NO TO VIOLENCE (NTV)

MALE FAMILY VIOLENCE PREVENTION ASSOCIATION INC.

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Committee Secretary
Standing Committee on Family and Community Affairs
Child Custody Arrangements Inquiry
Public Hearing 28 August 2003

Submission to Public Hearing

Major points raised by NTV:

a) No To Violence, the Male Family Violence Prevention Association Inc. (NTV) is the Victorian Government funded peak statewide organisation for agencies and individuals working in the field of male family violence in Victoria.

NTV and its members deal with male family violence issues on a daily basis. The organisation's direct service, the Men's Referral Service, operates as a Victoria-wide service providing anonymous and confidential counselling, information and referrals for men who use violence or abuse against family members. In the last financial year, the service responded to over 3,400 telephone calls, with the majority of individual callers being men voluntarily seeking assistance in taking the first step to ending their violent and abusive behaviour towards family members.

NTV is an organisation with some 120 individual and agency members working to prevent male family violence in this state and around Australia. Many NTV members provide men's behaviour change programs for men who have used violence as well as support services for women and children who have experienced male family violence.

b) NTV affirms that, for some families, shared parenting can be a successful arrangement that can be, and is usually negotiated privately. As an organisation NTV actively promotes positive, non-violent and responsible fathering and shared responsibilities for parenting.

c) NTV actively encourages and support positive fathering in a variety of ways. We are in the process of publishing a self-help book for fathers who have used violence in their relationship and wish to improve their fathering skills. The book will be entitled *"A Chip of the Old Block"* and be released in the coming year.

Many men's behaviour change programs mentioned above also include parenting education courses and programs for fathers and all provide information specific to fathering issues.

Programs for behaviour change for men who are violent in the family must address the situation of all family members and be integrated with or work closely with other services for those affected. All work with men and women needs to be informed by and utilise the legal remedies available for the protection of women and children. As well as helping to meet the needs of all affected by male family violence, this also enables feedback from women partners and women's groups about the programs for men and their effectiveness in stopping violence against women and children.

The Men's Referral Service also refers male callers to a wide range of positive parenting education programs and many post-separation men's support groups and courses that are funded by local, state and federal governments.

d) NTV recognises that some families are unable to arrive at shared arrangements without legal assistance. In these cases, which are characterised by high conflict and/or family violence, we are seriously concerned about the presumption of joint custody. NTV agrees that this proposal moves away from emerging evidence and legislation being introduced internationally that presumes no contact in cases where family violence is present.

e) The safety of children must be paramount in determining post-separation parenting arrangements. It is not in the interests of a child to have presumed contact, let alone shared residency with both parents, if violence or the *potential for violence* is present.

f) Family Violence takes many forms beyond physical and sexual violence. Many women usually contend with men who use various forms of abuse such as verbal, social, emotional and financial abuse and controlling behaviour that are not explicitly illegal under current laws and may be extremely difficult for a woman to prove or assert. It has been well researched that many (80%) of the women living with violence from their male (ex)partners do not report incidents of violence to the police. [1] In affect, NTV believes that much family violence may be invisible to the Family Court, particularly in those cases where women have avoided formal reporting processes when dealing with the violence.

g) NTV is strongly opposed to the notion of a rebuttable presumption of equal time with both parents in principle, and specifically in relation to families where violence has occurred. This organisation believes that the risk of such an under-researched and controversial shift is too great for it to be considered viable.

NTV believes that there is a *very real risk* both women and children will be placed at greater risk of violence and abuse from male partners because of the introduction of such changes. As a community we cannot allow this to eventuate. The safety of children and all those experiencing violence and abuse must be seen as the priority by this commission.

h) NTV supports the proposals put forward by DVIRC for the refinement of existing legislation to best serve the interests of children, and protect them from the risk of family violence. Further to this we would also recommend enhanced education at a legal and community level to encourage separating parents to make best use of the possibilities for shared parenting already existing within the parameters of the Family Law Act.

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[1] Office of the Status of Women. (1995). *Against the Odds: How Women Survive Domestic Violence.* Canberra: Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet

Appendix 2

Philosophy And Principles For Working With Male Violence In The Family[29]

1. Understanding male family violence

Male family violence is largely about the misuse of power and control in the context of male dominance
NTV believes that all behaviour change work with men must be done with an awareness of the social context of male family violence. Violence often involves an attempt to exert power and control. The person using violence does so to impose his will regardless of the wishes of the other person. Male family violence is primarily used by men to control women and children. Although many people have been working for change for some time now, our social history has largely been one of male dominance in all spheres of public life, reinforced by and allowing male dominance in the family. Gender socialisation of girls and boys to accept and continue gender roles has further reinforced male dominance. In this social context until recent times male family violence was largely hidden and private and surrounded by shame and secrecy and this is still often the case. Male family violence is often condoned and colluded with and denial about the nature and extent of it and its effects is widespread. People outside the family have been reluctant to intervene, and the response of the police and the legal system has often further disempowered women by failing to offer them the equal protection of the law.

NTV is aware that there are sometimes factors other than gender involved in choices to use violence. Violence is sometimes used by women, particularly against children, and also occurs in some same sex relationships. There are also other differences in power and privilege between groups divided by factors other than gender, such as social class, race, culture, age and disability, which leave some people more vulnerable to violence. However, the majority of cases of male family violence involve violence by men against women and children, and this is the focus of the work covered by this manual. The principles for working with men's violence against women and children in the family also apply to working with other uses of violence.

