



HUMANISTINEN
AMMATTIKORKEAKOULU

OPINNÄYTETYÖ

**The need for a support service for male victims of
domestic abuse in Co. Kerry, Ireland**

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Tiivistelmä <p>Opinnäytetyöni tavoitteena oli selvittää, onko Irlannin Kerryn maakunnan alueella palveluita jotka tukevat miehiä, jotka ovat perheväkivallan uhreja. Tavoitteena oli tuoda esille palveluiden vähyys ja niiden tarpeellisuus. Opinnäytetyön tilaaja on Novas kattojärjestön Arlington Lodge, joka on Kerryn maakunnan alueen ainoa tuetun asumisen yksikkö. Tukiasumisyksikkö avustamaa lukuisia kadulla eläviä henkilöitä, jotka eivät kykene asumaan itsenäisesti joko erilaisten addiktioiden, mielenterveysongelmien tai sosiaalisen syrjäytymisen vuoksi.</p> <p>Tutkimustyön tarkoituksena oli kerätä tärkeää tietoa perheväkivallasta ja sen uhreista ja kehittää maakunnan palveluita sen pohjalta. Toteutuksen tekoa ohjaava pääkysymys oli, miksi maakunnassa ei ole tukipalvelua miehille jotka ovat kokeneet perheväkivaltaa, ja olisiko sille tarvetta. Tutkimustyön tuloksena on koonti tutkimustuloksista ja tehdyistä haastatteluista.</p> <p>Tutkimustyö on laadullinen tutkimus, jossa käytin tapaustutkimusta sekä haastattelu tutkimusmenetelmänä. Haastatteluihin osallistui Irlannin ainoa järjestö, joka tukee perheväkivaltaa kokeneita miehiä sekä Irlannin rikosoikeus konsultti. Haastattelut toteutettiin syksyn 2017 aikana, samoin kuin tutkimustyö.</p> <p>Kerättyjen tulosten perusteella on havaittavissa suuri tarve palveluiden kehittämiseen, niin että tukipalvelut ulottuisivat jokaisen maakunnan alueelle, missä palveluille olisi tarvetta. Tutkimustyöhön vaadittavaa tietoa on hyvin vähän saatavilla, sillä aihe on ollut suuri tabu jo pitkään. Vaikka tietoa ei aiheesta ole saatavilla paljoa, ongelma on silti erittäin tärkeä ja aina ajankohtainen mikä vaatii tukipalveluiden olemassaoloa. Tämän opinnäytetyön tuloksia voidaan hyödyntää potentiaalisten palveluiden tai jo olemassa olevien palveluiden kehittämiseen. Työn aihe on ajankohtainen, sillä vuoden 2008 laman jälkeinen perheväkivallan uhrien määrä lähti Irlannissa nousuun.</p>	
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ABSTRACT

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Title The need for a support service for male victims of domestic abuse in Co. Kerry, Ireland	
Supervisor(s) Kimmo Lind, Tarja Jukkala	
Subscriber and/or Mentor Arlington lodge / Ronan Doherty	
Abstract <p>The purpose of the thesis was to conduct research on services in the county of Kerry in Ireland that support the men who are victims of domestic violence. The aim was to highlight the lack of services and their necessity. The subscriber of the thesis is Novas Arlington Lodge, which is the only supported housing unit in the Kerry region. The facility is assisted by a number of people living on the street who are unable to live independently due to various addictions, mental health problems or social exclusion.</p> <p>The purpose of the research was to gather important information on domestic violence and its effects, and to develop ground-based services on its basis. The main question the thesis was formatted around was why there is no support service in the County for men who have experienced domestic violence and would be a need of implementing such a service. The result of the research is the gathering of research findings and interviews.</p> <p>The research used is a qualitative study where case studies and interviews were used as a research method. The only Irish organisation, which provides support for male victims of domestic abuse was interviewed, as well as the Irish criminal justice consultant. The interviews were conducted during the autumn of 2017, as well as the case studies.</p> <p>Based on the information gathered and after compiling the data, the results indicate that there is a great need to develop such a service, which reaches the people who need it. There is a limited amount of information available to conduct the required amount of research, as the topic has been and is still considered a taboo subject area. Although there is not much information about this topic, the problem is still very important and relevant, and requires the existence of support services. The results of this thesis can be utilized to develop and implement potential services or help improve existing services. The subject of the thesis is relevant, as after the economic crisis in 2008, the number of victims of domestic violence began to rise in Ireland.</p>	
Keywords domestic violence, support services, man, economic crises	

