

# Men's Engagement in Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) Prevention Programs

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**Abstract**—This review emphasizes the effectiveness of men's participation in preventing domestic violence, and whether non-violent (NV) boys' and men's perceptions of intimate partner violence (IPV) prevention programs affect their involvement. The main goals of this assessment were to investigate (1) how NV men engaged in anti-violence prevention programs that empower women, (2) what were the possible perceptions of NV men involved in prevention programs (3) how to identify effective approaches and strategies that encouraged NV men to become involved in prevention programs. This critical review also included the overview of prevention programs such as: The Mentors in Violence Prevention Programs (MVP), The White Ribbon Campaign (WRC), and Domestic Violence Prevention Enhancement and Leadership through Alliances (DELTA). The review suggested that (1) the expanding prevention programs need to reach more macro settings such as work place, faith-based and other community based organizations, and (2) territory prevention programs should expand through addressing the long-term effects of violence.

**Keywords**—Engagement, intimate partner violence, non-violent men, prevention programs.

## I. INTRODUCTION

INTIMATE partner violence (IPV) is traditionally regarded as woman's issue, and many programs have been developed to end and prevent violence through women's participations and action. However, these programs have not adequately included effective strategies for the gender-based violence because feminine oppressive structures left men and boys out of prevention work, or men don't want to give up power and be involved [1]. To develop and deliver anti-violence efforts, the active participation of non-violent (NV) men and boys is likely essential. Additionally, the effectiveness of men's participation in prevention programs is due to two reasons: 1) men and boys will feel a sense of "ownership" of the problem 2) men need to be directly involved in the issues of violence, because they are most likely the part of the solution [1].

The best practices to prevent and end intimate partner violence are explored through increasing NV men's engagement in IPV prevention programs. The review of "Where Men Stand: Men's roles in ending violence against women" by Michael Flood has analyzed in focusing on NV men's engagement in the White Ribbon Campaign. This review included men's thoughts about their behavior in terms of VAW. Additionally, the models of ally or bystanders development have discussed in order to analyze efforts of NV

men engaged in prevention programs.

Men's engagement has caused a positive shift in attitudes and behaviors associated with VAW [2]; and has led to a more active role as bystanders who can effectively address VAW [3]. When men are part of the prevention programs to stop the physical and sexual assault of women and girls, these programs will foster respectful gender relationships, in families and communities [4]. To ally with women to prevent violence in the first place, men need to accept an ongoing process of changing themselves through self-examination and self-discovery [5], [6].

## II. BACKGROUND

### A. The Consequences of the IPV

IPV is physical, emotional, or sexual abuse perpetrated against a current or former spouse, sexual partner, girl/boyfriend, or by parties with a child in [7]. IPV affects survivors well-being negatively, for example severe, ongoing stress with family or physical aspects of one's environment is the most damaging to an individual's mental health [8]. IPV likely causes chronic stress in survivors' lives, and violent environment threatens survivors' physical and psychological well-being [9]. Male and female IPV victims most likely pay the enormous physical and psychological consequences of their injury, and even death [10]. Various studies also define other consequences of IPV as: depression, exacerbating symptoms of other serious mental illnesses, substance use, posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), physical health problems, and an increased risk of suicide [10]-[12].

### B. The Possible Reasons of Men's IPV

Men's violent behavior against women may be shaped for numerous of reasons at all levels of individual, family and community ecology. Both gender and culture are powerful influences on attitudes, and both operate at micro and macro levels [13]. These levels include individual socialization, the norms and relations of particular contexts and communities, and the society-wide workings of the media, law, and other factors (p. 137). Furthermore, gender differences in definitions and perceptions are forms of violence against women such as sexual harassment, date rape, and wife assault [13]. Gender differences, social norms and patriarchal attitudes are often other causes of violence against women. However, reference [14] found that cross-gender differences in attitudes in many countries are stronger than differences associated with other social divisions such as socioeconomic status or education.

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### *C. The Barriers of Men's Engagement in Prevention Programs*

Although many studies suggest that NV men's engagement is essential in the prevention programs, gender roles and other cultural norms are often barriers [3], [2]. Moreover, interpersonal violence commonly has been accepted as a private issue, and traditionally considered a woman's issue. This perspective has not likely allowed nonviolent men to be a part of the VAW prevention programs. The link between traditional notions of masculinity and violence makes it difficult for many men to be able to actively participate in violence prevention due to their masculine identity [3], [15], a tendency and attitudes of homophobia [15]. Although masculinity and other patriarchal behaviors can make their participation in VAW prevention program challenging, many prevention programs continue to strive to increase men's involvement in the prevention programs. While many studies discuss men's masculine identity, Men's defensive feelings about gender-based violence, and the feelings of blame and shame that may lead their reluctance to take part in prevention programs [16]. Although gaining a sense of awareness concerning the issues of men's VAW may naturally lead to negative emotional reactions, NV men learn that such feelings are not inevitable [16].

