actions.

In the following some of the language associated with this interrogation of masculinity will be detailed more with particular reference to John who openly acknowledged his violence towards his wife and his movements towards change.
Some men spoke of change occurring for them following their critical reflection on their family backgrounds or their community experiences, and critical reflection on the values that were involved with violence towards women and others. In the following John employs values of fairness and justice to explain how his determination to be different from his father occurred:

Dave: Sure. So when you think about how you are in your relationships be ... I don’t know if you’re married or not or with your girlfriend or other relationships, intimate relationships, where did you learn that?

John: I learnt that from just having an understanding that I did not want to be treated this way. [Dave: Right.] So I developed my thinking [Dave: Yep.] along of how would I want to be treated? [Dave: Right.] And so I- I-figured that to treat a person like how you would want to do would give the same whether it was a man, woman or child or whatever, and I grew up with that coming from a cultural background [Dave: Yep.] it was the same as these guys here in this room. [Dave: Yep.] And I think that’s the difference is that we have to develop our own thinking, so that we can come to a consensus of where we want to go and how we want to do it. [Dave: Mm.] So going back to your original question, I think yes we do have that freedom of- of right or freedom to choose and taking everything that’s within our society and say ‘It’s wrong or it’s right.’ [Dave: Right.] What is gonna be best for me or what is not. So I think- um- you take responsibility for whatever your thoughts and actions become. [Dave: Absolutely. Absolutely.] and that’s, that’s just how I developed, I- mean I came from a very much family wise like that where my father was all important. And as I said, all I knew was that I was not going to be like how you are. [Dave: Right.] So I set about doing that. [Dave: Right.]

In this account John makes reference to critically reflecting on his childhood experiences. His statement “I did not want to be treated this way” allows him to state the conclusion that he reached from witnessing and experiencing the physical
violence that he attributed to his father in other parts of the text. With the statement “I figured that to treat a person like how you would want to do would give the same whether it was a man, woman or child or whatever” he portrays the treatment he would want as the same for anyone. With this phrase he moves beyond notions of male privilege that articulate men’s entitlement to be treated as the authority who punishes transgressions to his authority, and instead situates men, women and children as equally requiring fair and just treatment: that all people should be treated “the same” regardless of their gender or age. His next comment “I grew up with that coming from a cultural background it was the same as these guys here in this room” makes reference to his traditional Pasifika cultural heritage and following from his previous statement may be interpreted as portraying his upbringing within the Pasifika culture as accommodating the values of fairness and justice that he had realised. The statement also allows him to counter any argument that such violence was culturally driven and it allows him to argue that moving beyond the acceptance of any violence is possible within his culture.

**Taking a moral stand and doing what’s right**

The next statement allows John to draw on morality to portray an adherence to nonviolent actions in relationships: “I think yes we do have that freedom of right or freedom to choose and taking everything that’s within our society and say ‘It’s wrong or it’s right.” John’s use of the vague pronoun “we” is not specific and suggests that he includes himself as one of a larger group to whom his following statements apply. His employment of the word “freedom” and the phrase “freedom to choose” situates the actions he advocates as associated with free choice and the phrase “taking everything that’s within our society” suggests that such choice can be exercised about all aspects of society. The following statement “and say ‘It’s wrong or it’s right” allows John to argue that moral judgements can be made about all aspects of society: that those society members he is referring to with the pronoun “we” can determine what is morally right or wrong.
Other participants used language that would suggest that they had taken a moral standing on this issue, for example Rhys spoke of witnessing a man’s domestic violence towards a woman:

Rhys: Ah. If yeah- when it’s in my face, I do feel like I have a moral obligation to intervene, but then there’s a difference between what you think and w- how you act. There there’s a line like sometimes I wouldn’t, but most of the time I find myself I at least say something vocally to let them know that I’m not happy with the situation that’s going on. When it’s in another room you almost try and ignore it, but when it’s right in front of you, it’s real hard for me or a lot of my friends just to sit there and accept what’s happening.

Alison: Mm. Mm. So there’s quite a difference between what goes on- going on in your head morally around it [Rhys: Mm. Mm.] and what hav- how you can act.

Rhys: Yeah.

In this account Rhys’s employment of the phrase “I do feel like I have a moral obligation to intervene” suggests that he has taken a moral stand on men’s domestic violence towards women and that this stand provides him with an “obligation to intervene”. His next statement, however, allows him to distinguish between taking such a moral stand and acting on this moral stand “there’s a difference between what you think and w- how you act.” This statement suggests that having a moral position on such violence might not be enough to ensure that a person acts to prevent such violence in all situations. The statement “There’s a line like sometimes I wouldn’t” is vague but it allows Rhys to portray a limit either to his moral position or to the actions he would take. The following statement allows him to portray the action that he is able to take which is to “say something vocally” when he is experiencing something about which he is not happy. His next statement, however, signals the limit to his intervention: “When it’s in another room you almost try and ignore it” as opposed to “when it’s right in front of you”.

Overcoming the Obstacles Page 157
Thinking independently, making good choices and taking responsibility

In the above extract John’s portrays the need to think independently with the statement “And I think that’s the difference is that we have to develop our own thinking”. The phrase “develop our own thinking” evokes notions of moving beyond thinking that might be of a group to thinking that is individual. It may also be interpreted as a reference to the need for men to move beyond the notions of mates’ loyalty within certain hegemonic masculinities, to negotiate these constructions of masculinity and to rebel against them if necessary. The reference to “our own thinking” allows John to situate this thinking as belonging to the individual man. In John’s account such thinking allows one to “come to a consensus of where we want to go and how we want to do it.” In another excerpt John more clearly portrayed this distinction between individual and group thinking:

John: Yeah, first and foremost address yourself as an individual that doesn’t pick up on what he or she or what everybody else is doing [Dave: Yeah.] but what I know to be true. [Dave: Yeah.] Which is, my mother said ‘don’t do this, don’t do that’, has that impacted on my life anywhere? Yes it has cos I still remember it. And so I believe my mother, she was a good woman, [Dave: Yep.] and so it must be right. Otherwise she wouldn’t say it to me. [Dave: Yep.] You know?

Alongside John’s previous statements about determining what was right and what was wrong this extract suggests that being independent allows one to determine the way to proceed that is consistent with a moral position.

John portrays people as having the freedom to choose their actions and this position allows him to articulate a statement about individual responsibility: “you take responsibility for whatever your thoughts and actions become”. While the word “you” is vague the reference in this statement to responsibility offers an allusion to men who act immorally or who use violence and the need for them to take responsibility for such acts while also suggesting that acting responsibly means making choices that are moral and acting accordingly. John moves his earlier
position on taking a moral stance to thinking and acting on this stance and taking responsibility for one’s thoughts and actions.