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1 INTRODUCTION

Domestic abuse is and has been a big issue in modern society. When a person hears the words “domestic abuse” and “male” in the same sentence, usually the first thing that comes to one’s mind is that the male is the perpetrator of the violence. This however is not always the case, even though most of the records refer to abuse towards women, there are male victims as well. Unfortunately, there are no existing statistics in Ireland about male victims of domestic abuse. However, this does not take away from the fact that the problem is real.

When domestic abuse occurs and there’s a societal assumption that the man is the perpetrator, it makes it more difficult for men to seek help. Male victims may also face difficulties when seeking help, as most of the helplines are targeted for female victims. In Kerry, you can find ADAPT (Domestic abuse services) which caters for women who have suffered from domestic abuse, but no such service is available for men. In Ireland, there is an organisation called AMEN (Abuse Against Men) which is a support service for male victims of domestic abuse, however their service does not reach to the Kerry area.

I would assert that domestic violence is a significant causal factor of homelessness. As it is hard to seek help as a male victim of domestic abuse, it may lead to homelessness in the worst-case scenario, which is what I will be focusing my thesis on. The objective behind the thesis is that the male victims in the Kerry area would have a support service around them during these difficult times, where for example the staff of Arlington lodge could guide them to. Domestic abuse has been identified by staff as the principal reason of homelessness for some men but has never been admitted by men in the service. The hoped outcome of the use of the thesis is so that it would be used within the organisation to raise awareness around the issue amongst staff members and residents. Another use of the thesis would be that it would be sent on to the council of Kerry, in order to raise awareness around the issue and increase knowledge around the need of a service for male victims of domestic abuse. I would also assert that the thesis could be used as an educational method for people who are studying to

work in the field of youth and community work, or who already are practicing the profession. In the field of youth and community work the thesis has a relevant role more specifically in the field of organisational work, equality and social inclusion. These values are also included in the core of youth and community work and its syllabus.

1.1 The Subscribing organisation

The organisation to which I am completing my thesis for is Novas, which is a voluntary organisation and Approved Housing Body working with families and single adults who are disadvantaged and socially excluded; primarily those who are homeless or at risk of being homeless. Novas provides a range of services and accommodation for marginalised households throughout Ireland. Novas established its first service in Ireland in 2002, – a temporary supported, low-threshold accommodation service in Limerick. Novas' service in Kerry, Arlington lodge opened its doors for the homeless in 2003. Arlington Lodge is Kerry's only temporary-supported homeless facility, it was set up to assist several rough sleepers in the county who were unable to maintain their own accommodation due to addiction issues, poor mental health and social exclusion. (Novas 2017)

Arlington lodge is a low threshold facility for male and female clients. It accepts self-referrals and referrals from external agencies, including the Kerry Homeless Information Centre. It caters for clients ranging in age from 18 years and look after a few older clients. The service imposes no obstacles for entry. Clients are accepted as they are and are key-worked by staff in a non-judgmental and compassionate manner during their stay. Care plans are drawn up in conjunction with clients, assessing and prioritising their needs and advocating on their behalf. (Fleming 2016) The role of the thesis in the organisation is to improve the services throughout Kerry, so in the case that a male would present to the doors of Arlington lodge, the staff there would have a service, which would be ran to meet the needs of the person, to refer the person to.