All forms of violence are unacceptable and must be challenged at all times
There are many forms of violence which are used to control and disempower. They include physical forms (including sexual violence and witnessing physical violence) to non-physical forms (including verbal, social, racist, psychological or emotional, economic, spiritual and institutional or structural violence) and neglect. Although only physical, sexual and some forms of racist violence are illegal and attract criminal sanctions, other forms of violence can also have very serious and lasting effects on one's sense of self, wellbeing and autonomy.

Men are responsible for their use of violence
The use of violence is a choice each man is responsible for. Although a man may have been socialised to believe in his right to control women and children, or even have been trained to use violence, he can still choose to take responsibility and learn non-violent ways of relating. Some men who seek assistance with stopping their use of violence have also experienced violence themselves. Men's behaviour change group facilitators need to keep separate at all times the issues relating to a man's own experience of being violated and his responsibility for his own use of violence against others. Any excusing, condoning or minimising of his use of violence on the basis of his own pain and difficulties reinforces his use of violence rather than challenging it.

Men can change and challenge other men to work for change

Men can change their attitudes and behaviour and learn non-violent ways of relating. Although men who use violence do so to gain power and control with damaging effects on others, they also report a range of negative effects for themselves. These include shame, guilt, hating themselves for what they do and frustration at not having the kinds of relationships with their partners and families they would like to have. Often they feel powerless themselves and use violence to try to increase their sense of power. Clearly, although it involves giving up the misuse of power and control and the privileges of dominance, men also have a lot to gain from learning to have equal, open and non-violent relationships.

2. Appropriate community responses to male family violence

The community response needs to be consistent and integrated at all levels

The long term prevention of male family violence requires a clear and consistent message from all individuals and social agencies that all forms of violence are unacceptable and will not be tolerated.

Men need to know that their use of violence will not be condoned by anyone and that everyone will respond to protect the rights of others to safety and autonomy. This includes responses from individuals and community agencies as well as the police and legal system. The legal remedies available to protect women and children must be used consistently and be enforced.

Women and children need to know that they will be believed and that their rights will be enforced. They need to have other options available, to know about them and to be supported in making changes in their lives if they decide to do so.

If the practices of people and agencies at all levels are not consistent, men will know that they can get away with violence, and women and children will be further disempowered and lose access to options other than continuing to live with violence.

NTV supports the ongoing work of many people working for change at all levels. This includes work to challenge and change gender socialisation, to provide services to support and empower women and children, to improve community awareness about male family violence and to improve the response to male family violence on the part of health and community support agencies and the police and legal system. NTV members are keen to work with individual men in an integrated and co-ordinated way with other agencies. They are also keen to share with others their knowledge about how to work with men to facilitate change. NTV welcomes the current policy of working towards regional and statewide networking and co-ordination between services for people experiencing male family violence.

Everyone affected by male family violence is entitled to support services

All women and men are entitled to group programs and other services which are helpful for resolving their experiences of male family violence. They are entitled to accessible services and information about them. This includes people with specific needs such as those experiencing geographical isolation, those who speak languages other than English and those with substance use difficulties. NTV as a peak organisation is available for consultation and training with those who wish to establish male family violence programs for behaviour change for particular groups with specific needs.

It is valuable for women and men to work together to prevent male family violence

Women need to work with other women for support and empowerment. Men need to work with other men to facilitate change. However, men wanting to change need to know the effects of their

An eight week

group for men to

learn new ways

of relating to

their children.

MEN'S PARENTING GROUP

*For further information
or to book in*

*Ring the Duty
Worker: on 9534 0981*

Men must have completed a Men's Behavioural Change Program

behaviour on women, and women often want to understand why men behave the way they do. Women and men men's behaviour change group facilitators can share this knowledge to get a rounded and more accurate picture of the complex interactions in couples and families seeking assistance with change. It is also helpful to hear the other point of view in learning about one's own gender bias and assumptions. This assists all men's behaviour change group facilitators to keep personal issues about experiences of gender clear when working with clients. Gender divisions affect everyone, and change requires communication, co-operation and the development of new and equal relationships between women and men. NTV members are committed to exploring new and co-operative ways of working together for change.

All work to prevent male family violence must be non-violent
NTV expects clients and people in the community to respect the rights of others to live free of violence. If men's behaviour change group facilitators use any forms of violence against clients or other facilitators, they invade their rights and reinforce the use of violence rather than challenging it to facilitate change. However, when necessary men's behaviour change group facilitators will use the social institutions of the police and legal system which have legitimate power to prevent, restrain and punish violence against women and children.

3. Appropriate ways of working with men for change

Change is about choice and responsibility
Men must choose to embrace change; any attempt to force them to change is a misuse of power and control. However, men's behaviour change group facilitators can confront men with the nature and consequences of their violence and the fact that they choose to use it. They can then invite men to take responsibility to stop using violence and learn non-violent ways of relating with others.

Men need to be supported and challenged to take responsibility
Men seeking assistance with behaviour change need to be given support while they explore painful aspects of their lives and behaviour and learn unfamiliar and sometimes threatening new ways of knowing about themselves and others. However, they also need to be given very clear boundaries about what attitudes and behaviour are acceptable. Once they have chosen to join a program in order to change they must be expected to take responsibility for their behaviour at all times, and be reminded when they fail to do so.