In John’s accounts thinking independently means thinking beyond loyalty to one’s mates and taking a moral stance. In the following excerpt John described an enactment of his position and the consequences that he had to endure as a result. He begins by describing getting in with a group of mates who were not his usual good mates:

John: Well see I- I also got in another group of guys that were totally different. So when I was about 18 I was with the- these group of guys, and we’d drive to town and, and hang out the window and try to pick chicks up and drive them down Queen St. On this particular day we picked up this chick and, and the driver said ‘Ok we’re going to a certain place’, so we all knew that what that meant, we were going to go up to this place and we were going to try and get it on with this girl. And because she came with us we thought that was okay. It was going to happen. But we get up there a-and I’m in the back and there’s two guys in the front and this girl was sitting next to me and we get up to this place and the light just must of went on in her head like, ‘Oh dear what am I doing here?’ [Dave: Right.] You know, and she looks at me, and I’m looking at her and thinking, ‘Oh no don’t do this to me’, like- you know, ‘I kno- know you’re going to start crying any minute’, and that’s exactly what happened, she started crying and and- of course all I really wanted to do was turn around and smack her over the head and say, well ‘Why did you come? Why did you even get in the car?’ But- And then the driver who was a really tough guy, and this is the difference I think, with this that where you need to be, have courage to be an individual thinker and go that next step, and he turned over and said, ‘Oh okay girl, are you going to turn it up for all three of us?’ And she just whimpered and started bawling her eyes out. And I thought, ‘Oh far out.’ But I didn’t get angry, I actually felt sorry for her which was a new thing for me. So I said to her, ‘You’re not alright with this are you?’ And she said ‘No, no’ she said ‘I just want to go home.’ I’ve never forgotten this. So I said, ‘I’ll tell you what to do, I’m going to open the car door for you and I want you to get out and run over there.’ And she- and she
looked at me like- you know like a relief on her face. So I opened the car door and told her to get out and she ran and of course I ended up having a fight with these two guys. I didn’t really know them that well? But they were totally pissed with me because of what I did. And so- there was, there’s a scenario that you could paint where I could of went one way and said with them, ‘I’m with you, and let’s just do her anyway’, but again it comes back to my upbringing where my mother just said ‘you just don’t do that sort of stuff’, [Alison: Mm.] See, so, I think that’s where I was starting to feel sorry for this girl. This upbringing, where my mother had said, ‘no you don’t do that.’ So you either stick with what you know to be right or you don’t. And when when you don’t I think it’s that’s when you step over those boundaries that you already know. [Alison: Mm, mm.] and so I didn’t- I ended up fighting these two guys. Got my beans. But this girl didn’t get raped, I didn’t end up in jail, all of those sort of things. You know, so it’s-

John’s account of picking up a girl and going with his mates to a place for sex with this girl allows him to construct the type of mates that he was involved with. The driver of the car is represented as “tough”, as making an explicit reference to the girl to provide the three men with sex with John’s use of spoken language “‘Oh okay girl, are you going to turn it up for all three of us?’”. This early representation also allows John to portray his realisation that the girl who they had picked up was not aware of their intention to have sex with her and that she did not want to have sex once she realised their intention.

John portrays thinking morally and independently and acting accordingly as requiring courage with his statement: “And then the driver who was a really tough guy, and this is the difference I think, with this that where you need to be, have courage to be an individual thinker and go that next step”. John’s use of the emphasised “really tough” and his employment of the phrase “have courage to be an individual thinker” allow him to suggest that thinking independently and countering the expectations - within certain masculinity discourses that promote loyalty to the mates values - may put one in conflict with tough men who will potentially react against a challenger’s oppositional position. His use of the phrase “go the next step”
alludes to the potential to align oneself with such a tough man rather than to go against him. He then described the action he took to release the girl from the car and to prevent a potential rape. The outcome John portrays as inevitable: “of course I ended up having a fight with these two guys. I didn’t really know them that well? But they were totally pissed with me because of what I did.” The use of the phrase “of course” signals the inevitable consequences of taking an action that was contrary to these men. The statement “I didn’t really know them that well” allows John to suggest that he might not have been in the position of having to defend a girl against rape if he had known them better: that he might not have associated himself with them or that they might not have expected him to collude with them. He again references the fight he endured as a consequence in his later statement: “I ended up fighting these two guys. Got my beans.” The latter phrase suggests that these men beat him up and he confirmed this when asked explicitly by the interviewer.

John portrays the different masculine values that he brought to this encounter with the young woman from those of his mates with the action that he described taking. He was happy to be a party to consensual sex with a girl and with his mates but he was not prepared to be a party to rape. With the statement “And so—there was, there’s a scenario that you could paint where I could of went one way and said with them, ‘I’m with you, and let’s just do her anyway’” John sets up the action that he took as emerging from a choice point. The phrase “where I could of went one way” suggests this choice point which would have allowed him to collude with the masculinity values of the other men and rape the girl. This phrase also opens up the possibility that there was another way. The outcome that John had previously described suggests that to make the decision, when he knew that getting beaten up was an inevitable consequence of this decision, would not be an easy decision for a young man to make. It also allows him to draw on the previously referenced “courage” to suggest that acting on a moral position requires courage especially if it means facing an inevitable beating. Of interest here was that this enactment of his moral stance was portrayed as in part driven by empathy for the young woman “I was starting to feel sorry for this girl”, an emotional response not acceptable within certain masculinities. Another influence he described was depicted as the values that
his mother had engendered in him “my mother just said ‘you just don’t do that sort of stuff’”. In John’s account a moral stance requires a commitment to the actions that such a stance will require even when certain values associated with some masculinities might invite a privileged response: “So you either stick with what you know to be right or you don’t. And when when you don’t I think it’s that’s when you step over those boundaries that you already know.” John’s final statement allows him to represent the benefits of taking a moral stance for him “this girl didn’t get raped, I didn’t end up in jail, all of those sort of things.”

**Breaking the mould – moving to another level**

“Breaking the mould”, “moving to another level”, recognising the “default setting” and moving away from it were phrases employed to denoted disrupting certain accepted masculinity values and moving beyond thoughts, values and beliefs that condoned or supported violence towards women or children within certain masculinity discourses:

John:  ... you think, ‘Ah it’s wrong!’ But then you don’t have those skills to go that next step, and go, ‘Why am I getting so mad. Why am I doing this? ‘And you know that you need to stop but you don’t know where, ‘How do I go about it?’ And if you’re strong enough and capable enough and are man enough- and I use those words because that’s exactly what you have to be- you have to be true and honest to yourself and go ‘Right, I want to go the next step.’ And so I did that, I went and found out what could I do to stop being the way that I was. And so for me it was great because I moved on to the next level.

John’s reference to going “the next step” portrays the movement to a different stage and away from the values, beliefs and behaviours that did not sit well with this man’s moral position.

Alex spoke of moving away from the provincial town that represented sexism, racism and homophobia and finding a group of friends where he could be comfortable with “wearing his pink jumpsuit”: a metaphor for being different or
having different beliefs and values that disrupted certain standard masculinities. John portrays the decision to shift away from past violence as requiring one to “be strong enough and capable enough and .. man enough” which situates such a change as requiring strength and certain masculine values that are contrary to those associated with male dominance, authority and violence towards women.

John: But suffice to say, I- I think men must find the courage to break a mould that’s part of their life, first, I think first they’ve got to recognise that it is a mould that they come from, and then they’ve got to do something about it, in other words they need to get to that next space where they want something better than what they’ve got, and I’m pretty sure that’s in all of us, because if we want to be treated the way that we treat other people then, you know, if we keep belting each other then that’s all we’re gonna get.

John articulates the steps to “breaking the mould” that he portrays as something men must break. In his construction the first step is to “recognise it is a mould”. This phrase employs the word “mould” to portray a predetermined expectation about how men ought to be and as such makes reference to history, tradition or previous modelling of certain forms of masculinity. In the next step he portrays men as needing to “get to that next space where they want something better than what they’ve got” and then to “do something about it”. His final statement provides a strong motivational statement for change “if we keep belting each other then that’s all we’re gonna get.”

Pre-marriage courses
Pre-marriage courses are offered by some church organisations and, in Ben ‘s account, can work to raise consciousness about gender roles, to assist in undercutting the practices that might lead to violence and to provide a firm grounding for an egalitarian caring relationship:
Ben: I know one of the things that kind of helped me kind of form that in terms of my relationship with my wife was some work which we did prior to getting married. We did do a pre marriage kind of course which- [Dave: Oh right.] the first part of the course was kind of geared around sort of how to actually have a conversation and actually how to argue effectively ah without I guess bashing your partner and actually working towards a kind of an agreement or an understanding of each other’s position. [Dave: Yeah.] And then the latter part was like a multiple choice of like 140 questions which we did separately and there were generally kind of like statements about asking about your background and what you how you intended to split the home you know the housework [Dave: Right. Right, right, right.] and what your expectations were about career, to children to you know etc. and we answered those kind of separately and then we went through another kind of 7 to 10 weeks with um- with another married couple and going through the kind of various topics from um- you know what I was talking about um- and saying well ‘You said this.’ and ‘You said that.’ let’s have a chat about it.