1.2 The need and objective

The main objective for this thesis is to raise awareness on domestic abuse and on issues related to men as victims of domestic abuse. Other objectives for this thesis are to point out the need for a service for male victims of domestic abuse and in the end, hopefully this piece of work will be used in implementing such service in Kerry, by submitting the work to the Kerry County Council. I also wish to raise knowledge of the support offered in Arlington Lodge, so that a person who is not safe in their home would know who to ring and where to go for support, for example in the scenario that they have had to leave their home in the middle of the night scared for their wellbeing. This is hoped to be implemented by creating a public briefing in Tralee Co. Kerry around the subject matter after the publication of the thesis.

In this thesis, I will be researching services available for men who suffer from domestic abuse. My research will begin in Ireland and narrow it down to specific regions, such as Kerry. With this I will be comparing the number of services available for men to women and the reasons behind this. Throughout this research, I will be focusing on the evidence that indicates the need for a service for male victims of domestic abuse, as well as comparing and contrasting the services to the services provided in Finland in order to have a comparison from another European Union member state. Both women and men suffer from domestic abuse, so there should be equality to the services provided. In my research, I will be looking in to the effects that domestic abuse can have on one's mental health as well as the consequences of this.

2 BACKGROUND

Male victims (29%) are over twice as likely than women (12%) to not tell anyone about the domestic abuse they are suffering from. (Mankind Initiative, 2016) The reason for this is that men may feel that their masculinity is challenged after experiencing domestic abuse, as well as the belief they may be subjected to ridicule from the wider community. There is a perceived sense of shame related to being a male victim of domestic

abuse due to the expectations society sets for men, and what a man should be. Another issue surrounding the subject is that there is an inequality in the perception of the perpetrators of domestic abuse. Domestic abuse may often be seen as a gender based issue, which it isn't. In the annual report of the Irish organisation AMEN (Abuse Against Men) it was reported that the total of disclosures of domestic abuse towards male victims in 2014 was 8,437. (Amen 2014) When men are being violent, they may be expected to take full responsibility for their actions and might lose custody of their children whereas if the woman is the perpetrator of violence, it may be seen as the man has done something to provoke the violence. In these kind of circumstances men feel like they have no other option than to stay in the abusive relationship in fear that they would lose access to their children. (Fountain Resource Group 2015)

“The law is there to protect victims of violence but what can the law do when the victims are too ashamed to seek their help. When society tells these people that they do not live up to what is expected of their gender? Men are told they should never hit a woman it is not the accepted thing to do and it certainly is not. So, when a man is being beaten, bitten, stabbed and emotionally destroyed where can he go in a society that tells him to “take it like a man”?” (Carey 2010,5)

Even though the subject has been researched and by the conclusions made as I mentioned above, there remains a stigma around the subject of male victims of domestic abuse. In the Report of the National Study of Domestic abuse conducted by the National Crime Council in association with the Economic and Social Research Institute in 2005 it is said that, apart from sexual violence which is almost always perpetrated by men against women, women and men are generally similar in terms of their experience of and use of violent behaviour. However, the outcomes of domestic violence in terms of physical and psychological injuries tend to be considerably more negative for women victims than for men victims (Watson & Parsons 2005)

Based on the research done and the information gathered about domestic abuse and domestic abuse against men, I have concluded that this is an ongoing issue around the world, and as there is no such service in Kerry, there is a severe need for one.

2.1 Definitions and effects of domestic abuse

The term “domestic abuse” contains a lot more than meets the eye. Looking past the possible physical violence, domestic abuse can unfortunately involve a lot more destructive behaviour; threats and ultimatums, isolation from family and friends, extreme jealousy, control over access to personal necessities. (Samaritan House 2017) The possible abuse can be physical, emotional, sexual, financial as well as social, one might ask that what is left in a person’s life after these areas are covered?

The occurrence of psychological or physical illness isn’t always the result of being a victim of domestic abuse. However, a person who is or has been suffering of domestic abuse is more likely to develop a psychological or medical illness. Victimized people commonly develop emotional and/or psychological problems due to their abuse, including anxiety disorders and various forms of depression as well as substance abuse disorders. Depending on the severity of the abuse it is possible that the victim may develop a post-traumatic stress injury such as posttraumatic stress disorder or acute stress disorder. If abuse has occurred from a very early age and has been substantial, a personality disorder may occur. Severe abuse can even lead the victim to contemplate suicide or carry out their suicidal thoughts.