Men require education about violence and the opportunity for personal exploration
Behaviour change programs for men who are violent to family members need to educate men about the different types of violence, the misuse of power and control and the ramifications of these. Each man also needs to explore how it relates to his own life and individual change processes.

The change process is gradual and takes time
In order for men to become and remain non-violent they need to change on a number of levels, in their thinking, feeling, attitudes and behaviour. They also need to learn new skills and practise and integrate them in their lives. Once they have begun this process they often need support as they move through different phases to consolidate and maintain change.

Information is available from a range of sources about how to facilitate change
Knowledge of feminist understandings about the role of gender is crucial in male family violence work with men. There is also a need to understand other factors which affect men's lives and choices. NTV members are open to information from other theoretical sources and perspectives which may assist in developing more effective methods of working to stop violence.

The Effects of Marital Separation on Men

Peter Jordan

ABSTRACT. The aim of the study was to examine the reactions and experiences of separated men in their personal, psycho-social and practical areas of life. The study collected retrospective data from 168 men who had been in contact with the Family Court in Brisbane, Australia. The men were asked to describe their emotional state, using Bradburn's Positive and Negative Affect Scale, a set of health complaint items chosen specifically for the study, and the activities and situations which had caused them difficulty. Each of these measures was obtained for the time just preceding marital separation, during/immediately after the separation and at the time of the survey (one to two years following the separation). Separation was a highly upsetting experience from which the men had recovered to a large extent by the time of the survey. There were few signs that they had been aware of the impending separation. Those who showed least evidence of being aware of what was to come also were least likely to want it, more likely to seek reconciliation and were more likely to remain distressed one to two years following separation. Those of lower occupational status and those still living alone

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at the time of the survey were also more likely to show poorer recovery from the peak distress experienced at separation.

The literature of divorce has predominately focused on women and children. This study was intended to contribute to the emerging pool of empirical evidence concerning men and separation by considering men's feelings about divorce and its effect on men's social and daily living activities.

SOCIALISATION OF MEN

Chiriboga and Cutler (1977) suggest that early socialisation often builds a wall between males and their emotions. Once this wall is breached by an extreme situation such as separation, the shock of experiencing fully their own emotional state may have a devastating effect on men. Scher (1981) supports this, saying that males are generally trained in our society to hide their thoughts and feelings; if they reveal them, they are taught that they can be vulnerable, weak and unmanly. Or as Eichenbaum and Orbach (1983) put it: "There is a traditional myth that women are dependent and clingy, but that men are strong, independent and self-contained. This myth suggests that women need men to complete their lives but that men do not need women in the same vital way." Eichenbaum and Orbach argue strongly that it's time we all knew not only that the myth is rubbish but that the exact opposite is true. Men are just as dependent as women but their dependency is conventionally concealed.

Kressel (1980) suggests that, as a result of socialisation processes, men do not fully experience and express the emotional and interpersonal side of life. This is also supported by Krentzler (1975) who found men to be frightened by feelings of vulnerability, helplessness and loneliness that erupt within them during the crisis of divorce. Ladbrook (1976) reported that males (particularly those of the more "chauvinist" variety) at the time of separation, have to learn almost from the beginning how to handle domestic responsibilities, prepare and plan balanced nutritious diets, self-diagnose illness symptoms and motivate themselves to become active during the day.

MEN'S REACTION TO SEPARATION

Gove (1972) suggests that marriage has more to offer men than it does to women, and therefore adjusting to single status may be easier for women than it is for men. This seems to fly in the face of cultural stereotypes, but data to support this conclusion has continued to accumulate consistently. For example, Zeiss, Zeiss and Johnson (1980) found that men had more difficulty moving away from past marriages, and experienced less improvement in their general adjustment than did women.

Morgan (1981) reports that men react in different ways when separation occurs, e.g., those who initiate the breakup are often angry because their wives do not live up to their expectations, or they are full of guilt because they are abandoning their wives for other women. Those who are left are often in a state of shock, devastated by their wives' unexpected announcement that they are leaving the marriage. Part of the explanation for the severity of men's reactions has been related to attachments they form to their wives and children. Bloom and Hodges (1981), in studying the predicament of the newly separated, found the attachment bonds between spouses to be stronger in the case of men than women. The stereotype of the separated man as the "swinging bachelor" appears to be very rarely true. Community agencies that provide programs for the newly separated will probably find that men need more help than women before they come to see their marriages from their spouse's point of view, and come to grips with the high probability of divorce. Goldsmith (1980) reported that women were more likely to initiate divorce and men were more likely to be "left." An Australian study by Burns (1980) confirmed this pattern: of her respondents, 50% of men regretted the separation whereas only 33% of women regretted it; and 25% of men wanted a reconciliation as against only 9% of women. Another Australian study (Bordow, 1981) provided additional evidence to support the contention that men have a very strong desire to maintain their marriage. Approximately 30% of men expressed a wish for reconciliation with only 7% of women willing to contemplate such an option.

Vaughan (1981) suggests that how and at what point one responds emotionally in the divorce process is somewhat dependent

on who initiated the divorce. The spouse initiating the divorce may experience greater stress prior to separation with a later reaction of guilt, while the non-initiating spouse may feel the greatest trauma at the time of separation and experience a heightened sense of 'hurt, rejection, anger and/or resentment. In addition to the emotional impact of severed bonds and the inability to accept termination, some men are also faced with problems in daily living tasks, which in themselves are not novel but are new for such men.