Ben described a Christian concept of “mutual submission” as a useful foundation for addressing the potential for dominance and control in his relationship. The term is an interesting one as it promotes a counter to some depictions of masculinity that draw on male authority or dominance.

**Holding men accountable**

Many of the men spoke of the importance of having small groups of men who they could talk to about intimate and emotional matters. Some men distinguished between their groups of mates who might not talk about anything intimate and other groups that would. One group called such groups accountability groups.

**Accountability groups**

In the following Warwick described the type of group that men required in order to address issues such as men’s domestic violence towards women:
Warwick: I think accountability groups are a good thing as well, like we had our men’s group and stuff like that, you’ve **got** to, and my wife said, you’ve **gotta** be able to talk to men about stuff [Dave: Right.] you- you can’t share it with your wife a lot of stuff that drives men crazy and a lot of it’s around sexual type stuff [Dave: Yep.] or anything like that, or violence or whatever, you can’t share it with your wife, you’ve got to have someone- and you can’t share this stuff with your mates, you’re not gonna go tell your mate that you’re having a problem with premature ejaculation and all this sort of shit [Dave: Sure, sure.] at the local pub are you? [Sean: Mm.] You need a, men somehow have to be- lead to, like accountability type groups or, or [Unidentified participant: Mm.] small men’s groups or something like that where they can actually sit down and discuss this and find out, hey there’s other people that do this [Dave: Yep.] or there’s other people can relate to this [Viv: Yeah.] other men have this problem as well [Dave: Yep.] [Sean: Mm.]

Warwick depicts accountability groups as different from groups of mates who meet at the pub and do not discuss matters of intimacy or importance to men. Other men described good mates whom they had known for years and who were able to share such intimate discussions. Warwick’s depiction of such groups as “accountability groups” suggests that within these groups challenging men and holding them accountable will be an expected part of the group dynamic and as such is a distinguishing feature from other groups of men where to challenge has been described as disloyal or potentially producing physical violence.

‘I don’t love you anymore’
John was held accountable for his physical violence towards his wife by his wife and by his mates once he disclosed to them. His wife’s statement that she did not love him anymore because of his violence was a strong motivation for change. John described being driven to change through his motivation to get her love back and because of the potential loss of her and his children:
John: And so when my wife had said to me ‘I don’t love you anymore’ because of this, what was really, really important was getting that love back. And so I was driven via that to say ‘OK. You know, I’ve stuffed up again but I still don’t have that, skills to go to that next level of, why am I getting mad? Why am I taking it out on the person that I love?’ So all I did was, I talked to mates. Because I mean, again when you say that you know you need help you don’t know where to go to get help. [Alison: Mm.] But I had mates, so I talked to them and they’d go ‘yeah I get mad John but I don’t do this’ and another mate would say something else or, they all helped to make up a decision in my mind that I thought okay, I’m going to stop and I’m going to try some of these things what they, what my mates have said. And so I tried and from there I moved on. [Alison: Mm.] I don’t know what would happen if, if I didn’t try and move on because I- you know that didn’t happen.

John depicts his wife’s declaration as the driver for him to reflect on his actions and the reasons for them. He portrays his mates as the ones he turned to in order to address his problem. John had previously portrayed good mates as critical to the production of good men. The statement “‘yeah I get mad John but I don’t do this’” is employed by John to demonstrate the reaction of his friends and to demonstrate that his friends did not sanction his behaviour. His following statement “and another mate will say something else or they all helped to make up a decision in my mind” suggests that his mates’ support was critical to his final commitment “to stop” to try something different and to change. This account suggests that John’s mates were not people who supported or justified his violence but rather offered helpful alternative responses that assisted him to change.

**Providing a climate to talk**

A common theme was that men need men to talk to about intimate issues and that the men and the environment for men to talk needs to be safe:
Dave: So, what is it that creates the situation that um you guys can say, oh yeah we’ll talk, we can, we’ve talked about it we’ll go there in groups, what is it that creates that?

Evan: I, I would say that it’s definitely the safety, I mean there’s, you know, there’s a, we’re in a men’s group, we’re there, we, you know we, we, it’s a, it’s a – sacred ground [Dave: Yeah.] you know?

Some men set up their own groups in order to provide safe ways to explore masculinity issues but, when asked whether these groups spoke about men’s violence towards women this issue was not discussed in some groups. Others set up groups of men to meet, accountability groups or meeting places, in which their specific motivation was to talk about the issues that men did not always talk about. Sean articulated the need to avoid competition, commonly associated with certain masculinities, in order to have men discuss issues safely:

Sean: Yeah, it’s got to be prompted, I’d say fishing, yeah, and golf, yeah, you might get it, you know [Viv: laughs] there with some communication stuff but, probably actually you’re gonna be more frustrated and more competitive kicking in nine times out of ten than, than actually um communicating about the stuff that matters, you know? [Warwick: Yeah.]

Ben spoke of missing the English pub environment, which provided quiet places for friends to chat and share intimate concerns.

**Use mass media to promote constructive messages**

Most of the participants recognised the need for population based interventions and some stated their support for mass media messages, some making suggestions about messages that might be employed.

**Use dominance to address gender – redefine strength**

In the following Alex suggests using the male concepts of strength or dominance to counter authority in relationships:
Alex: I think it’s got something to do with redefining what strength is. I mean that seems to be the issue, there are people— it’s about— you were saying, mentioning dominance before— its— and people being made— if you’re dominant you’re made to feel weak and this is the way to take strength back is through violence. Well there is no place for dominance in a marriage, or in a family it’s an equitable thing. It should be shared out— um— And— how do you— how do you put forward that negotiation that— strength— that it actually strengthens families.

In Alex’s construction the suggestion of a message that “there is no place for dominance in a marriage” would work to counter the use of dominance and entitlement common in relationships where men employ excessive controlling or violent practices. Alex goes on to explore the notion of dominance as an intervention in the following:

Alex: I actually find the word dominance really useful [Dave: Right.] much more useful than abuse. [Dave: Right, right.] because then it talks, it’s gender neutral and it talks about what behaviour is for rather than its kind of, what it is [Dave: Right.] cos you know you hit somebody, that’s violence and it results in a bruise and a trip to A & E but it also results in dominance [Dave: Yep.] and it might, it might only hit a woman or a woman might only hit a man once in 10 years but the dominance remains for maybe 10 years until he has to hit her again. So it’s a different kind of abuse, one off, no it’s not abuse, but actually it is [Dave: Yeah but the one off can have that effect so that—] can have that ongoing, the power has shifted, the dominance has been asserted [Dave: Yeah that’s right.] and at some point a woman is going to get the bash again or whatever it takes and that might just be verbal violence too. [Alison: Mm, mm.] Or economic violence or whatever.

Alex portrays the word dominance as capturing the impact of one-off physical violence and the long-term consequences of the associated emotional violence that goes with it. John’s statement “if we keep belting each other then that’s all we’re
gonna get.” provides a motivational message for men to change from actions of dominance and violence.

In the following Ben suggests that dominance is also associated with the “subtleties” such as the wife being “the butt of all jokes”:

Ben: I think I would probably play on the, play on some of the subtleties as well, you know, when you- in particular when you talk about dominance, cos one of the things which I do s- you know see from time to time is- is that kind of mental abuse and you- and you - sometimes it’s very subtle and you kind of- you know you hear in a conversation that you know suddenly the wife or the- is at the butt of all the jokes. [Alex: Mm.] and I think you know that’s quite indicative as well in terms of that kind of power play. And what’s going on. [Alex: Mm.] Um. Yeah.

These subtleties he portrays as in “a conversation” suggesting that it occurs amongst the talk of friends. He portrays this form of subtle abuse as a “kind of power play”, drawing on the notions of male control and authority as a descriptor. He argues that such subtle forms of dominance also need to be addressed.

