

A Pilot RCT Exploring the Effectiveness of the DPEW in Decreasing the Potential Risk of IPV

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A Need for Theory-Driven IPV Prevention Programs

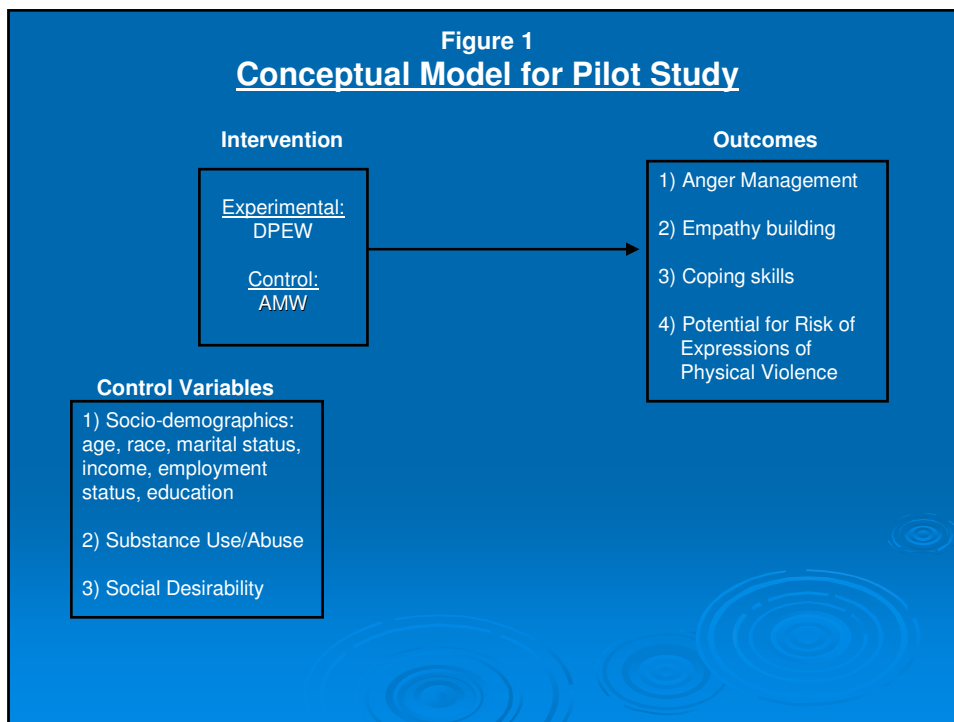
- **Current IPV offender tx programs have been built on theories & approaches that are largely without scientific merit**
- **IPV research has traditionally focused on secondary, or reactive, intervention programs that are uneven as to quality and effectiveness** (Archer, 2000; Babcock, Green, & Robie, 2004; Feder & Wilson, 2005; Stith, et al., 2004).
- **Exploration of innovative, pro-active, preventative approaches necessary in order to combat IPV's serious effects**
- **Yet, targeted, primary prevention efforts not utilized in IPV**
- **There exists extensive primary prevention research re violence in related fields (e.g., youth, dating, sexual offenses)**
 - that may be adapted to IPV

DBT—Conceptual Framework

- Dialectical Behavior Therapy—Potentially promising strategy for preventing violence (DBT; Fruzzetti & Levensky, 2000; Linehan, 1993)
- Theory-driven intervention
- DBT—a psychotherapeutic intervention w/ an educ component teaching a range of interpersonal, cognitive, & emotion regulation skills, w/in a supportive atmosphere of respect for the indiv & a commitment for positive change.
- DBT demonstrated effectiveness in tx. of indivs w/ Borderline Personality Disorder (BPD) (Koons, et al., 2001; Linehan, et al., 1991; Linehan, Heard, & Armstrong, 1993; Lynch et al., 2006; Robins & Chapman, 2004).
 - Who share many of same characteristics inherent in IPV offenders (see, Table 1). (Fruzzetti & Levensky, 2000; Waltz, 2002)

Pilot Study Aims

1. Explore processes / viability of conducting further research on experimental intervention—Dialectical Psychoeducational Workshop (DPEW)
2. Gather prelim. outcome data on potential effectiveness of DPEW in ↓ potential risk for IPV



Research Questions

To what extent does the DPEW:

- **↑ anger management skills;**
- **↑ ability to express empathy;**
- **↑ adaptive coping skills;**
- **↓ potential risk for expressions of physical violence**

Research Design

➤ RCT

- Not a methodology utilized in IPV field
- Experimental Condition → DPEW
- Control → a one time, first session anger management workshop, AMW
- Pre / Post; 1 month Qualitative Follow-Up

Research Design & Methods

➤ Feasibility—Process Level Data

- Utility & acceptability of DPEW & overall study.
- Structure, curriculum, duration, group size, perceptions re facilitator's expertise, measures, recruiting procedures, etc.