Hetherington, Cox and Cox (1978) found that the main practical problems of living encountered by divorced couples were those related to household maintenance and to economic and occupational difficulties. Many divorced men, particularly those from marriages in which conventional sex roles had been maintained and the wife had not been employed, initially experienced considerable difficulty in maintaining a household routine and reported distress associated with what one man termed "a chaotic lifestyle." Hetherington et al. also found divorced men were less likely to eat at home than married men, they slept less and had more erratic sleep patterns, and had more difficulty with shopping, cooking, laundry and cleaning. In a study by White and Bloom (1981) it was found that the most common source of difficulty for virtually all men was in the area of social behaviour. The social adjustment required at the time of separation was the major hazard for the recently separated man. Social isolation or rapid reattachment were both common patterns of behaviour. Loneliness was a pervasive problem and was highly predictive of poor overall adjustment, whilst social contacts outside the marriage prior to separation appeared to be of help in their adjustment. Bloom and colleagues (Bloom & Hodges, 1981; White & Bloom, 1981) also found that one of the arenas in which the stressful character of marital disruption shows itself is in the work setting, with men changing careers and working less efficiently; they reported a strong relationship between poor adjustment to marital separation and poor job performance.

Presented with a seemingly insurmountable range of problems, what are the help-seeking behaviours of such men? It is somewhat ironic but understandable that, even though in great need and unlike most women, men's conditioned attitudes and reticence prevents most of them from seeking professional assistance. Burns (1980)

found that close to half the men, but less than one third of the women, sought no help at all at the time of the marriage breakdown. Scher (1981), in writing about men's attitudes to counselling, said that very often men come to counselling looking for an opportunity to express and experience feelings and needs which they believe their world denies them. Therefore they use counselling as a means of feeling dependent and allowing themselves to have a sense of failure and of being weak. In a study of the social supports used by separated persons, Chiriboga, Coho, Stein and Roberts (1979) concluded that male reluctance to seek help may be a factor underlying their greater emotional disturbance during marital separation.

METHOD

Objectives

This research was undertaken in order to clarify, in the Australian community, the effect of separation and divorce on men. The study was designed to assess the immediate and long term effects of marital separation in terms of; (a) Physical and psychological well-being; (b) Coping with day to day living routines, i.e., work, social relationships, household tasks, finances; (c) Loss of husband and/or father role; (d) Attitudes and beliefs. The study also aimed to find out who made decisions about separating and what help was sought (if any), and to establish areas which cause men most distress following separation and/or divorce.

Sample

The study sample was chosen from Court files opened in 1983 and included all men who were applicants or the spouses of applicants for a divorce from the Brisbane Registry of the Family Court of Australia. Brisbane Registry was chosen because the files were readily accessible to the researcher. To be included in the sample, men had to have been separated for no more than two years and no less than one year at the time of forwarding the questionnaire. The reason for limiting the time of separation to between one and two years was, first, to allow sufficient time since separation for some

of the effects to appear, and, second, to minimise forgetting by limiting the time since separation. It is recognized that recall will have been selective and was probably contaminated by reconstruction of past events and feelings.

Four hundred and seven potential respondents were identified through examination of files and were asked to participate in the study. One hundred and sixty-eight men responded positively, giving response rate of 41%.

Measures

The main data collection was by means of a written questionnaire which covered demographic and psychosocial information about the respondent's family, their marriage and its conflicts. In addition to such direct questions a number of standardised tests were included aimed at assessing psychological well-being (Bradburn, 1969) and psycho-physical well-being (Gilmour, 1983). Two further measures were devised to assess the degree of attachment to wife and children, and the extent to which the men coped with general living conditions. They were based respectively on Gilmour (1983) and Berman and Turk (1981).

The respondents were asked to report on the situation at three points in time: before the separation, in the period immediately following the separation and at the time they received the questionnaire. Since all the data were collected approximately two years after the separation, the study was vulnerable to distorted recall and to attempts to make reactions appear more reasonable and consistent than perhaps they actually were.

A check on the internal consistency of the health scale for each time occasion was used in an attempt to detect any distortion; the response consistency was satisfactory, with coefficient alpha (Nunnally, 1967) being 0.75, 0.74 and 0.83 for the three occasions. The Bradburn Scales were known to be of high internal consistency. The lists of practical difficulties were also checked by carrying out a cluster analysis on the items separately for each of the three time occasions; the clusters which emerged were consistent over occasions.

RESULTS

Demographic Profile

The profile of a typical respondent was: Australian born, aged between 29 and 39 years, somewhat more likely to be employed in a white collar occupation, and to be married for an average of 10.3 years at the time of separation (the duration of marriages was from two months to 35 years). Respondents had an average of 1.9 children, with 20% of respondents having at least one child in their daily care and control; 46% of respondents were living alone, with a significant proportion (28%) living in new relationships.

Decision to Separate

The respondents stated that it was the wife's decision in 65% of the cases, husband's in 19% and a joint decision in 16.2% of the cases. These findings agree with overseas research (Goldsmith, 1980) and with a recent Australian study (Headlein, 1984), which found that the final decision to separate was the woman's decision in 60% of cases and the man's decision in 33% of the cases. Approximately 1 in 5 (18%) of this study respondents were unaware of their wife's intention to separate, whilst 66% of respondents said they did not want the separation.

