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# Motivation enhancing approaches to reduce recidivism and increase programme attendance for men court ordered to attend domestic violence perpetrator programmes: a systematic review

Carol Vigurs, Katie Quy, Carol Rivas, Kelly Dickson, Karen Schucan-Bird

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*Submitted to the Coordinating Group of:*

Crime and Justice

Education

Disability

International Development

Nutrition

Social Welfare

Methods

Knowledge Translation and Implementation

Other:

*Plans to co-register:*

No

Yes  Cochrane  Other

Maybe

Date submitted:

Date revision submitted:

Approval date:

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## **Title of the review**

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Motivation enhancing approaches to reduce recidivism and increase programme attendance for men court ordered to attend domestic violence perpetrator programmes: a systematic review

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## **Background**

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The negative effects of domestic abuse are varied and far-reaching. Studies report that the health, well-being, and autonomy of domestic violence victims is adversely affected (WHO, 2013; Campbell, 2002), the emotional and behavioural outcomes of their children are compromised (Wolfe et al., 2003). Compared to men, women are more likely to be the victim of multiple incidents of various types of domestic abuse (partner abuse, family abuse, sexual assault and stalking) (Walby and Allen, 2004). Men are significantly more likely than women to be repeat perpetrators of violence.

There are also significant social and economic costs: in the UK the cost of treating the physical health of victims of domestic violence (including hospital, GP, ambulance, prescriptions) is estimated to be around 3% of the NHS budget (Walby 2004) and around one in ten calls to the UK police are to report an incidence of domestic abuse (ONS 2016).

However, systematic reviews of domestic violence perpetrator programmes specifically designed to change the behaviour of domestic violence abusers and prevent further assaults have consistently focused on their effectiveness in reducing repeated incidents of domestic violence. Reporting on the occurrence and magnitude of effects of programmes has had a number of methodological weaknesses: while small effects were reported via official records across the various programme types, these effects were eliminated when victim reports of recidivism were included (Akeonsi et al 2013, Aos, Miller and Drake 2006, Babcock, Green and Robie 2004, Cluss and Bodea 2011, Eckhardt et al 2013, Feder Wilson and Austin (2008), Losel et al 2011, Miller Drake and Nafziger 2013, Smedslund et al 2007, Stover, Meadow and Kaufman 2009).

In addition, there has been limited analysis of the underpinning principles or programme theories for criminal justice intervention in domestic violence. Evaluations of perpetrator programmes have typically focused on one outcome measure (officially recorded recidivism) without fully considering the relationship between the mechanisms of change and the resultant impact on behaviour (Bowen, 2011a). A number of authors have proposed the value of examining the programme theory of these programmes as part of their evaluation (e.g. Bowen, 2011a; Dobash and Dobash, 2000).

The issue of the role of programme theory is further highlighted by the dual theories of change underpinning domestic violence perpetrator programmes. While on the one hand they

function as a treatment, and employ the theories and techniques of psychological treatments for behaviour disorders, they are also required to fulfil the aims and responsibilities of legal systems to protect the public, punish offenders, deter others from committing the same offence and ultimately rehabilitate the offenders. But this confrontational nature of the legal system, to have the perpetrator accept guilt in order to rehabilitate, may be at odds with the non-judgemental therapeutic alliance between the therapist and client expected of most psychological treatments as necessary for successful treatment (Murphy and Baxter 1997). Nonetheless, without external pressures, the perpetrators of domestic violence may not feel the need to self-refer to treatment programmes or may have no incentive to seek treatment (Parhar 2008). The criminal justice system is in a unique position to exert this pressure with threat of sanction for non-compliance.