A few studies have investigated individual, community, and institutional level of barriers in an international settings, for example, class, ethnicity, religion within men's national or regional context on an individual level may impede their access to getting involved in antiviolence efforts, due to issues such as poverty, migration, racism, illiteracy, and food insecurity [17]. These issues might make VAW less visible and cause lower concern for NV men.

Researchers have found the possible barriers of men's engagement as: (1) the community-based intervention programs might not ask them to get involved, (2) timing problems, (3) perceiving as a personal issue, and (3) the lack of information about the consequences of violence against women [18], [19].

The study is describes the difficulties of non-violent men's engagement as: "Among the reasons endorsed by more than 10% of the men were that no one had asked them to get involved; they did not have time; they did not know how to help; they perceived that they had been vilified and were seen as part of the problem, rather than approached as an important part of the solution; and that intimate partner violence is a private matter and they were uncomfortable getting involved" [20]. These challenges describe men interpersonal relationships, yet cultural and societal factors also affect their engagement to prevent male violence. For instance, in some countries program representatives identified institutionalized male power within governmental, media, criminal justice, religious, tribal, and other community institutions as a significant barrier for men's engagement [17].

### *D. Men's Involvement in Violence Prevention Efforts*

Non-abusive men need training to express their attitudes toward women, and they can reflect how their behavior is

positive and healthy to women and girls. Three levels of prevention is described as: 1) tertiary prevention might include education programs or legal disincentives for abusers; 2) secondary prevention is to identify at-risk individuals and work to reduce the risk factors that create vulnerability to problems; 3) primary prevention involves working to reduce the number of incidents of VAW, or to prevent it from happening [21]. In terms of gender-based violence prevention, this effort would involve the introduction of concepts such as new values, ways of thinking, and the development of new relationship skills [16]. Primary and secondary violence prevention programs focus on sexual harassment and dating violence while working with school-aged men; on sexual violence and rape when working with college-aged men; and on intimate partner violence when working with older men, fraternities and sports teams [15]. Furthermore, universal prevention programs that may include both education and media programs, that aim at shifting beliefs and attitudes about violence and building communication and conflict resolution skills [20].

In order to increase the effectiveness of NV men's engagement in the violence prevention programs, these men require training in the context of cohesive peer groups, educational and consciousness-raising workshops [22]-[24]. Violence prevention programming might involve a one-time workshop with men [1] and a series of ongoing interactive workshops for men, or social marketing and media campaigns directed at men [23].

Men need to take individual responsibility for their actions and recognize the existence of societal power relations which is violence against women [15]. The behaviors and attitudes that cause men's violence against women may also represent factors that lead men to be violent toward other men [3]. Men who are violent with women preclude these men from having meaningful friendships with other men [1]. The efforts to engage men as allies can presumably help to reduce the risk of abuse by men who participate in it; while changing the culture of abusive men [20].

### III. THE POSSIBLE BARRIERS OF MEN'S ENGAGEMENT IN PREVENTION PROGRAMS

Although the efforts toward men's engagement in preventing intimate partner violence (IPV) are still a new approach, various fields of services and approaches have developed in individual, community and institutional settings. These efforts might include education programs for nonviolent men, and social marketing media [2]. However, gender roles, socio-economic status, ethnicity, and religion may impede men's access to getting involved in antiviolence efforts [17]. Sexism, classism and racism likely play significant roles in blocking awareness of violence against women (VAW) because these factors often do not allow them to see IPV as a social problem. Given these negative roles, this report particularly aims to analyze the bystander approach and social marketing materials, and how these programs encourage nonviolent men to prevent IPV.

Sexism is one of the significant barriers of NV men's

engagement in the prevention efforts. An Australian survey which found the relationship between indicators of socio-economic status, occupation, and employment and violence-supportive attitudes was not as consistent as those for sex and support for gender equality [13]. Numerous meta-analyses found that men's adherence to sexist, patriarchal, or sexually hostile attitudes are an important predictor of their use of VAW [25]-[27]. Moreover, sexism is a challenging issue for non-violent men's engagement in prevention programs because VAW is long seen as a "woman's issue", and this process inevitably involves examining gender roles, men's own past behavior, and men's power [17].