In nearly 72% of the marriages there was an attempt made by one or both of the couple to get back together after the separation. 54% of the respondents and only 7% of wives sought a reconciliation. This pattern of men seeking reconciliation more than women do has been borne out in overseas and Australian studies (Goldsmith, 1980; Burns, 1980; Bordow, 1981).

Reasons for the Separation

Chronic or recurring conflicts were seen as potential early warning signs of separation; a series of open ended questions were used to try to isolate and understand these conflicts. Table 1 outlines these responses.

It is interesting to note that responsibility for recurrent conflict is equally attributed to both spouses. Finances and husband's work (37%) are closely followed by wife's actions and attitudes (30%).

Another way of understanding separation and its contributing factors in more detail was to ask the respondents to state what causes or reasons they believed resulted in their separation. Table 2 summarises their responses.

In spite of the respondents accepting some responsibility for the recurring conflicts (Table 1) they chose to place the responsibility for the actual separation upon their wives. Such attitudes seemed to allow the men to avoid or deny any degree of responsibility, to make scapegoats of their wives and to see and feel themselves as victims.

Attachment of Wife and Children

Responses to questions relating to attachment illustrated the significance of marriage for men. Some 1 to 2 years after the separation 65% of the respondents still felt as if the separation was a horrible mistake; 46% still felt some anger towards their wives and 39% felt they would never get over the divorce. The vast majority (91%) of the respondents said they did not want to be separated from their children, while 98% said they still had strong feelings for their children some 1 to 2 years after separation.

Psychological Wellbeing

The Bradburn Positive Experience Scale (Bradburn, 1969) gives the number of positive experiences that these respondents have had, the higher experiences that contribute to psychological wellbeing; the higher the number (maximum score is 5) the more positive the psychological affect.

Data in Table 3 indicates that, at separation 90% of respondents had only two or less positive experiences, however one to two years after separation the percentage of respondents experiencing two or less positive experiences had decreased to below the before separation level, from 58% to 46%.

On the Bradburn Negative Experience Scale (Bradburn, 1969), the lower the number of negative experiences the more positive the respondent's psychological wellbeing. The scores can range from no negative experience to five such experiences.

The scores on the Bradburn Negative scale suggest a similar pat-

TABLE 1

Areas of recurring conflicts

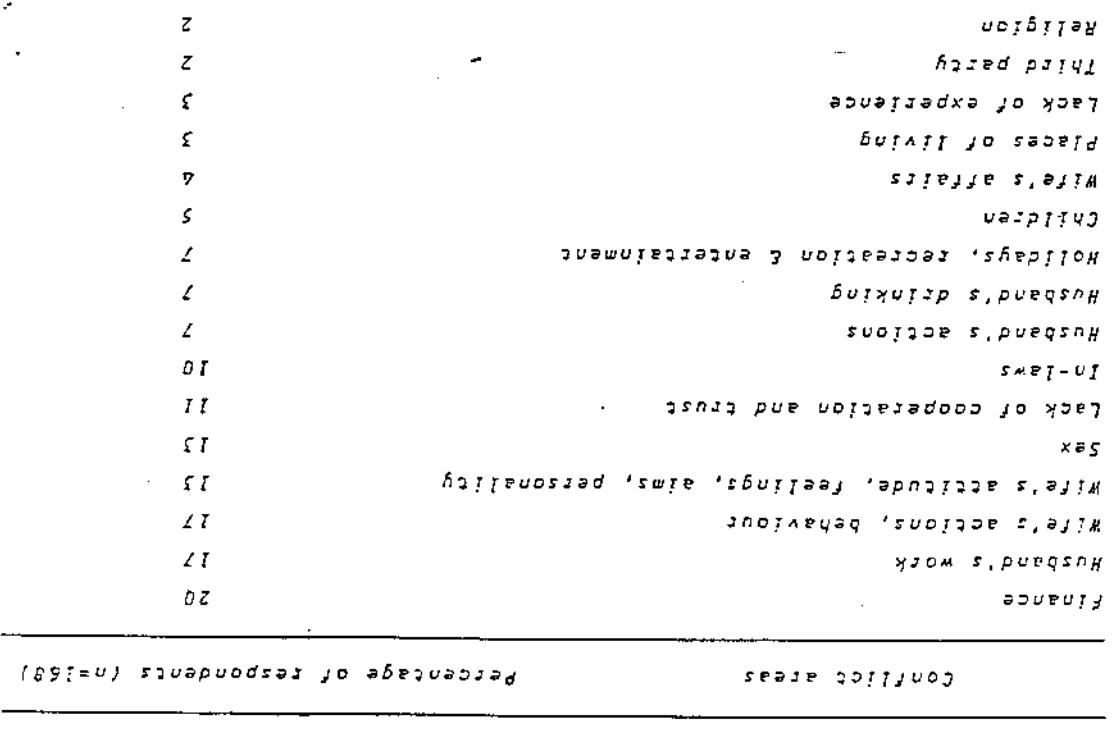| Conflict areas	Percentage of respondents (n=168)
Finance	20
Husband's work	17
Wife's actions, behaviour	17
Wife's attitude, feelings, aims, personality	15
Sex	12
Lack of cooperation and trust	11
In-laws	10
Husband's actions	7
Husband's drinking	7
Holidays, recreation & entertainment	7
Children	5
Wife's affairs	4
Places of living	3
Lack of experience	3
Third party	2
Religion	2

TABLE 2

Believed causes/reasons for separation

Question: What do you believe contributed to you and your
wife separating?