*Understand masculine identity and get the messages right*

Some of the participants commented on the need for campaign organisers to be aware of the masculine identity that they were trying to address with the messages and the messengers they used. This matter is particularly relevant for those target audiences that are likely to condone violence in some aspects of their lives:

Dave: I’m just thinking that um- some of the guys that have come through the last campaign been ex-gang members and stuff eh [Arana: yeah.] so they’ve been around the mill a couple of times and come out the other side and then they stand there um- and they say family violence it’s not okay.

Arana: Oh I’d rather- if you wanna have them I’d rather have someone hard you know, not hard in the sense [Dave: Yeah.] but- you can be soft at the same time, you don’t want him to be crying [Dave: Yeah.] and all the gang members will be going- you might have different people for different- [Dave:
Yep.] you know [Dave: Yep.] you not going to put a softy up [Dave: No I know.] there for a gang [Dave: No I know. I'm not yeah.] punters. Yeah.

Jordan: Yeah it sort of portrays- portrays them as well? [Dave: Yep.] You can’t see a chief or Matai go up and he’s massive as- and he’s got tattoos hard out, he says oh- I’m against violence. It’s- it’s like- [laughter] like goes against everything- [Joseph: Why are you up there why don’t you just be somebody else.] Or a league player a famous league player and he’s- he’s like (?) a massive as guy [Dave: Yeah.] and he- he comes up and he goes ‘Oh I’m against violence.’ [Dave: Cos I’m thinking-]

Alison: What’s the- what’s the issue- what happens for you when you see that. [Dave: Yeah.]

Jordan: It’s like um-

Rhys: You don’t believe them.

Jordan: No it’s like he- I think it’s like a leadership thing. Like um- say if you’re a boxer and then you say you’re against violence it’s like that sort of thing?

Alison: It’s a bit like hypocrisy is it?

Jordan: Yeah it’s like you’re a hypocrite [general agreement] or you’re- [Rhys: Mm.]

Alison: Because you’re doing violent stuff.

Jordan: Yeah.

Jordan: It’s making you soft and then when you’re a boxer and you challenge someone else [Rhys: Yeah (?)-] they’ll knock you out like that. Cos you’re against violence you’re- [Dave: Right.] soft- like that. [Dave: Right, right.]

Alison: So is it- is it because they’re a hypocrite that you don’t like it or is it because, it’s not going to work with them to be a- continue to be a boxer because they’re going to be seen to be soft.

Jordan: Yeah. Like that sort of thing it’s the way they portray or- see people see them [Alison: Yeah.] in the world [Alison: Yeah, yeah.] on top of that.

In this account the use of men who clearly use violence in their everyday lives to portray a general anti-violence message will not work. This issue is explored in more depth below:
Jordan: But you know what I mean [Alison: Yeah.] it’s like saying David Tua’s [Alison: Yeah.] against violence and he knocks out people, just like that.

Alison: Although what’s wrong with being soft sometimes.

Jordan: Yeah, I’m just saying [Alison: Yeah.] he’s a good guy he’s fought a lot of good guys and then- you see him on the ad [Rhys: Yeah.] and goes ‘Oh I’m against violence.’

Dave: If it was ‘I’m against violence against women’ would that be different?

Jordan: Yeah. 
Rhys: Yes that would be [general agreement].

Dave: So if he was to stand there and say I’m against violence against women.

Jordan: Mm.

Rhys: That would be better. [general agreement.]

Alison: Oh so he [Jordan: Yeah.] needs to actually [Jordan: Yeah.] say it.

Jordan: Yeah. [general agreement] The word is-

Alison: So just saying I’m against family violence wouldn’t be good enough.

Rhys: No [Alison: It would have to be violence against women] that would work too. [Arana: That would work too.]

Dave: That would work too.

Rhys: It’s just violence is so broad because you can associate violence with what he does [Jordan: Yeah, yeah.] as a sport. Like if say if you’re more specific in the sense of family violence- I’m against family violence I’m against violence against women it’s more specific and it’s ‘Oh okay.’ It’s not- [Alison: (?)] he doesn’t challenge women [Jordan: Yeah.] really so it’s- [Dave: Gotcha.] there’s no link there. [Dave: Gotcha.]

In these constructions the participants portray a message that is specifically against violence towards women or family violence as acceptable from a man who might use violence as his legitimate work. Specifically stating the form of violence he is against allows a distinction to be made between his professional sport and the message he is portraying and does not undermine his masculine identity.
Understand the hierarchies

Participants suggested that campaign organisers needed to be conscious of the masculine hierarchies in any campaign that aim to get people to approach others and to talk about their violence:

Alison: Well Rhys you were talking about how um you know in the fam- family people, people knew about the- the viol- violence [Rhys: Mm.] and that you wouldn’t sort of you wouldn’t say anything about it so like- how hard is it if you’ve got one side of the family that doesn’t use violence and another side of the family that does, how hard is it to talk and challenge the violence that’s used in that other- you know how it is it to challenge that you know if a guy saw his- saw someone beating up a woman and didn’t like it how hard is it to challenge-

Rhys: For me to challenge in what way like-

Alison: To say- to bring it up and say well that’s not okay.

Rhys: Oh I couldn’t. Especially like there’s- there’s a line for me I know that I sort of have to respect my elders and th-who am I to go up to them and tell them.

Alison: So that would depend partly on whether they were an elder or not.

Rhys: Yeah. [Alison: Yeah. Would that-] I guess if my dad was to tell them I- I know my dad, my dad my dad does I- I’ve seen him talk to his cousins saying that’s that’s his- but it’s- yeah.

Rhys situates the difficulty in approaching another as relating to the position that he has in relation to that person. His statement that he would not approach an elder portrays the distinction between a peer approaching a person and someone who does not have that standing approaching him. The group works up this notion of peers and who is appropriate to approach further:

Dave: So um- I’ll go back to um yeah- I’ll go back to Alison’s question again about how um- easy is it to say something.

Rhys: It’s hard.
Dave: You’ve said it’s hard [Arana: To say something?] to say something about violence in the family.

Rhys: Depending on your relationship with them. Yeah. Depending-

Jordan: Like if I saw you doing it [Dave: Yeah.] I wouldn’t go up to you.

Rhys: Yeah.

Jordan: Cos I’m not the same age as you I’m not [Dave & Rhys: Yeah.] your friend I’m not your cousin [Rhys: Mm.] [Dave: yeah.] or your brother-

Arana: Cos I know with ah- my brothers if they’re in an argument if you interfere [Dave: Yeah.] you’re challenging them. You’re going to get a hiding. [laughs]

Dave: Right. [Unidentified participant: Yeah.]

Arana: So you leave it. Let them settle it. [Joseph: Yeah.] Yeah. And they’ve been telling that to my sisters don’t, intervene you know let them sort it out, yeah. [Dave: So-] So we had that understanding to just shut up let them deal with it and yeah.

Jordan suggests that in order to approach a person they need to be a peer whereas Arana depicts differences between peers and the need to be aware of the possible reaction that some peers might have to a challenge of their behaviour. In his account some peers may react violently and their associates will determine their willingness to intervene given the likelihood of being hurt.

In the following the group points to status as another factor that needs to be considered in any approach to a man about his violence. For example, in the following the participants stated that if status is not considered there are potential consequences when men of status are approached in Samoan culture.

Dave: A- and I’m just wondering i-if kind of when you think about other reasons- um other reasons why you might not say- say anything if there’s anything else that sits [Joseph: It’s probably-] there.

Joseph: -levels as well like- if a guy is like- like a big top chief or something? [Dave: Yeah.] You just don’t mess with him? [Dave: Right.] [Rhys: Oh-] Mm.

Rhys: Status. [Joseph: Yeah.] Status is another factor.