It is less clear how effective legal pressure is in securing changes in behaviour, particularly as participants may be reluctant or resistant to treatment, may participate only to avoid further sanctions, or not identify themselves as domestic violence perpetrators at all. In a review of court mandated treatment programmes, Farabee et al (1998) found that the legal pressure to attend substance abuse treatment programmes was an effective strategy for reducing attrition and increasing compliance with the programme, and this was also more effective than for people who self-referred, particularly in the field of drug and alcohol abuse. Other studies have found similar results, that individuals court-mandated to attend alcohol abuse treatment programmes were more likely to complete the programme than self-referrers. On the other hand, for domestic violence perpetrators, results have been mixed. A systematic review of men court-ordered to attend domestic violence perpetrator programmes (Feder, Wilson and Austin 2008) found only a modest effect on recidivism for men who completed the programme compared to those who had dropped out when measured by official reports of recidivism, but this effect disappeared when measured by victim reports. Studies that took the treatment drop outs as the control group found larger effects, the authors suggest this could be due to pre-existing differences between them, such as motivation to change or fear of sanctions for non attendance for the participants who stayed the course. Individual studies in the review found mixed effects for programme retention, with one study finding that court-mandated perpetrators were just as likely to drop out of the programme as those who had self-referred, and other studies finding court mandated domestic violence perpetrators were more likely to complete the programmes. (Dutton 1986, Waldo 1988).

An important step in addressing these issues is exploring the mechanisms through which treatment may exert an effect and the moderating variables that might influence the impact of an intervention. One review (Eckhardt, 2013) in a systematic review of reviews (SRR) of domestic violence perpetrator programmes (Vigurs et al 2016) found that of the four alternative programmes that reported lowered recidivism rates, three involved a pre-treatment motivational interviewing programme, or motivational enhancement. This review in the SRR also found that interventions that focused on stages-of-change motivational interviewing group sessions had lower rates of recidivism compared to a traditional Duluth model programme alone.

This review forms part of a programme of work undertaken as part of the ESRC commissioned What Works in Crime Reduction at the College of Policing and undertaken at the EPPI-Centre, which was the third component in a series of reviews. This review will only focus on those programmes delivered by or accredited by the criminal justice system, and on individuals who are required to attend such programmes through orders of the courts under a condition of probation following prosecution, or as a condition under a caution and on the effectiveness and impact on official and/or victim related outcomes.

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## **Aims**

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The review aims to answer the following questions:

- What is the impact of motivation enhancing interventions as adjuncts to perpetrator programmes on criminal justice and victim related outcomes?
  - What is the impact of motivation enhancing interventions as adjuncts to perpetrator programmes on programme completion?
  - What are the moderators associated with effective motivation enhancing interventions?
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## **Existing reviews**

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### **Reviews of motivational interviewing**

We found only one systematic review of motivation interviewing for offenders:

1. McMurrin M (2009) Motivational interviewing with offenders: A systematic review. *Legal and criminological Psychology*. 14. 83-100

The review considers motivation to change as one part of the responsivity variable in offender treatment (Andrews and Bonta, 2006; 2010). The review includes all types of offences and motivational interviewing and adapted motivational interviewing such as MI approaches and motivation enhancement techniques. The aims and outcomes of the included studies varied from increasing treatment engagement or completing treatment attendance to changing attitudes and beliefs and for the three included domestic violence offence studies, only one of the included studies measured outcomes related to behaviour change. The review suggests that more is needed to determine the effectiveness of motivational interviewing and motivational interviewing approaches on not only changing beliefs and attitudes and readiness to change, but also what impact this has in changing the behaviour of perpetrators of domestic violence in terms of repeating incidents of domestic violence.

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## **Intervention**

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It has been argued that the prevailing model of intervention where perpetrators often commence treatment on a non-voluntary basis and may not recognise a need or a desire to change is unlikely to result in substantial or lasting changes in behaviour (Musser and Murphy, 2009). Such programmes are often underpinned by requirements for 'active personal change' and acceptance of responsibility, which are likely to be rejected by an

individual who has not progressed to a point of readiness to change (Musser and Murphy, 2009). In contrast, offender treatment approaches which adhere to the principles of risk, need and responsivity (Andrews and Bonta, 2006; 2010) tailor the treatment response to an assessment of the threat posed by an offender (risk), their specific functioning deficits (need), and learning and motivation (responsivity), which may be more effective than a blanket 'one size fit all' approach. The risk principle asserts that criminal behaviour can be reliably predicted and that treatment should focus on the higher risk offenders; the need principle highlights the importance of criminogenic needs in the design and delivery of treatment; and the responsivity principle describes how the treatment should be provided. One example of a responsivity variable is that of the offenders' motivation to change (McMurran 2009).