Reasons	Percentage of respondents (n=168)
Wife's attitudes, feeling, goals personality	24
Differences/incompatibility	18
Wife's actions	15
Husband's work	14
Lack of communication	13
Financial problems	10
Wife's affair	8
Husband's attitudes	8
Husband's actions	6
In-laws	6
Arguments	4
Husband's affairs	3
Sexual relationship	3
Death in family	2
Children	1
Didn't know	3

TABLE 3

Bradburn Positive Experience Scale

No. of positive experiences	Percentage of respondents		
	Before separation	At separation	Recently (1 to 2 years after separation)
0 - 2	57.8	90.4	46.0
3 - 5	42.2	9.6	54.00

TABLE 6

Bradburn Negative Experience Scale

No. of negative experiences	Percentage of respondents		
	Before separation	At separation	Recently (1 to 2 years after separation)
0 - 2	66.9%	28.9%	69.6%
3 - 5	33.1%	71.1%	30.4%

lem to that of the Bradburn Positive Scale (see Table 4). At separation most respondents (71%) experienced many negative events, but one to two years later the percentage of respondents experiencing negative experiences had fallen to 30%. A recovery to pre-separation levels is once more demonstrated.

Health and Practical Living Problems

The percentage of respondents having problems with health showed the same trends as found in the Bradburn Scales: high problem levels at separation with return to before separation levels one to two years after separation (Table 5). The before separation percentage for sleeplessness (45%) and headaches (30%) do seem high and could be taken as early warning signs of psychological distress.

As with health problems the percentage of respondents who experienced problems in practical/social areas before separation ranged from 20% to 54% (Table 6). Problems which caused difficulties at this time for a large percentage of respondents were: (a) in the finance area, "bills" (54%) and saving money (52%); (b) in the work area, 42% found problems with work motivation (ambition) and 34% found it difficult to "concentrate on work" and had little "work satisfaction"; (c) "intimate relationships" area presented a problem for 44% of the respondents.

The impact of separation on daily tasks and activities was seen most dramatically in the "Social Initiatives" areas where the percentage of respondents experiencing difficulties doubled from the before separation rates. Furthermore, a process of recovery is once again indicated by the return to the "before separation" levels on most of the activities when reported at 1 to 2 years after separation.

The items (Table 6) were selected to cover several areas, including doing chores, taking new social initiatives, work and finances. The structure of such living difficulties was checked by carrying out cluster analysis on the items separately for each of the three times occasions. The clusters that emerged were consistent over occasions, and were thus used to define Scales to measure broad types of "living difficulties." The cluster analysis of items generated three distinct clusters of events with the same items defining each cluster on each of the three time occasions. Furthermore, the structure and

TABLE 6

Practical living problems experienced
by respondents at each stage

Four Distinct Clusters	Activities/situation which caused problems	Percentage of respondents		
		Before separation	At separation	Recently (1-2 yrs after separation)
Chores	Cleaning the house	22.7	34.6	16.9
	Cooking meals	23.8	56.1	16.9
	Household repairs	21.5	27.2	15.0
	Shopping	20.4	29.1	14.4
	Taking care of the car	15.3	19.0	10.6
Social Initiatives	Talking to people	23.3	45.6	20.0
	Making new friends	25.8	46.9	29.6
	Developing & maintaining intimate relationships	45.9	61.7	44.2
	Attending Social Activities	29.6	53.5	31.5
	Few invitations to social activities	27.5	40.1	26.8

TABLE 5

Complaints/symptoms experienced
by respondents at each stage

Complaint/symptom	Percentage of respondents		
	Before separation	At separation	Recently (1-2 yrs after separation)
Sleeplessness	44.8	81.3	55.8
Physical injury	12.3	16.0	12.8
Headaches	30.1	42.9	19.8
Poor memory	21.6	36.4	27.6
Stomach ulcers	15.3	23.5	12.9
Crying	20.9	70.7	25.3
Reduced Energy	25.6	63.2	31.5
Poor appetite	21.5	61.0	21.0
Excessive Tiredness	22.7	57.7	28.2
Tight muscles	19.5	42.3	23.3

contents of each cluster clearly reflected the conceptual areas used to generate such items in the first place. These clusters are also similar to those identified in other studies (Hetherington, Cox & Cox, 1976; Brown, Felton & Whiteman, 1980; and Barman and Tunk, 1981).

Relationship Between the Psychological, Physical and Practical Difficulties

When all measures of psychological, social and physical wellbeing were considered, the general pattern shows a low positive affect, high negative affect and high health complaints being associated within each times occasion, with those showing more distress before separation being more distressed during separation, and those showing more distress during separation being more distressed at the survey time. Distress levels before separation and at the survey time were less correlated.

Table 7 shows the mean scores for the six measures on each time occasion. Distress was greatest during separation, and was only slightly higher before separation than at the survey time whether measured by lack of positive affect, high negative affect, or health complaints. Chores presented most difficulties around the time of separation, but also were more of a problem before separation than at the survey time. Finances were difficult before and during separation; but somewhat less so 1 to 2 years after separation; difficulties in taking social initiatives were elevated during separation, but did not differ between before separation and the survey time.