Alison: Oh that’s interesting [Dave: Yeah.] tell me about that. How does that work.
Joseph:  Oh it’s just like um- If he’s a chief then like if he- you just let him do what he wants to do. And if you’re like lower than him you just don’t mess with him. Otherwise you, you get a hiding and that.

Dave:  Yep.  Yep.  Apart from getting a hiding would there- would there be other kind of penalties? Or other- [Joseph:  I’m not sure.] other repercussions?

Joseph:  I haven’t done it I just don’t- Mm.

Rhys:  It’s almost like if the chief’s not happy with you then everyone else won’t be happy with you. [Dave: Yeah.] [Joseph: Yeah.] It’s that kind of- you know if he doesn’t like something then all everyone’s gonna just- go where he goes.

Dave:  Right.

Arana:  Or you get the odd one that don’t- you know wanna give- you know- you get the odd one. [laughs]

Dave:  So you get the odd one- the odd one who is willing to say something or is willing to speak out or [Arana:  Yeah.  Rhys: Yeah. ] How do they- how do they [Arana: Oh-] do they do that.

Arana:  I dunno I-I think with ah- one- I got one uncle h-his brother’s high up in the church he just comes in says give me a beer give me a smoke he won’t say nothing. We can’t do that. That’s probably because they have a relationship, [Dave: Right.] I mean, you know, an understanding. So we don’t- you know all of us cousins who are younger ones, you know, we can’t get away with that. Or we’d be chucked out. [laughs. Coughs]

Rhys describes the impact of confronting a man of status such as a chief about any violence that he might be using. In his account a chief’s status means, “..you just let him do what he wants to do.” In this construction a chief’s authority allows him to act as he wants. He portrays such authority as influencing those who do not have such standing such that any challenge is not considered “And if you’re like lower than him you just don’t mess with him”. The impact of any action that is not to the liking of the chief is depicted with the statements “you get a hiding” and, since everyone follows the chief, “everyone else won’t be happy with you.” Arana described family peers to such men of status as being able to talk to such men in ways that others cannot with his account of a family relationship in which a peer was able to react differently to a man of standing.
That these participants were able to describe the consequences within Samoan culture does not preclude certain consequences from happening if a man of standing is confronted about his violence in other cultures. Within any culture men of standing will have resources available to them that others do not, which might be used to contest any exposure of his violence. For those men of status who are not prepared to honestly and publicly acknowledge their violence when exposed, and who want to hide the shame of such violence, an attack on the person or people exposing them is likely and will have social repercussions on those bringing such matters out into the open.

This account raises the degree of influence that people of status or standing have within a community. For those communities who actively follow the guidance of certain people of status, the leaders who are prepared to promote messages of non-violence or of peaceful relationships may be employed positively to bring about effective change.

*Use influential figures*

Many of the participants described the impact of influential people as critical to their developments in thinking about violence towards women and suggested that such people could influence men to become engaged in any work on the prevention of men’s domestic violence towards women.

*Male mentors*

Many of the participants spoke of the importance of good men guiding other men towards masculinities that assisted men to grow beyond violence towards women. Most men are not violent towards women and some of the men in this study worked to provide good mentoring to other men. In this study some men’s groups spoke of never having discussed the issue of men’s violence towards women and children whereas for other groups, such matters were raised and men were supported to change. The evidence in this study would suggest that mentors must be prepared to raise the issue of men’s violence towards women and children and to address men’s shame and guilt about their fellow men’s actions for this topic to be
discussed. In an all male group, without knowledge of violence and without the scrutiny of women, this research suggests that some men’s groups can be invited by certain masculinity notions of male loyalty into representing an issue such as men’s violence towards women as a duality of men versus women with the outcome of blaming the victim of violence and avoidance of discussions about their own violent actions. Some participants stated that advocating on behalf of women does not mean being anti-men.

Some men spoke of the bottom line required to advocate on this issue – a strong moral stance on the fundamental right to nonviolence and to be treated with humanity - and these representations allowed them to cut through any justifications that supported violence. Ideological dilemmas invited some men away from their nonviolent stance. One participant spoke of his support for the changes to sec 59 of the Crimes Act, which removed the defence of reasonable force from perpetrators of child abuse, but stated that he voted for the right to smack a child in the recent referendum because he did not like the state interfering in the home. Some men pointed to the need for education of men about such violence in order to distinguish between the impact of conflict that is not harmful, and the dynamics and impact of violence. This research suggests that mentors need to understand the dynamics of men’s domestic violence towards women and to be careful to avoid the invitation to support strategies, such as the right to privacy, which will not assist the prevention of such violence and violence towards children.

*Church ministers*

Church leaders were described by some participants as potentially strong leaders who could engage men on non-violence advocacy:

Alison: How do you involve men- [Dave: Yeah how do you involve men and- and particularly um- particularly not- not necessarily through professionals like police or counsellors or stopping vi- how do you involve men in it.

Arana: Take them all to church [laughs].

Rhys: [laughs] Get them through their churches.

Dave: Church might be a way to do it eh?
Rhys: I think churches [Arana: Churches.] I think like um- [Arana: There’s quite a few bashers there. [laughs] Na. [laughs]] I think churches are good [Arana: Good yeah.] good place to definitely start because the pastors words is God’s word [Dave: Yeah.] [Arana: Yeah.] in the sense that- so if you can get to the pastor um- encourage him to ah- I remember my old pastor used to- he used to say in church um- he almost encouraged the beating, [Arana: [laughs]] he almost was like you know the Bible says you can hit your blah blah blah- twist the words of the Bible so- I knew the Bible and I was sitting there going ‘No it’s- it’s spare the rod. [laughs] I’m sure it was spare the rod.’ I highlighted it for mum. [laughter] But I was- what I’m getting back to is g-get to the pastor and if you can get the pastor on your side and if he can say something it can definitely increase awareness. [Alison: Mm, mm.] And that there is an issue.

Rhys comments point to the need to ensure that church members approached advocate effectively on the prevention of violence towards women and children and are educated effectively to take a stand on this issue.

Rhys: But getting- but then you’ll have to go to- the pastor- he is pro God but, he is also- I dunno-

Jordan: Authority.

Rhys: Yeah he- he-s- [Jordan: Speak my authority.] Yeah just bring a lot of gifts, [Arana: [laughs]] a lot of money a lot of food, and then say now look what we want-

In this account any approach to a pastor will require cultural knowledge of the appropriate approach to take to be effective.

Mothers

Good mothers who promoted respect towards women, educated young men about respectful sexual relationships and non-violence were described by some men as strongly influencing the ways they treated their wives and girlfriends. A study of
young New Zealand men found mothers to be similarly influential (Towns, forthcoming).

**Youth workers**

In youth culture where challenging a mate may result in physical violence other venues for contesting the values and beliefs associated with violence towards women are necessary. In the following Ioane suggests that youth workers in drop in centres are in a position to provide mentoring and guidance on values to young people:

Alison: Yeah, where that’s a no no you know, not to challenge your mate. What would, how do you, how would you move it, how would a group move to a different place where it’s safe to do that do you think?

Ioane: Oh- I can- like more drop in centres you know, have more drop in centres for them [Alison: More drop in, more places?] to go and talk to youth workers. Cos they’re more- you know- they’re like, like-minded, you know- with- You can pretty much ask them anything and they’ll be truthful with you as well. Honest too. Pretty much be like parent figures for you. [Alison: Like a-?] Like parent figures for you [Dave: Right, right.] Youth workers and stuff (?)

In Ioane’s account youth workers have a strong influence on young men and can provide parental leadership of young people away from violence.

**Use education campaigns**

Some men suggested that mass media campaigns could be used more to educate men about such violence and the action to take to stop it. One example given was for a simple solution to feeling out of control or angry such as “It’s okay to walk around the block”. Some participants said that the campaign should avoid “shock campaigns that demonise men”. Some men suggested that the campaign could be used more to inform the population of facts about men’s domestic violence towards women such as the extent of it and the dynamics of men’s domestic violence towards women such as the use of dominance and entitlement and the
unpredictable nature of such violence. Some men suggested that the campaign could be employed to dispel myths about such violence. One man suggested that the “It’s not okay” campaign could be a “lifesaver” for some men because it filled a gap for men involved in such violence by pointing them in the direction of help.