The concept of motivational interviewing was first developed in the early 1980s based in part on addiction treatment work carried out by William R. Miller, and later with Stephen Rollnick (Miller & Rollnick, 1991, 2002). Motivational interviewing (MI) is similar in principle to Client-Centred Counselling in its emphasis on empathy, optimism, and respect for client choice (Rogers, 1951). Motivational interviewing differs in that it is a more non-directive approach as its main focus is to address clients' readiness to change. The underlying theory in motivational interviewing is that people experience and move through different stages of change while modifying their behaviour. Originating from the Trans theoretical stages of change theory (Prochaska & DiClemente, 1983; Prochaska, DiClemente, & Norcross, 1992), it understands that the journey to behaviour change may not be a linear progression through the stages; ambivalence to change means that modifying behaviours may pass through cycles, regressing and advancing through the stages before finally behaviour is changed permanently.

A systematic review of motivational interviewing for substance addiction or dependency found effectiveness overall in reducing substance use compared to no treatment but not much of a difference when compared to treatment as usual or alternative treatment. (Smedslund et al 2011). A 2009 review of four meta analyses of motivational interviewing employed for various purposes found that MI was most effective when it was used as a pre-treatment intervention (Lundahl and Burke 2009).

Motivational enhancement therapy (MET) is a further therapeutic application of motivational psychology and stages of change theory that aims to overcome ambivalence and advance through stages of change. It has a more specific emphasis than MI on personalized assessment, feedback, and change plans. It was originally developed for individuals with drug and alcohol dependence (project MATCH, 1997). MET has been found to be effective in comparison with established treatments, including Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (Westra and Dozoi, 2006) or Twelve-Step Facilitation Therapy (Vasilaki, Hosier and Cox, 2007). It has also been found to be effective in conjunction with other therapies, for example the Cannabis Youth Treatment combines MET with Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (Dennis et al 2004), and as a prelude to other therapeutic approaches, and has been adapted and used to address a variety of health issues.

This review therefore examines the primary studies on motivational enhancement as a pre-treatment to standard domestic violence perpetrator programme compared to standard domestic violence perpetrator programme without efforts to address motivation to change or programme readiness. They will be directly delivered by the criminal justice system prior to a conviction for domestic violence or programmes that target convicted perpetrators. The men will have been court ordered to attend the treatment programme.

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## **Population**

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### **Geography**

A study will be included if data has been collected from OECD countries (Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Chile, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Korea, Luxemburg, Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, United Kingdom, United States).

### **Demographics**

This review will include male adults (aged 16 or over) who have been ordered by a court to or are under some condition of legal compulsion to attend a standard domestic violence perpetrator programme. The assumption is that men who are under legal pressure to attend a domestic violence programme may be more ambivalent to change or treatment resistant than men who volunteer to attend such programmes.

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## **Outcomes**

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This review will include studies if they report on repeated incidents of domestic violence at follow up after the treatment phase. This may be from official reports of recidivism or reports of repeat incidences by the victim. The review will also include studies that report on programme completion rates and rate of attrition.

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## **Study designs**

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Studies will be eligible for inclusion if they report on the quantitative impact of the motivational interviewing / motivational enhancement techniques, using eligible outcomes and participants. The evaluation must be of sufficiently robust study design that we can make a causal inference to the outcome, such as a randomised controlled trial or quasi-experimental study design with an eligible comparison condition. The comparator would be a standard domestic violence perpetrator programme without the motivational interviewing or motivation enhancing pre-programme. Study designs that do not include an eligible comparison group will be excluded such as those that are interested only in a change in a persons' beliefs or attitudes after treatment.

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## Review authors

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**Lead review author:** The lead author is the person who develops and co-ordinates the review team, discusses and assigns roles for individual members of the review team, liaises with the editorial base and takes responsibility for the on-going updates of the review.