Although the impact of the separation period on the psychological, physical and practical States of most respondents was quite marked, the data in Table 7 suggests that in overall terms 1 to 2 years later, men seem to show some gains in three areas as a result of marital separation: these were (a) an increase in positive feelings or experiences; (b) reduced difficulty with practical daily living chores; and (c) fewer financial difficulties.

Discriminant Function Analysis

The MANOVA procedure was used to conduct a discriminant function analysis of the contrasts, to determine which combination of contrasts best separated the group from a null hypothesis of no

TABLE 6 (continued)

Four Distinct Clusters	Activities/situation which caused problems	Percentage of respondents		
		Before Separation	At Separation	Recently (1-2 yrs after separation)
Work	Starting a new job	9.0	21.2	13.7
	Concentrating on my work	33.5	71.1	28.1
	Work satisfaction	33.5	52.2	21.5
	Arguing with workmates	11.3	19.6	3.2
	Ambitious approach to work	42.2	39.2	50.4
Finances	Too many bills to pay	54.3	58.1	42.9
	Food too expensive	30.8	28.4	27.2
	House repayments or rent too high	29.8	50.4	28.9
	No money for outings or personal pleasure	39.1	43.9	28.3
	Saving money	52.2	59.1	51.5

TABLE 7

Mean scores and contrast values for the
distress and difficulty scales

Occasion			Contrast			
Mean Pre-separation	Mean At Separation	Mean Follow-up	Pre vs F'up* Mean	p	At vs Pre/F'up** Mean	p
Distress measures						
Bradburn positive	2.22	0.71	2.70	0.48	.023	-3.69	.005
Bradburn negative	1.76	3.10	1.55	0.21	N.S.	2.90	.0005
Health complaints	2.31	4.90	2.35	-0.04	N.S.	5.14	.0005
Difficulties						
Chores	1.29	1.78	0.97	0.32	.057	1.30	.0005
Social Initiatives	1.61	2.87	1.61	0.00	N.S.	2.52	.0005
Finances	2.01	2.09	1.72	0.30	.018	0.45	.004

* This contrasts and compares pre-separation scores to those obtained for
the follow-up period (1-2 years after separation).

** Compares the at separation period to the average of the pre-separation
and follow-up.

change. This analysis was used to explore two issues: (1) the contribution of each measure over and above the other measures, to detecting changes; and (2) the extent to which the measures overlapped in detecting changes. The analysis was conducted separately for the contrasts which compared before separation scores to those obtained for the survey period, and for the comparison of the during separation period to the average of the before separation and survey periods. The analysis of the rise in distress around the separation compared to before separation and survey time produced an interesting picture. All of the measures had discriminated significantly, and thus all correlated with the function although the correlation was only small for the measure of financial problems. The health complaints scale was the best at discriminating this period of peak distress, with only small additions to the ability to measure it coming from the Bradburn Scales. Thus, the effect of the separation period was all-pervasive and could be measured on any of the scales, with the health complaints scale being the most sensitive measure.

The discriminant function analyses also showed which distresses could be taken as early warnings of the coming separation. Those who reported more good feelings before separation (i.e., with high Bradburn positive scores) had higher bad feelings and health complaints at survey time (1 to 2 years after separation). This was further confirmed by the correlation between bad feelings before separation and good feelings at survey time. This suggests that those men who were least affected by or aware of problems before separation were the least likely to fully recover. The finding that those with least before separation distress showed the least recovery leads to the final section of the analysis. The question dealt with here is what factors predict the men who will be most adversely affected, either at separation or 1 to 2 years after separation. Several measures were identified as possible predictors of impact and recovery. These measures were: age; occupational status; length of marriage at separation; living arrangements at survey time (whether alone or with others); number of children; whether there were areas of overt conflict recalled by the man as evident before separation; whether the man made the decision to separate; whether he wanted to separate; whether reconciliation was attempted; and how often he and

his wife had separated. These variables were entered as covariates with the Bradburn Positive and Negative, Health Complaints, and Practical Problems scales for each occasion as the dependent variables. The analysis was conducted separately for each occasion as the dependent distress was "whether or not the separation was wanted" by the particular respondent. Other associated predictors were reports of before separation conflict, attempted reconciliation and occupational status of the respondent.

These findings suggest that when (a) the separation was unwanted; (b) no pre-separation conflict was recalled; (c) reconciliation was attempted, and (d) occupational status was low, distress was highest "at separation" and 1 to 2 years later. This profile (or combination) with its parallel high level of distress was found in approximately one third of the respondents. Another additional trend was that those respondents who were not living alone at the time of survey (1 to 2 years later) were significantly more likely, other things being equal, to report more positive levels of adjustment. To sum up, the above findings suggest that those men who showed least evidence of being aware of impending separation also were least likely to want it, were more likely to seek reconciliation and were more likely to remain distressed for a prolonged period of time. Those of lower occupational status and those still living alone were also more likely to show poorer recovery from the peak distress experienced at separation.

DISCUSSION

The Impact of Separation

As was reported in previous writings and studies (Ambrose, Harper & Pemberton, 1983; Burns, 1980; Gilmore, 1983; Krentzler, 1975), the impact of separation on the psychological wellbeing and general health of the men in this study was severe. At the time immediately following separation a high percentage of men reported complaints and symptoms which are recognised in clinical practice as the outcomes of severe loss and bereavement. In general comments the men stated that they experienced feelings that were totally new to them and for which they were unprepared.