Research Design & Methods

Recruitment

- Adult male clients of a local (standard) anger management program
- Self-referred
 - (excluded: court-mandated)
- Sixty one (61) men approached to participate in pilot study.
 - Fifty-five (55) agreed; six (6) refused.

Research Design & Methods

Inclusion Criteria:

- Males 18 yrs & older;
- Never engaged in prior acts of IPV;
- Positive response to at least 1 of screening questions, e.g., “If I had the opportunity, there are some people I would hurt physically.”

DPEW **(N = 28)**

Core Elements:

Interactive handouts utilized throughout:

- **Acceptance—Change see saw**
 - Balancing extreme emotions (anger)
- **Dialectical Tool Box**
 - Gain awareness of the importance of recognizing and managing emotions (coping skills)
 - ‘Tools’ one may utilize: mindfulness, validation, making effective requests, ‘acting opposite of anger.’
- **Validation / Empathy-building skills**
- **Personal Plan of Action—how participant might manage angry feelings and emotions.**

Control—AMW **(N = 27)**

- **Comparable in time & format to experimental condition**
- **First session of (a 7 week) standard anger management program:**
 - Lecture regarding causes & consequences of expressing anger
 - Participants are asked questions re what they know about anger & how they have expressed anger

Measurement

Control Variables:

- Age, race, marital status, education level, income, employment status
- Substance Use / Abuse
- Social Desirability

Measurement

Outcome Variables:

- Anger Management Skills: State-Trait Anger Expression Inventory (STAXI-2) (Spielberger, 1988).
- Empathy: Balanced Emotional Empathy Scale (BEES) (Mehrabian, 1996).

Measurement

- Coping Skills: Ways of Coping Questionnaire (WCQ) (Folkman & Lazarus, 1988).
- Potential for Risk of Physical Violence: Risk of Eruptive Violence Scale (REVS) (Meharabian, 1997).

Adequacy of Randomization

Comparisons of baseline variables between control & treatment groups.

- Chi-square test used for comparisons of categorical variables; t-test used for continuous variables.
- Chi-square test showed no significant difference between two groups ($p=0.69$)
- Provides evidence that randomization process was successful (two conditions = at baseline)

Post treatment scores

- All post tx scores show a statistically significant difference between control & tx conditions
 - Provides initial support for pilot study's hypotheses

Changes in Outcomes between Pre & Post Tests

- Shows changes over time from pre to post test.
- All statistically significant except anger expression-out and anger expression-in sub scales (stxi_axo; stxi_axi).
 - anger expression-out = expression of anger toward others
 - anger expression-in = capacity to suppress angry feelings
- High scores = individuals express (axo) or suppress (axi) anger more frequently.

Changes in Outcomes between Pre & Post Tests

- Data based on indiv being used as own control via their pre & post test scores, so as to calculate a difference score between pre & post test scores.
- Data show that w/in control condition some indivs coping (wcq) & AM skills (stxi) ↓ over time, such that there was a statistically significant difference (delta_wcq_d; delta_wcq_sc; delta_wcq_ar; delta_wcq_ea; & rev).
- In tx condition, nearly all p-values were statistically significant, except for confrontive coping subscale (delta_wcq_cc), & anger expression out & anger expression in subscales (delta_stxi_axo; delta_stxi_axi).

Changes in Outcomes between Pre & Post Tests

- ****Key finding:** DPEW's effectiveness in ↓ desire to express anger physically (delta_stxi_sangp), while at the same ↓ potential risk for physical violence (delta_rev).
- Data demonstrate that the tx (DPEW) had an effect & that although some individual scores ↓, tx condition produced significant difference between 2 groups.
- Findings provide preliminary support for pilot study's hypotheses

Results

- **Key Finding: DPEW's apparent effectiveness in ↓ desire to express anger physically while also ↓ potential risk.**
- A low dose intervention, w/ small sample, provides initial support for DPEW, as preventative strategy for at risk individuals
 - DPEW appears less effective re controlling inward & outward feelings of intense anger.
 - May be due to limits of low dose in effecting positive change re more complex emotions.

Targeted Populations & Prevention Programs

Preliminary results = promising building blocks on which to strengthen DPEW

- its utility as preventative program for at risk indivs needs to be further tested on larger sample, over a longer period of time.
- would prove useful to conduct follow-up at several data points (e.g., at 3 mths and/or 6 mths, and at 12 mths) to assess the sustainability of the DPEW's effectiveness.

Limitations and Questions for Exploration

- Duration of intervention
- Length of follow up
 - retention of effects
- Screening for BDP
- Experimental and control conditions
 - e.g., experimental, longer duration, TAU
- Pilot outcomes reconceptualized as mediators of ultimate outcome of violence
- Measurement of outcomes
 - e.g., reliability of self report, conceptualization of violence outcome