Male economic and decision-making dominance in the family is possibly one of the strongest predictors of the incidence of family violence [28]. These findings support the significant roles of sexism and social classes in shaping VAW. In Africa, Asia, and North and South America, program representatives noted that issues such as poverty, migration, racism, illiteracy, and food insecurity make the issue of violence against women less visible and a potentially lower concern for many men [10]. Additionally, the study with South American participants found that younger and poorer men likely dropped the antiviolence prevention programs [17]. Additionally, [29] reported that many men in South Africa as well as other low income contexts, poverty, material insecurity, and unemployment were dominant their attitudes and choices reflected this.

Racism is also challenging issue of preventing and ending violence against women. Reference [17] highlights that "for some men marginalized by racism and/or poverty, traditional avenues for performing and embodying hegemonic masculinity may be complicated or foreclosed." If prevention programs focus on engaging a culturally specific group of men, this approach may leave men feeling limited in their access to power and security, and this limitation hampers men to critically evaluate their power and privilege [17].

Reference [17] has showed the role of intersectionality in engaging men, and the ways that gender-based violence interlocks with community or state-sanctioned forms of violence, as well as the class, race, and orientation-based marginalization experienced by many potential male allies. As a result, prevention programs need to focus on the issue of VAW in a community level as well as individual level without marginalizing of sub-groups regarding their gender, race or class.

#### IV. THE OVERVIEW OF IPV PREVENTION SERVICES

The goals of prevention services are described as: (1) social norms campaigns that seek to close the gap between men's perceptions of other men's agreement with violence-supportive and sexist norms and the actual extent of this agreement and (2) bystander intervention approaches focus on fostering a sense of community responsibility for violence prevention [13]. College males also reduced their overestimation of other males' sexist beliefs and comfort with sexism, after a recent social norms initiative on a US university campus [16]. Reference [30] found that

approaching men and women as potential bystanders to behaviors related to sexual violence can improve attitudes, knowledge and behavior among US undergraduates.

As a primary prevention of sexual violence, a simple framework for understanding and organizing prevention initiatives through the Spectrum of Prevention offers: "1) strengthening individual knowledge and skills, 2) promoting community education, 3) educating providers, 4) engaging, strengthening, and mobilizing communities, 5) changing organizational practice and 6) influencing policies and legislation" [31]. These steps explain the prevention programs in an ecological approach.

##### *A. Bystander Approach in Colleges*

College students play a significant role as bystanders to increase the effectiveness of rape-prevention programs such as The Men's Program [32]. In colleges, a bystander approach may help to prevent rape with the contribution of everyone to prevention efforts. The bystander approach, prevention activities are not limited to potential victims or perpetrators but can engage all individuals; such as friends, parents, grandparents, coaches, teachers, brothers, sisters, and community members of rape victims in being allies and other educational activities [32].

Local schools and universities might provide a forum for a panel discussion on the issues related gender-based violence, or offer a course on gender-based violence, or incorporate the topic into already existing courses [16]. Education programs in schools and universities use pedagogical approaches, the possibly effects on people's attitudes toward positively and their participation in VAW [13]. Prevention effort is also being delivered by interactive theater and online training [33], [34]. Many studies showed the importance of the sufficient training for educators; and if facilitators gain sufficient training and support, whether the facilitator is a peer or professional may make less of a difference in the effectiveness of the program [35].

The bystander framework aims to make community members to be aware of their role as active bystanders in preventing sexual and relationship violence and stalking; furthermore, this framework offers thoughtful and effective methods to change cultural norms and attitudes in communities [36].

##### *B. Social Marketing Materials for Communities*

Researchers emphasize that social marketing campaigns can produce positive change in the attitudes and behaviors associated with men's perpetration of VAW [2]. In doing so, the social marketing campaign shaped attitude change after exposure to the prevention messages to step in as an active bystander in situations of violence [35]. Reference [37] discusses that social marketing campaigns have the potential to increase public knowledge on a given topic about the changing their current behaviors.

The underlying goal above of social marketing campaigns possibly changes individual behavior by stressing fundamental problems associated with the individual's negative or

inappropriate behavior. In order to reach this goal, the well-developed social marketing need to include print, radio, online technologies, and television [36].

Overall, to reduce and end the incidence of sexual and partner violence, schools, colleges, community organizations and other broad media campaigns may provide social marketing tools, bystander approach and among others.