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Name:	Carol Vigurs
Title:	Mrs
Affiliation:	Evidence for Policy and Practice Information and coordinating Centre (EPPI-Centre)
Address:	UCL-Institute of Education 18 Woburn Square
City, State, Province or County:	London
Post code:	WC1H 0NR
Country:	UK
Phone:	+44 207 6126413
Email:	c.vigurs@ucl.ac.uk

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### Co-author(s):

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Name:	Katie Quy
Title:	Dr
Affiliation:	Thomas Coram Research Unit (TCRU)
Address:	27-28 Woburn Square
City, State, Province or County:	London
Post code:	WC1H 0AA
Country:	UK
Phone:	+44 (0)20 7612 6957
Email:	k.quy@ucl.ac.uk

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### Co-author(s):

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Name:	Kelly Dickson
Title:	Ms
Affiliation:	Evidence for Policy and Practice Information and coordinating Centre (EPPI-Centre)

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Address:	UCL-Institute of Education 10 Woburn Square
City, State, Province or County:	London
Post code:	WC1H 0NR
Country:	UK
Phone:	+44 207 612 6127
Email:	K.dickson@ucl.ac.uk
<b>Co-author(s):</b>	
Name:	Carol Rivas
Title:	Senior Researcher (Associate Professor)
Affiliation:	Social Science Research Unit
Address:	18 Woburn Square
City, State, Province or County:	London
Post code:	WC1H 0NR
Country:	UK
Phone:	+44 207 6126923
Email:	c.rivas@ucl.ac.uk
<b>Co-author(s):</b>	
Name:	Karen Schucan-Bird
Title:	Research Officer
Affiliation:	Evidence for Policy and Practice Information and coordinating Centre (EPPI-Centre)
Address:	UCL-Institute of Education 10 Woburn Square
City, State, Province or County:	London
Post code:	WC1H 0NR
Country:	UK
Phone:	+ 44 20 7612 6465
Email:	K.Schucan-bird@ucl.ac.uk

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### **Roles and responsibilities**

The authors have a range of experience in the methods of systematic reviewing for policy and practice and expertise in the topic area.

Carol Vigurs has authored and co-authored a range of systematic reviews for policy and practice, including for the What Works Centre for Crime Reduction on the topics of domestic violence and policing mental health and for NICE clinical guidelines for health and social care. Carol Vigurs is also experienced in developing search strategies and will lead on updating the existing search strategy and information retrieval.

Katie Quy has also co-authored a number of systematic reviews for the What Works Centre for Crime Reduction on the topics of domestic violence and policing mental health. Katie is also a psychologist carrying out research in the areas of child development, parenting and wellbeing, and oppositional behaviour, and a lecturer in psychology on the Social Sciences programme in the Department of Social Science.

Carol Rivas has been co-authoring and more recently leading on a Cochrane systematic review of advocacy interventions in domestic violence since 2005. She is currently involved in two studies developing core outcome sets for domestic violence study syntheses and research, one for interventions for abused women and one for children of couples in an abusive relationship. She has experience in both quantitative and qualitative evidence synthesis. Carol is a senior researcher in public health and social policy and has led projects on the experience of domestic violence and on domestic violence screening. She leads an MSc module on Evidence for Policy and Practice.

Kelly Dickson has over 10 years' experience leading policy relevant systematic reviews in health and social care and in both quantitative and qualitative evidence synthesis. She has recently co-authored a DFID funded mixed method review on mental health and psychosocial programmes for people affected by humanitarian emergencies and an NIHR funded review on positive youth development programmes for young people. Kelly is also an integrative psychotherapist working with adults in community-based settings.

Karen Schucan-Bird has led a number of systematic reviews addressing different policy-related questions. Within criminal justice, Karen has completed systematic maps and in-depth reviews, specifically in the fields of domestic violence and policing and mental health, and is currently involved in updating the UK Crime Reduction Toolkit (an online repository of narrative summaries of systematic reviews). Her day to day work also involves teaching undergraduate and postgraduate modules in the Social Sciences.

The distribution of tasks is summarized as follows:

- Content: Carol Vigurs, Katie Quy, Carol Rivas, Kelly Dickson, Karen Schucan-Bird
- Systematic review methods: Carol Vigurs, Carol Rivas, Kelly Dickson
- Statistical analysis: Carol Vigurs, Carol Rivas
- Information retrieval: Carol Vigurs

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## **Funding**

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The What Works Centre for crime reduction was funded by an ESRC grant. This systematic review is a part of that work.

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## **Potential conflicts of interest**

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None of the authors has been previously involved in relevant criminal justice interventions that are the focus of this review. Carol Vigurs has published reviews on domestic violence perpetrator programmes and a review of reviews of domestic violence perpetrator programmes as part of the What Works Centre for Crime reduction.

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## **Preliminary timeframe**

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- Date we plan to submit a draft review: 1 June 2018