Abuse can result in poor self-esteem, which can lead to a lack of close and trusting relationships or to body image issues (particularly for sexual abuse victims). This in turn can result in eating disorders, which may be seen as victims' attempts at self-control in one small part of their lives, where they would otherwise feel completely out of control and vulnerable. (Patricelli 2005)

Domestic abuse can unfortunately be both physical and emotional;

Physical abuse is defined as hitting, slapping, kicking, throwing the spouse on to the floor or ground or assault involving the use of a weapon such as a knife, broom handle or other household objects or a gun. Emotional or psychological abuse may include the use of ridicule, insults, accusations, infidelity, and ignoring the partner, all of which result in an erosion of the victim’s self-esteem and self-worth. (Wiehe, 1998, 75)

One aspect of emotional abuse is financial abuse, which is common to be used by abusers to gain power and control in the relationship. The forms of financial abuse may

be subtle, in general financial abuse includes restricted access to funds. Financial abuse with emotional, physical and sexual abuse, manipulation, intimidation and threats are all intentional tactics used by an abuser aimed at entrapping the partner in the relationship. (NNEDV,2017)

Often domestic abuse cases are left unreported and in some cases, the victim might not understand that they are in an abusive relationship. As the Irish social justice and criminal behaviour consultant Margaret Finch stated in her interview - "The key question is, is it abuse?"

"If you look at caricatures and everything going back the notion of the larger woman slapping the husband on the back of the head and he going out drinking and she roaring at him when he comes back. That kind of concept of women being volatile to their husbands was kind of always there, it was almost a norm. But if the man is being violent to a woman I do think always was wrong and just hidden. But there is a bit of a thing in the Irish culture of that Irish women can be rough to their men if that makes sense. And I think that's kind of what has been a danger, so it has been misperceived as that's how a strong woman is, which causes the confusion and trouble of understanding that the actions might be abusive instead of a norm." (Finch 2017)

The reporting of domestic abuse focuses often on the physical assaults, even though this might not be the most damaging type of abuse.

"One can hurt a partner deeply – even drive the person to suicide – without ever lifting a finger. Verbal aggression may be even more damaging than physical attacks." (Loseke, Gelles, Cavanaugh 2005, 68)

Emotional abuse is an attempt to control, in just the same way that physical abuse is. The only difference is that the emotional abuser might not use physical hitting, kicking, pinching, grabbing, pushing or other physical forms of harm. The perpetrator of abuse uses emotion as their weapon of choice. Commonly, the perpetrator of emotional abuse does not know that they are being abusive. Rather, the perpetrator may be aware that they feel insecure about whether their partner loves them, so the perpetrator feels compelled to accuse their partner of cheating, blame them for the perpetrator's unhappiness or constantly check the partner's voice and text messages, etc. The accusations, the blame and the constant checking up are forms of emotional

abuse. The emotional abuse cycle follows the same pattern as the physical abuse pattern; once the victim of emotional abuse figures out what's going on and starts thinking about leaving or calls the perpetrator on their actions, the perpetrator will suddenly become very apologetic and romantic to try and maintain the relationship with the victim. Commonly the perpetrator will behave like the partner of dreams, so that the partner would dismiss their thoughts of perhaps leaving. As soon as the perpetrator regains the victims trust that they will no longer continue the emotional abuse, the abuse starts back up with the same old abusive patterns. Emotional abuse is a painful pattern of serious abuse of which the primary effort is to control someone by playing with their emotions. (Matthews 2016)

2.2 Domestic abuse in Ireland

“Domestic abuse is the physical, emotional, sexual or mental abuse of one person by another within close, intimate or family relationship. In most situations, the abuser uses a range of abusive behaviours to gain and ensure power and control over the other person and these abusive actions often get worse over time. In most cases women are the victims of domestic violence and male partners (husbands, boyfriends or ex's) the perpetrators. Domestic violence can also occur between family members, between same sex couples and be perpetrated by women against men.” (Safe Ireland, 2017)

Domestic abuse may begin when the perpetrator of the abuse starts feeling the need to gain control and power over their partner. The perpetrator may think that the need to gain control and power over their partner is caused due to jealousy, low self-esteem and struggles in expressing their emotions. It may also be caused due to the feel of inferiority to their partner.