#### V. THE REVIEW OF IPV PREVENTION PROGRAMS

Men's intimate partner violence prevention programs generally aim to educate men about the effect of gender, to facilitate empathy for people and the self, and to teach men how to positively affect other men and women [16]. This report will investigate the Mentors in Violence Prevention Program (MVP); [38], the White Ribbon Campaign (WRC), [1], the MenEngage Program [17], and Domestic Violence Prevention Enhancement and Leadership through Alliances (DELTA).

##### A. The Mentors in Violence Prevention Program (MVP)

The MVP is a leadership training program that motivates students-athletes and student leaders to prevent VAW on the colleges [19]. The MVP focuses on young men not as perpetrators or potential perpetrators, but as empowered bystanders who can confront abusive peers, and this approach likely supports abused peers [19].

The activities of the MVP are describes as the processing a series of hypothetical scenarios involving sexism, domestic violence, and sexual assault [19]. Peer educators and lead participants through potential responses, discuss reasons they might intervene or not intervene, and consider what factors might reinforce participants for getting involved [39]. As a result, non-violent student-athletes and leaders learn what to do, how to take action if they disapprove of VAW in this program.

In group education with men and boys, interactive educational activities include topics such as gender and sexuality, male and female sexual health, violence and other general resources; furthermore, facilitators have knowledge about various aspects of violence, the relationships and controlling behaviors [39]. The evaluation of the MVP program found the lower levels of sexism and an increased belief that fraternity men and sorority women could prevent VAW [40]. The MVP provides a structured opportunity for men to talk with each other about masculinity that is related to men's VAW [38]. In addition to the MVP project contributes to a change in the socio-cultural construction of masculinity that equates strength in men with dominance over women [41], [38]. The Mentors in Violence Prevention Program (MVP) includes sessions that are (1) to give a presentation to the entire coaching staff to introduce program which is MVP playbook, (2) to schedule individual sessions, (3) to use scenarios that include harassment, violence in the Playbook, (4) to discuss how nonviolent men deal with potential perpetrators, and (5) to prepare college male student-athletes to become mentors [38]. This program's main goals are to educate athletes to prevent them from committing VAW, and

to use their stature among their male peers in the larger student body [38].

The MVP has been evaluated in many institutional settings, including high schools, college campuses and the United States Corps. The pre and post-test measured attitudes and behavior of non-violent men; and this evaluation highlighted the reward of pro-social, proactive responses to situations of harm or potential harm [42].

##### B. The White Ribbon Campaign (WRC)

In the WRC, active bystander on the individual level aims to: (1) intervene in violent incidents and high-risk situations, (2) challenge perpetrators and potential perpetrators, (3) support victims and survivors, (4) be an egalitarian role model, (5) challenge the social norms and inequalities which sustain men's VAW [2]. In community level goals likely are to involve male faith leaders and faith community, to develop and implement policies and programs in promoting respectful relationships between men and women, and to integrate violence prevention into the activities and policies of local councils [28].

The WRC is the first social movement undertaken in which VAW was significantly identified as a man's social issue and emphasized men's responsibility in violence prevention [16]. WRC is also non-partisan, and attempts to include men from across the social and political spectrum; furthermore, the WRC work with women's organizations and urge men to listen to the voices and concerns of women [43]. The WRC is a grassroots activism effort, and the white ribbon is a statement that one will not commit, condone, or remain silent about men's VAW. This campaign has grown into the largest effort [16]; with spreading 60 countries around the world [44].

The WRC used various tactics such as education, awareness-raising, outreach, technical assistance, capacity building, partnerships and creative campaigns, and these strategies help to inspire men to understand their potential to be a part of a positive change [44].

The WRC includes the workshops and presentations focus on promoting gender equality for middle, high school and post-secondary students as well as people from all walks of life to become allies. These workshops' topics are "who's The Man?", "Blueprints for Change", "Behind The Masculinity" and "How Homophobia Impacts Heterosexual Males" [44]. Reference [43] notes the importance of the activities are that to give boys and men the structure, the encouragement, and to work as allies with girls and young women.

##### C. Michigan Coalition to End Domestic and Sexual Violence (MCEDSV)

MCEDSV focuses on the primary prevention programs such as Domestic Violence Prevention Enhancement and Leadership through Alliances (DELTA) program, Rape Prevention Education (RPE) and Mobilizing Men and Boys in Michigan (M3).

The DELTA program's goals are (1) to reduce first time occurrences of IPV in funded communities, and (2) to address the entire continuum of IPV from episodic violence to

battering through a variety of activities in individual, relationship, community and societal level influences [45]. DELTA PREP funded 19 state domestic violence coalitions to build their organizational capacity for IPV primary prevention work which includes developmentally appropriate activities [45]. In 2002, Centers for Disease Control (CDC) used e Family Violence Prevention Services Act (FVPSA) funding to develop the DELTA Program [46]. This program has contributed to knowledge and practice by sharing the coalitions' experiences and disseminating project resources [46]. DELTA Program represent and support the work of local domestic violence programs with using public education, public policy development, training, technical assistance, and program development [46].