**Use third parties to raise the issue**

One group spoke of the helpfulness of a third party raising the issue for men who might be fearful of being labelled as having a problem if they raise it themselves:

Sean: ... the conversation comes up, because it’s been raised already, [Dave: Yep.] so I haven’t had to raise it, you haven’t had to raise it, somebody else has raised it [Dave: Gotcha.] you know what I mean? [Dave: Gotcha.] And so a third environment has, has presented the issue, now we can discuss it cos it’s ok, cos neither of us has raised it so- so we’re ok now, you know? Whereas if I’d raised it in the first place then straight away you’d think I must have an issue, you know. But because it’s a third party raising it [Dave: Yeah.] it’s easier.

Dave: It’s guilt, guilt by association though [Sean: Yeah yeah, you know.] that you’re talking about that I want to talk about it or so I must be doing it.

Sean: I must be the one that’s got the problem.] [Dave: Yeah.] And so, or you perceive that I’ve got a problem, [Dave: Yeah.] because I’ve raised it,[Dave: Yeah.] whereas when a third party raises it, it’s actually okay. [Dave: Yeah.]

Third parties raising such topics allowed this matter to be discussed amongst men without any associated stigma. For this group the third party might be a leader of a men’s group or it might be a DVD on a topic or a television programme that could be recorded. Sean stated that such programmes might then be recorded by parents, played for their adolescent children and sensitive matters surrounding such issues raised as a point of discussion that might not be raised otherwise. He suggested that long car trips provided a non-threatening forum for the playing of such recordings and for the associated discussion around such topics.
Make the theme non-violence for big sporting events

Some participants promoted the need for mass media prevention campaigns to address the problem, one suggesting the big sporting events would provide a strong forum for such promotion:

Harry: But um- on a small group basis like this, like ten people in a room, it’s gonna take forever. [Alison: Mm.] I don’t know whether you would be able to encourage like, world cup, make the thing non violence for [Dave: Right.] 2012 world cup and have you know, like at the beginning of each game a dedication ceremony, how this is ritualised, what we’re doing on the field is ritualised, this is not acceptable, [laugh] you know, to do at home, lay out some sort of concept, you know, because um when you have [Darryl: take it out on the field not at home.] yeah but that’s [laughs] I mean um, yeah, sort of, but um, yeah I don’t know, I’m just thinking, because, I’m just conscious of how vast the world is … But- it’s 150 years later and we’re still having the same conversation [Evan: Mm.] it needs to be got out there on a mass basis.

Darryl: Ghandhi kicked out the English, non violence [Harry: Yeah.] that’s-

Harry: Look at India now. And Pakistan. You know, it’s like [Darryl: But that was a huge-]

Darryl: -that was a huge victory, a moral victory [Evan: Oh yes-]

Evan: -and Ghandi’s still a, yeah, Ghandi’s still very cool in modern, I mean, in modern youth [Alison: Mm.] [Alison: Mm.] [Harry: Oh yeah, yeah, yeah.] in India

Darryl: That whole idea of like non violence [Harry: Yeah, yeah.] is turn the other cheek

Harry: Look at Parihaka in NZ in the (?) you know, in a smaller, on a smaller basis but- it’s like how, I just think that somehow we have to get this- cos our culture is so mass consumer orientated, I don’t want to make it another consumer commodity- [Darryl: Mm.][Dave: Sure.] but it has to be mass-

Darryl: It’s a public health, it’s a public health- [Harry: It’s a health issue.]
Summary

Participants made many suggestions for overcoming the obstacles to engaging men in any such campaign. Some obstacles that they were able to overcome themselves in order to be nonviolent were evident in their texts. Taking a moral stand against all forms of violence and seeing men’s domestic violence as one form of violence that men could work against was articulated as an approach by some of the men and was evident in the texts of other men as an effective approach. Identifying fairness and justice as values that apply to oneself and to all others regardless of age and gender; thinking independently from one’s mates or other influences that lead to the acceptance of violence; taking responsibility for one’s own thoughts and actions; breaking the silence about one’s violence and talking to good mates or to groups of men who would not collude with such violence were articulated in descriptions of change. Holding men accountable for their violence was depicted as raising awareness of the need for change.

Some accounts suggested that men could move beyond seeing a gender-based campaign as disloyal to men if they were strong in their anti-violence commitment and seen by other men to be firm in their beliefs. Providing a strong message that domestic violence or family violence was not something they liked or they wanted in their lives was described by some as providing a means for men to advocate for women without being seen to be anti-men.

Mass media campaigns were depicted by some of the men to be the way to reach the numbers needed for change. Some of the men’s statement suggested that there was a need to be conscious of masculine identities in any such campaign and to be conscious of how to situate any message so that it is not read as hypocritical, especially when employing men who use violence in their professional sports. Some men’s accounts suggest that there is a need to be conscious of status, hierarchy and the potential for violence when advocating for men to speak to other men about their violence. Such accounts suggest that there is a need to be careful about who is expected to approach whom about any violent action and how approaches should be made in order not to cause harm. Having a third party raise the issue - through leaders speaking to large groups or through DVDs or television programmes that
could be recorded - was depicted as assisting men to discuss the issue, and to raise the issue with their adolescent children, without the stigma associated with having raised the issue by themselves for discussion. Some men suggested that influential figures such as church ministers, mentors, mothers and youth leaders will be effective in encouraging men to be engaged in campaigns or actions involving the prevention of such violence.
4. Conclusions

This study demonstrates the importance of the understanding of masculine practices and masculine identities to any planned intervention associated with the prevention of men’s domestic violence towards women. One of the important findings in this study is some men’s depiction of the significance to some forms of masculine identity of the provider role and the link between violence towards women associated with the man’s experienced loss of status because of his inability to provide. This finding suggests a psychological pathway between financial hardship and the associated increase in violence towards wives or girlfriends.

In addition findings from this study suggest that many of the justifications and excuses that have been found amongst men who had been violent to their female partners to account for their violence are more widely held within masculinity discourses of men who were not selected for any violence towards women. The study also points to the ways in which certain values associated with male loyalty to men are evoked in campaigns that specifically attempt to address gender-based violence. This does not mean that campaign organisers should stop employing gender-based interventions but it does mean that the ways in which messages are delivered concerning men’s domestic violence towards women need to be carefully thought through. The study demonstrates the ways in which critical qualitative research involving discourse analysis can contribute to the fine details of campaign messages and assist with finding the ways to overcome these difficulties.

The study involved the men’s discussions about masculinity and domestic violence and did not evoke the possibilities of women’s positive impact on men, although some reference was made to the influence of mothers by some of the men. There was a noticeable difficulty in some of these focus groups in getting men to focus on the issue of men’s violence against women when many of the men preferred to divert their attention to women’s violence, which was not the topic of this research. There is a risk that exclusive men’s groups allow men to position themselves as ‘hard done by’ and needing their ‘own spaces’, rather than focusing on the hard issues. This point is one of importance, particularly when ordinary men
are constrained by masculinity prescriptions from challenging each other or from talking about difficult emotional topics. Considerations for future research should be given to the importance to men of women’s influences and of ‘inclusive masculinities’. Perhaps it is time to consider the possibility that men would benefit from working alongside women in all aspects of their lives particularly when it comes to the prevention of domestic violence.