All I can say is I have given away a lifetime for nothing, after being with the same woman for 36 years. You must know how I feel . . . try to understand a man's side — why make it so easy for a woman just to leave a man, get a pension with no questions asked, and then he must sell everything to pay her. (General comment by a respondent)

The "novelty" of the separation experiences is largely related to the low percentage of men (19%) who actually wanted the separation or made the decision to separate. Results such as: one in four respondents being unaware of recurring conflicts or chronic problems in their marriages; and one in four not knowing the reasons for their wives thinking about separation, are suggestive of a lack of sensitivity to the emotional state of the marriage.

From discussions with counsellors working in the marital counselling field, it is evident that they are seeing many cases in which wives have started separating from the marriage some time before their husbands were aware of it. In general such wives state that they found their needs and feelings were not being fulfilled within the marriage and when they sought some assistance from their husbands they were not taken seriously. As a result these wives sought to have their needs and feelings met outside of the relationship in such avenues as work, recreation, children, religious activities and friends. As Vaughan (1981) put it, the spouse initiating the divorce may experience greater stress prior to separation with a later reaction to guilt, while the non-initiating spouse may feel the greatest trauma at the time of separation and experience a heightened sense of hurt, rejection, anger and/or resentment.

Responsibility for Separation

There were clear indications in this research that many men saw themselves at the time of separation as having little control or power over the continuance of the marital relationship. Nearly 70% of the men wanted a reconciliation, with only about 40% of the men actually living again with their wives after the initial separation. Further, not only was the decision to separate made by 65% of the wives but also, the men saw the major reasons for the separation occurring as being related to their wives actions, behaviours and

attitudes. So in focusing the blame and/or cause for separation predominantly onto their wives, many husbands indicated their own powerlessness, or shedding of responsibility.

It could be argued that, given the power and responsibility such husbands have handed over to their wives in allowing them to take the more influential role in the marital relationship, the high percentage of wives deciding to separate is not unexpected. The process by which the decision to separate was made may well mirror the processes of decision making within the marriage. Lack of responsibility within the marriage and lack of awareness of important factors holding the marriage together could parallel such lack of responsibility and lack of awareness at the time of separation. This particular view of the power within relationships is reflected in not uncommon comments made by women, such as "to be a good wife you have to make decisions for him but make sure he believes they are his ideas," and "he may be the head but I am the neck so every way I turn he goes." The consequences for many husbands, therefore, is that having given their wives the power (consciously or unconsciously) in the marriage, such power can be used to end the marriage. Many husbands being unaware of the power and responsibility they have allowed their wives to have, are shocked at separation. Such men feel let down by someone they entrusted with their marriage, and so they believe and feel it has all been done to them. They see themselves as having no control over the events and they feel they are the victims, they have a sense of victimisation. Such a sense of victimisation may not only colour their own perceptions of themselves and their relationships but also contribute to them believing and feeling they have been very unjustly treated. Their feelings of injustice and victimisation can also be transferred on to the society or system which is seen as supporting women and their actions. So supports presently provided for women in the form of shelters, benefits and legal assistance may be viewed as continuing the victimisation process.

Predictive Profile

The study has generated a profile of men who are at risk of not coping following separation, such men remained at a high level of

chronic distress up to two years following the separation. The major factor which was found to predict hurt and distress for the respondent men was whether they wanted the separation or not. Further analysis of the results found that there were four elements which when found together were predictors of continuing chronic distress. These elements were: (a) no pre-separation conflict was recalled; (b) separation was unwanted; (c) reconciliation was attempted; and (d) occupational status was low. In the study approximately one third of the men were found to fit this profile of chronic distress. The consequences for these men, if their particular feelings of chronic loss and distress were not dealt with, included continuing physical and psychological health problems, difficulty in coping with work, social activities and general daily living tasks. The consequences for the community may be that such men will continue to use the court system to try to pacify their own feelings of injustice and may take direct action against those they see as responsible for the injustices. They may seek to use various community systems as an arena for hurting others.

Implications for Practice

The major focus of the study was to consider whether men do "hurt" as a result of separation. It was clearly indicated that men do "hurt" and the findings also provide information on the content and extent of such distress and loss experiences. Further, the study has put forward a profile of men who are more likely to suffer chronic distress over time.

Given these findings, what can be done to assist men cope with the traumas of marital separation? The first step in meeting men's needs is to recognise that they are significantly affected by marital separation. In the public arena such recognition requires a reassessment, if not rejection of the image, that men are necessarily rational, self-sufficient, and unemotional individuals. Second, in professional arenas which deal specifically with men who have recently separated, a change of focus as well as reconsideration of the methods of interventions, may well be necessary. A crucial finding which emerged from the study was that following separation men suffered a significant loss and that many were devastated

by the experience. As with all bereavements some men were able to grieve and cope either with the help of others or through their own emotional resources. However, a significant proportion of men did not cope, suffered chronic distress, and felt a deep sense of victimisation. Therefore it would seem appropriate, that services and institutions contacted by these men, need to initially deal with their client's acute loss experience. Decisions made by these men, either by themselves or on their behalf, before dealing with such grief and loss are likely to be doomed to failure. Clinical experience has shown that the degree of objectivity and rationality is very low at the time of emotional distress. Further research needs to be undertaken to assess those clinical practices which can best meet men's needs after separation, as well as research which can establish avenues through which men may take a greater responsibility for the emotional state of their marriage and seek help within the context of a marriage rather than at or after actual separation.

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