People who have traditional beliefs may believe that they have the right to have power and control over their partner as they are not equal due to gender roles. This behavioural issue may also be caused due to undiagnosed mental health issues or learnt behaviour. The use of substances such as drugs and alcohol may have an impact to abusive behaviour. When a person is under the influence of a substance it may be more challenging for them to control their levels of impulses, which can also show as a lack of control of their violent impulses towards the people around them, such as

their partner. Concluded from the following diagram the use of alcohol is one of the top triggers to set off abusive behaviour. In the diagram below potential triggers for abusive behaviour are described as per research conducted by Dr. Dorothy Watson and Sara Parsons.

Table 1.

	Total %
Anything that seemed to set off behaviour? (per cent of cases)	
Minor incidents/nothing in particular	36
Use of alcohol (by either partner)	34
Disagreement/row	8
Jealousy	9
Pregnancy	7
Use of other drugs (by either partner)	4
Stress	4
Moving in together	2
Getting married	2
Birth of first child	2
Birth of subsequent children	1
Change in work situation (either partner)	1
Break-up of relationship	3
Illness	3
Affair	2
Number of cases	316

(Watson & Parsons 2005)

Abusive behaviour is never justified, nevertheless these factors behind abusive behaviour may help to gain understanding around abusive behaviour. (Goldsmith 2016)

In 2005 The National Crime Council of Ireland carried out a survey regarding domestic abuse in Ireland. The research was conducted by the Economic and Social Research Institute of a nationally representative statistical sample of over 3,000 adult women and men, as well as focus group interviews with Traveller and immigrant women. (Watson, & Parsons 2005) The results of the research outlined by Dr. Dorothy Watson concluded that 15 per cent of women and six per cent of men have experienced severe physical, sexual or emotional abuse from an intimate partner during their lives. In the research,

it was also concluded that while the risk of abuse is higher to women, domestic abuse also affects a significant number of men. The risk of having experienced abuse is also higher in couples where one partner controls decisions about money. The research suggests that approximately 213,000 women and 88,000 men in Ireland have been severely abused by their partner. Findings in the research found an increased risk of abuse where the partners are isolated from close family and neighbourhood supports, as per where anonymity from the person to report the abuse is more assured, the abuse may be more likely to be reported. (Watson, Dorothy & Parsons, Sara 2005) Approximately half of the people who had experienced severe abuse were injured physically. It seemed to be that women's injuries were generally more serious than men, also, women were nearly twice as likely to seek medical treatment than men. As mentioned in chapter 2.1, verbal aggression may be even more damaging than physical attacks. That was also discovered during this research; the respondents stated that the emotional abuse or the emotional consequences of abuse were the 'worst thing' that they had experienced. Most respondents of the research said that they had confided in someone, friends or family, regarding their abuse. Nevertheless, only a minority had reported the abuse to the Gardaí. It also appears that male victims were less likely to make a report than women; 5 per cent of men compared to 29 per cent of women. Both women and men had similar reasons for not reporting the abuse; the seriousness of the abuse, wanting to handle the situation themselves and shame or embarrassment. (Watson & Parsons 2005)

In 2011 in a report of Sonas Housing in Ireland it was observed that due to recession the issue of domestic abuse started to increase.