Limitations to the study are that funding was not available for a full literature review and restricted the interpretation of the texts to the principal investigator and the depth of that analysis. A Pasifika researcher may have provided different readings of the text. Furthermore the principal researcher was a woman and different readings of the texts may occur from a man’s perspective. The study had no Māori participants and the principal researcher supports funding for a Kaupapa Māori research project on this topic. Asian people in New Zealand come from diverse cultural backgrounds and the principal researcher encourages researchers with knowledge of such Asian cultures to conduct research projects on this topic. As a qualitative research project involving discourse analysis the study does not require the form of sample representation necessary in quantitative research to ensure that statistical findings are powerful and it should not be judged according to quantitative statistical research requirements. Generalisation of the findings in this research occurs through access to a range of participant backgrounds in order to capture a range of values and beliefs in the language of the participants that will provide a snapshot of New Zealand culture.
5. Recommendations

1. That discourse analytic research, carried out by skilled researchers knowledgeable about such violence, is funded alongside any population based interventions aimed at addressing men’s domestic violence towards women to ensure that the messages are appropriately worded and that they will be effective with the target audience. That the research in this study be employed to inform any further mass media campaigns designed to engage men in the prevention of men’s domestic violence towards women.

*Justification:*

This study has shown that the messages in population-based campaigns can be interpreted, within certain masculinities, as setting up dualities between men and women and between good men and bad men. These dualities are unhelpful for prevention work in the area of men’s domestic violence towards women. In addition some messages can be unsafe in this context (see below). Use of discourse research when developing prevention campaigns will help identify any such cultural representations that might stand in the way of promoting an effective change message.

2. That a population-based approach to the prevention of such violence continues and that carefully identified community leaders, selected for their appeal to target audiences, who promote anti-violence messages are used to engage men more in the prevention of such violence.

*Justification*

This study and others have shown that there are many different forms of masculinity and that men situate themselves within those forms of masculinity with which they identify. For each of these forms of masculinity the status gained by a man will depend on the attributes valued within that particular construction of masculinity.
Some of the men identified community leaders or men of status within their communities as valued men who would be able to lead and to promote gender transformative change. Such men should be selected for their appeal to target audiences and the messages carefully crafted to ensure that they do not run counter to the way in which the leader has gained status. For example a leader who has gained status in a sport that uses violence (e.g. boxing, rugby, rugby league) needs to provide an anti-violence message specific to men’s domestic violence towards women rather than a general anti-violence message in order to avoid being constructed as hypocritical and to avoid confusions around his professional identity and his message.

3. That any population-based intervention aimed at engaging men in the prevention of men’s domestic violence towards women begins by promoting a strong message that most men do not use violence towards women and that most men are decent people and want to do what is right.

Justification:
This study has shown that, within masculinities that draw on men’s loyalty towards men, some men will interpret a prevention programme aimed at men’s domestic violence towards women as implying that all men are violent towards women. In this interpretation such programmes inevitably demonise all men. Such an interpretation will work against engaging men in the prevention of men’s violence towards women. To counter these loyalty discourses a strong message needs to be made at the outset of any intervention associated with men’s violence towards women that contradicts any possible interpretation that the prevention programme constructs all men as violent towards women.

4. That policy makers who are concerned with the prevention of men’s domestic violence towards women note that some men identify strongly with being the
provider in the family and that economic hardship will impact on some men’s masculine identity such that their inability to provide may be interpreted as diminishing their masculinity. Such an interpretation may provide a justification for violence towards wives and girlfriends. I recommend that the Ministerial Taskforce on Family Violence takes strong action to ensure that mass media messages, designed to prevent men’s domestic violence towards women, receive particular attention during times of economic hardship or high unemployment when more of such violence occurs.

Justification
Many men in this study constituted being the provider as a significant and defining aspect of their identities particularly those who positioned themselves within more traditional masculinities. Some men portrayed the difficulties with being able to adequately meet family expectations around the provider role as contributing to men feeling powerless and bad about themselves as men, as contributing to their frustration and as contributing to anger and potentially violence towards wives and girlfriends.

The extent of men’s domestic violence towards women is known to increase during times of economic hardship; however the cultural imperatives for such an increase are not widely understood. This study has identified the identity of the provider, within certain constructions of masculinity, as a potential mediating factor between economic hardship and violence towards women.

5. That a Kaupapa Māori research study that parallels this research be funded.

Justification
Kaupapa Māori research projects allow Māori to bring Māori knowledge in this field to better inform prevention opportunities. Māori have distinct cultural influences associated with their position as indigenous people in New Zealand and are disproportionately represented in the statistics on family violence. As a
result much more resources are being directed towards the prevention of violence within whanau, hapu and iwi. Māori have a unique history and whakapapa that appears to run counter to men’s domestic violence towards women. There is a gap in knowledge associated with contemporary and traditional masculinities within Māori culture and the ways these masculinities play out in relation to the men’s domestic violence towards women and in engaging men in the prevention of men’s domestic violence towards women.

6. That Pasifika health promotion teams be funded to use this research to provide appropriate approaches for the prevention of such violence in Pasifika communities.

Justification
This study identified some difficulties that Pasifika men, as new immigrants, have when coming to New Zealand, particularly those influenced by traditional representations of men as the authority in the home and in local and national political life. Pasifika health promotion teams have experience of working with Pasifika people to promote healthy living in their own unique way. This work, alongside the work of Pasifika violence intervention experts, is likely to best find appropriate pathways to reach Pasifika men to address issues associated with masculinity and the engagement of men in the prevention of men’s violence towards women.

7. That the Families Commission and the Ministry of Social Development mass media prevention campaigns continue to focus on gender transformative interventions aimed at the respectful and moral treatment of girls and women as these show evidence of effectiveness with gender-based violence such as men’s domestic violence towards women and sexual violence. That these campaigns promote all forms of gender and social equity, which are protective of men’s domestic violence towards women (WHO, 2004).
• That the Families Commission and the Ministry of Social Development and other Ministries involved in the prevention of such violence consider using such mass media campaigns to counter the effect of dominance in relationships and to promote egalitarian relationships which protect against violence (WHO 2004).

• That the Families Commission and the Ministry of Social Development consider using such campaigns to provide more educational material
  i. about the extent of men’s violence towards women,
  ii. about its impact,
  iii. to counter justifications and excuses for violence,
  iv. to counter myths about such violence,
  v. to promote easy solutions such as “it’s okay to walk around the block”,
  vi. to promote men’s emotional expression as a sign of strength rather than weakness.

• That particular attention is paid to educating and engaging men’s groups, which currently exist in the community and are available to support men, in any prevention efforts.

• That work begins on aligning domestic violence prevention campaigns with big events such as the 2011 World Cup or international sporting events.

_Justification_

The existing population-based approaches were spoken of favourably in this study by many of the participants. The men came up with many useful ways in which to use population-based approaches and these, along with existing knowledge from international research, provide some potential opportunities for prevention campaigns. Some of the men spoke of the need to educate men about the extent of the problem and the impact on women and on families. The justifications and excuses for such violence provide a further
opportunity for intervening to counter these excuses and the myths that support them.

Masculinities that devalue men’s expression of emotions have pushed men to seek emotional support outside the standard male networks. More needs to be done to promote the legitimacy of men’s expression of emotions that traditional masculinities would portray as “weak” or counter to being a man. There are many men’s groups that meet quietly to support other men and promote men’s needs. Some of these groups and their leaders require more education about men’s domestic violence towards women in order to avoid doing harm by inadvertently colluding with the justifications and excuses for such violence.

8. That mass media campaign organisers recognise that expecting men, as a bystander, to challenge other men who use violence may be risky and even dangerous.

_Justification:_

Many of the men spoke of their fear of the potential for violence if they challenged other men about their violence towards women. Within masculinities that promote loyalty to men challenging other men is not accepted and was constructed by some men as potentially violence evoking. Other men spoke of being able to quietly and gently provide a context for disclosure that would allow them to support a man towards change.

This study suggests that any specific message employed to encourage men to challenge a man who engages in violence towards another may not be safe. A better approach is to encourage men to change themselves. There is room for educating men about how to respond safely in a situation where a known person is engaging in violence towards a woman.
6. References


Adams, P. (forthcoming) Interventions with men who are violent to their partners: Strategies for early engagement. *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy*


Towns, A. (forthcoming). The Culture of Cool and Being a Man: Getting in early to prevent domestic violence Part II. Report prepared for ACC.


