Utilization of Videoconference Software for Men’s BIPs

Summary of Experience and Research to date and COVID-19 Considerations

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Introductions

- Melissa Petrangelo Scaia, MPA
- Jon Heath
- Professor Nicole Westmarland
- Rosanna “Rosie” Bellini, PhD Researcher
Experience of last 15 Months

- Melissa Petrangelo Scaia, MPA – Minnesota
- Jon Heath – Maine
Use of VIDEOCONFERENCE TECHNOLOGY for BIP group work

- Grew up in rural America and had been doing groups for 20 years.
- Knew that men were driving far – up to 2 hours one way
- Was using GoToMeeting for international work with Global Rights for Women
- Reached out to others and put it on Aquila listserv
Other agencies talked about the “pros and cons” but did not try it. They talked themselves out of it.

Speculation for the “cons” was just that – speculation

I wanted to try it, be transparent, put in safeguards for women who were battered and have a researcher as part of the pilot
Use of VIDEOCONFERENCE TECHNOLOGY for BIP group work (continued)

- Researcher and assistant: Professor Nicole Westmarland and Rosie Bellini of the University of Durham in England.
- Professor Nicole Westmarland also co-authored the Project Mirabal study related to BIPs.
- They have volunteered as researchers.
Comparison of In-Person Groups vs. Videoconference Groups – Referrals

- Criminal court referrals from judges and probation
- Sought to get referrals from Minnesota, Maine, and Texas but initially only Minnesota was approved
- Now we receive referrals from Minnesota and a few other states
- Developed fillable form for use by referral agency and men to fill out
- Men fill out form and e-mail it back and then intake interview is scheduled
- All communication done by e-mail
Comparison of In-Person Groups vs. Videoconference Groups – INTAKE INTERVIEW

- Intake Interview done individually with one man at a time to assess his readiness for group – personally and ease with use of technology
- Conduct demonstration of GoToMeeting framework
- Reiterate NO use of cell phones or cellular network
- Review rules and technology requirements
- Make contact with local victim agency and victim of offender
Comparison of In-Person Groups vs. Videoconference Groups – GROUP PROCESS

- The Duluth Model’s curriculum “Creating a Process of Change for Men Who Batter”
- Co-facilitation of man and woman
- Facilitators and men can log in from anywhere
  - Travel abroad for work
  - Men who travel
- "Share Screen" function for use of whiteboard
- End with reflection question and send via e-mail and have men answer by the start of group the next week
Advantages of VIDEOCONFERENCE BIPs

- More communication with men in-between groups
- Everything is documented in writing
- No absences for a cold and mild illness because you cannot get others sick
- Smaller groups
- Less weather interruptions of group
- Men and facilitators can log in from anywhere which means less absences from facilitators also
Disadvantages of VIDEOCONFERENCE BIPs

- Smaller groups
- Men could be drinking alcohol during or prior to group
- Harder to do small group work with the men
- Videos and audio have a slight delay
- Data security and privacy
- Men who do not have the internet in their home have to find a private place to participate
  - Cook County, MN set up a room in their Health & Human Services building for the men to come to connect because they do not have internet at home
- Men who do not have a computer or iPad cannot participate
  - Carlton County, MN purchased 10 iPads for their men to use just for this purpose
Lessons Learned and “the Unexpected”

- Confirm that the e-mail the man is using is only used by him
- Men who light up a cigarette during group
- The family dog sits with the man
- Communicate that the men must sit still while participating in group
  - Make your coffee before group
  - Go to the bathroom before group
  - Men cannot be doing childcare during the group unless the child is an infant and not disruptive to the group process
  - Woman came and listened by the door of his room
Costs of Videoconference Groups

- Videoconference Software
- Fast internet connection
- Coordinator
- Special thank you to Hunter Cardwell, Pathways to Family Peace Coordinator – grad student
- Facilitators – special thank you to our volunteer facilitators
Considerations during COVID-19 pandemic

- Interviewed five women this past weekend about their thoughts and concerns about doing videoconference men’s group during COVID-19.

- They all strongly cautioned to not do it with men who are currently living with a partner who has used violence against them unless you can verify she will not be home during the group process.

- All concerned about the threats and harm to the children who may be home now because not in school.

- The “closer access” he has to women and children immediately after group the more worried they were. “If he leaves group feeling bad he will take it out on us. At least with in-person group he has the drive home to chill out.”

- Some women felt it was better to give him a break right now from group because of concerns of money, and other women felt like it is best to keep it going.

- All women cautioned programs from making contact with them during this time over the phone because women are more likely near him.
Initial Lessons Learned from Researchers

Summary document from:
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- Rosanna “Rosie” Bellini, PhD Researcher
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