Local DELTA and RPE-funded communities have been implementing promising prevention approaches such as: Programming for Men and Boys (Men Can Stop Rape, MOST Clubs and A Call to Men presentations), Healthy Relationships Curricula Peer Leadership Bystander Skill Development Forum Theater and Experiential Learning [46].

MenEngage program grants from the Department of Justice through the Office of Violence against Women (OVW) has been received; and these grants have used for two local communities is an extension of their existing Mobilizing Men in Michigan initiative [47]. The advocacy activities of the MenEngage program primarily includes; promoting sexual and reproductive health and rights, ending violence against women and girls, preventing child sexual exploitation, sexual abuse and trafficking, and supporting men's positive involvement in maternal and child health and as fathers or caregivers [47]. Additionally, MenEngage programs aims to increase HIV and AIDS prevention and treatment, and to reduce violence between men and boys [47].

MenEngage Program is a global program including hundreds of non-governmental organizations, as well as UN partners. The ultimate goals of the MenEngage program are (1) to provide a collective voice on the need to engage men and boys in gender equality, and (2) to build and improve the field of practice around engaging men in achieving gender justice and advocating before policymakers at the local, regional and international levels [47]. In order to reach these goals, MenEngage program claims that manhood needs to be defined by: "building relationships based on respect and equality and speaking out against violence in your society" [47]. However, organizational representatives found five core challenges such as: (1) negotiating issues of gender, (2) intersectionality, (3) sustainability, (4) legitimacy, and (5) ideological inclusivity [17]. Regarding gender roles, negotiating male privilege and having man-only spaces are major struggles for women's organizations in efforts to end violence [17].

## VI. DISCUSSION

Intimate partner violence men's preventions programs play a powerful role to prevent and end violence. However, numerous men still challenge to get involve in prevention efforts due to cultural norms, masculinity, possible financial

difficulties and other individual or/and societal barriers. This paper recommends expanding prevention programs where offers and what ecology focus.

Such institutional settings such as work places, faith-based and other community based organizations need to be more aware of intimate partner violence. The information about how to increase men's engagement in the prevention programs at the all levels is still need to be developed, for example there is limited resource on programs to prevent intimate partner violence outside of school or college settings [20]. Other settings such as health, work place and other organizations might encourage men to attend actively prevention programs. So collaboration within different agencies may affect each other to learn how to participate prevention efforts. Ally building is a relatively new initiative for men's antiviolence engagement, in particular; however, little data are available on the number of men who make an effort to participate in antiviolence efforts or not mention serve as antiviolence allies [48]. This ally building should be a significant step for further community outreach programs for individuals who are not aware of antiviolence involvement.

The prevention programs need to focus on how to prevent stalking and IPV on the campus as well as sexual violence; for instance, Reference [49] found that there are many more research articles dealing with campus sexual violence prevention than stalking or IPV. On the other hand, violence prevention efforts need to some problems are related to VAW, such as binge drinking and other key risk factors, instead of focusing too much on individuals or small groups, such as athletes or fraternity members [49]. Additionally, the consistent definition of violence against women (VAW) is essential, because the lack of standardized definitions and the varied use of terms related to VAW prevention also present challenges to the field [49].

The limitations of this review are that (1) the lack of data about undeveloped or developing countries' efforts on prevention through non-violent men, and (2) prevention programs mostly focus on the activities for prevention efforts, and not primarily increase the non-violent men's engagement. As a result, prevention services need to consider more outreach programs, education to increase non-violent men's engagement on individual, family, organizational, and societal levels [20].

In order to reduce these barriers, the appropriate strategies depend in part on the circumstances, the participants, and the context should be considered [2]. Furthermore, if campaigns put more emphasis on their public education efforts such as schools, community and among others, they importantly develop a strong advocacy capacity with educational materials [43].

## VII. CONCLUSION

This review primarily highlighted two main issues for the effective prevention programs of intimate partner violence that are (1) more non-violent men need to involve prevention programs for the safety of women and children in experiencing risk of violent environment, and (2) prevention

programs need to establish new strategies to increase non-violent men's engagement in globally. At last but not least, in the literature review showed the little data about IPV prevention programs in undeveloped and developing countries, and more globally studies are needed.

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