Appendix A

Information and Consent Form

Mt Albert Psychological Services Ltd

E-mail atowns@pl.net Freephone 0800 021 934
PO Box 41124 Mobile 021 846 939
St Lukes Auckland 1346 Fax 09 846 9390

Information Sheet

Encouraging Men to Talk about Domestic Violence

Principal Investigator: Dr Alison Towns, PhD Dip Clin Psych, Tel: 021 846 939, Freephone 0800 021 934, e-mail: atowns@pl.net

Request for Participation
Hi. You are invited to take part in a research study on men’s ideas about masculinity and campaigns aimed at preventing domestic violence towards women (such as White Ribbon Day). This study will help develop information on prevention campaigns. It will also inform education programmes on healthy relationships for young people. Taking part in the study is voluntary. You do not have to take part in this study and you can say no without giving a reason. You can take a week to consider your participation. If you would like to participate, please contact Dr Alison Towns ph: 021 846 939 to arrange a time to meet.

Description of the Study
The main aim of the study is to talk to you about the relationship between masculinity and acting to prevent men’s domestic violence towards women. We are very interested in your ideas about the social and cultural influences that support men’s opposition to such violence. We are also interested in your ideas about the obstacles to men opposing such violence. We are interested in what you consider would be useful ways to support men to act to prevent such violence. We want to talk to a total of 30 men.

To participate you will be a man between the ages of 18 and 65 years and able to speak English. You have been invited to take part in the study because you meet the requirements for this study.
If you agree to take part in this study, you will take part in one two-hour focus group discussion with up to four other men. The focus group will be lead by a man who will encourage discussion with a number of questions. A woman co-leader will also be present to assist with questions that might bring a different point of view. The discussion will be about the social and cultural supports and obstacles you encounter when asked to act to prevent men's domestic violence towards women. You don't have to answer all the questions and you may leave the focus group discussion at any time. The focus group discussion will be arranged at a time that suits you and at a suitable place for the purpose. The interview will be audio-recorded, and the recording will be transcribed into a typed text. The language in the text will be read by the researchers for common forms of talk that indicate common values and beliefs. These will be grouped together to help reveal related social and cultural influences. A report will be written up and used to inform domestic violence prevention campaigns. The data collected will be stored securely in the office of Mt Albert Psychological Services Ltd.

**Benefits, risks and safety**
You may find the chance to talk about what it is to be a man and men opposing men's domestic violence towards women stimulating and interesting. You may be pleased to contribute to the Campaign on Action Against Family Violence and education programmes on healthy relationships. You will receive a petrol voucher for your costs. The discussion may, however, touch on issues that you find distressing. You will be offered information about local support services at the end of the focus group discussion and the researcher will be able to talk to you about these. For free help you can phone LIFELINE Auckland 522 2999 or 0800 111 777.

**Protection**
In the unlikely event that matters arise which concern a person's immediate or imminent safety the researchers will immediately take action to ensure the safety of all concerned.

**Participation**
If you do agree to take part you are free to withdraw from the study at any time, without giving a reason and this will in no way affect your future care or any future relationships with Mt Albert Psychological Services or associated agencies. You should be aware, however, you're your contribution cannot be withdrawn from focus group discussions. Taking part in this study is entirely voluntary. You do not have to take part in this study, and, if you choose not to take part this will not affect any future relationships or care or treatment with the Mt Albert Psychological Services Ltd or its associates.

More information is available from the Dr Alison Towns (see above).

If you have any questions or concerns about your rights as a participant in this research study you can contact an independent health and disability advocate. This is a free service provided under the health and Disability Commissioner Act.
Telephone: (NZ wide) 0800 555 050
Free Fax (NZ wide) 0800 2787 7678 (0800 2 SUPPORT)
Email (NZ wide): advocacy@hdc.org.nz
Anonymity and confidentiality
No material that could personally identify you will be used in any reports on this study. To protect your identity, an alternative name will be used on the transcripts and when referring to information from your interview. The interviews will be transcribed by a clerical assistant who is bound by this signed confidentiality agreement. The funder, Accident Compensation Commission, has the right to audit records associated with this research. All records and transcriptions will be stored securely so that all details and information given during the study will be kept confidential. Audio-recordings will be destroyed on completion of the transcriptions. While confidentiality will be encouraged in focus group discussions it cannot be guaranteed. In the unlikely event of an imminent and immediate safety issue arising confidentiality cannot be guaranteed.

Results
You will be given a summary of the results and a copy of the report. The results of the research will be written into a report, published on the National Network of Stopping Violence Services website. The report will then be further written into an article for publication in an appropriate academic journal. Information from this study may also be used in seminar and conference presentations. Please note that there will be a delay between data collection and publication of results.

Compensation
In the unlikely event of a physical injury as a result of your participation in this study, you may be covered by ACC under the Injury Prevention, Rehabilitation and Compensation Act. ACC cover is not automatic and your case will need to be assessed by ACC according to the provisions of the 2002 Injury Prevention Rehabilitation and Compensation Act. If your claim is accepted by ACC, you still might not get any compensation. This depends on a number of factors such as whether you are an earner or non-earner. ACC usually provides only partial reimbursement of costs and expenses and there may be no lump sum compensation payable. There is no cover for mental injury unless it is a result of physical injury. If you have ACC cover, generally this will affect your right to sue the investigators.

If you have any questions about ACC, contact your nearest ACC office or the investigator.

The study has received ethical approval from the Northern X Regional Ethics Committee.

Please feel free to contact the researcher if you have any questions about this study.
CONSENT FORM

Encouraging Men to Talk About Domestic Violence

- I have read and I understand the Information Sheet dated 7 November 2008 for volunteers taking part in the study: Overcoming the Obstacles to the Prevention of Domestic Violence.

- I have had the opportunity to discuss the project with the researcher and I am satisfied with the answers I have been given.

- I have had the opportunity to use whanau support or a friend to help me ask questions and understand the study.

- I understand that taking part in this project is voluntary and that I may withdraw from the study at any time and that this will in no way affect my future health care or my relationship with the Mt Albert Psychological Services or its associates. I understand that my contribution cannot be withdrawn from focus group discussions.

- I understand that my participation in this study is confidential and that no material which could identify me will be used in any reports on this study.

- I understand that no identifiable information about me will be accessible to persons other than the researcher and the transcriber.

- I understand that my participation will be stopped if it appears harmful to me.

- I also understand that confidentiality will not be guaranteed due to the focus group discussions and in the unlikely event of any imminent and immediate safety concerns.
• I am aware that an exception to confidentiality will be if the interviewer has significant concerns about the safety of myself or others.

• I also understand that the research data will be stored securely at the premises of the Mt Albert Psychological Services Ltd.

• I know who to contact if I am distressed by the study.

• I know who to contact if I have any questions about the study.

• I understand that I can have access to the finished research report.

• I have had enough time to consider whether I want to take part in the research.

I agree to an approved auditor appointed by either the funder, the ethics committee, or the regulatory authority or their approved representative, and approved by the Northern X Regional Ethics Committee reviewing my relevant records for the sole purposes of checking the accuracy of the information recorded for the study.

I give consent to my interview being audio recorded

YES/NO

I wish to receive a copy of the results

YES/NO

I ___________________________________________ [full name] hereby consent to take part in this study.

Date ______________

Participant Signature   ________________________________________
Signature of Witness_____________________________________________

Name of Witness:_________________________________________________

Project explained by_____________________________________________

Project Role  ______________________

Signature______________________________

date _________________________

Researchers: Dr Alison Towns, Tel: 021 846 939; 0800 021 934

Hazel Scott, Tel: 360 4933, 021 189 4691

The participant should retain a copy of this consent form.