"The availability of good, quality services is even more important in times of recession, when domestic violence often increases in a recession. Increased financial pressure and/or unemployment can escalate stress and the downturn can be used as an excuse to legitimise controlling behaviours." (Cosgrove 2011)

In the Sonas Housing report it was found that, due to recession in 2011, there was a further 26 per cent increase in calls for services in the first half of 2011. Sonas housing is the largest provider of frontline services to women and children experiencing domestic abuse in the greater Dublin region. According to the UK and Council of Europe

standard one family for a populace of 10, 000 requires at least 424 family refuge spaces to be set up. The report completed by Sonas discovered that there are just 131 existing family refuge family spaces across Ireland. Concluding from the research carried out, there is a serious need in support services for victims of domestic abuse across Ireland. (Sonas,2017)

In 2016, there were 16,946 disclosures of domestic violence against women noted during 19,115 contacts with Women's Aid Direct Services. There were 11,078 incidents of emotional abuse, 3,502 incidents of physical abuse and 1,671 incidents of financial abuse disclosed. In the same year, 695 incidents of sexual abuse were disclosed to Women's Aid services including 316 rapes. The Women's Aid National Helpline responded to 15,952 calls in 2016. (Women's Aid 2016)

2.3 Gardaí and domestic violence

In 2017, it was found that 45% of domestic violence calls to Gardaí were not recorded on the Pulse (Police using leadings systems effectively) system, which is the computer system used by the Garda Síochána, the police force of the Republic of Ireland. (O'Keeffe and O'Cionnaith 2017)

In the Crime Investigation Report of 2014 the following findings were made regarding the Gardaí's investigation of domestic violence cases

- "Limited evidence that Domestic Violence (DV) policy is audited or monitored to ensure that it is implemented at an operational level;
- No recorded evidence that divisional nominated inspectors are checking DV calls or ensuring accurate recording and classification on PULSE;
- Follow-up visits do not always happen (DV Policy - call back within one month);
- High number of calls to domestic incidents with low volume of arrests recorded on CAD;
- A difference in the service provided to victims where a court order was in place to protect the person and where no such court order existed;
- Absence of supervision of calls to DV incidents by control rooms. Supervisors do not always check the actions of Gardaí dealing with DV cases and are not asking why an offender was not arrested;

- Identified many cases of domestic violence where a crime had occurred, but it was wrongly recorded as an 'Attention and Complaint' or a case of 'domestic dispute – no offence disclosed';
- Inconsistent approach to dealing with victims of DV who initially make a statement of complaint, but later decide that they do not want to go to court;
- Different Garda attitudes towards DV. While some members demonstrated an understanding of DV, others were unaware of the complex reasons why many DV victims return to their abusive partners and the broader challenges faced by DV victims;
- Some Gardaí are providing a very good level of service to victims and help them to obtain the relevant protection or barring orders at court. These Gardaí also visited victims after the initial call. However, some members displayed negative attitudes towards DV by referring to calls as problematic, time consuming and a waste of resources (Garda Síochána Inspectorate 2014)."

In Central Statistics Office's Review of the quality of crime statistics in 2016 it was concluded that most of the reports regarding domestic disputes do not relate to criminal incidents, but in certain cases such calls could be eligible for recording on PULSE either as crimes or non-crime incident types, which could explain why 45% of domestic violence call weren't recorded on the Pulse system. However, there is no criminal offence of 'domestic violence'. Many of the behaviours which are part of a pattern of 'domestic violence' are, however, criminal. (Watson and Parsons 2005, p. 32) These criminal offences are recorded/investigated by the Gardaí and prosecuted through the courts.

Concluded from the information released in the Crime Investigation Report, there are some existing struggles with the Gardaí's investigation of possible domestic abuse cases, which may also have an impact on the of abuse. If the victim of abuse has the thought that the Gardaí won't be able to help them in their situation, they may not see the reason for reporting the experienced abuse. Margaret Finch also stated an interesting fact in her interview about the investigation of domestic abuse and the societal assumption of abuse behind it.

"I think that the focus has been for years to look out for a woman who has been experiencing domestic violence, I know that in terms of dealing with the Gardaí – I know that in the last number of years even in the Kerry area but also nationally they were surprised how many domestic violence incidents they've come to on everything assuming it's the woman who is the victim only to realize after couple times of going back to that location that it in fact was the man who was the victim." (Finch 2017)

3 SUPPORT SERVICES IN IRELAND FOR VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC ABUSE

Across Ireland, there are many services that cater for victims of domestic abuse

SAFE Ireland – creating safety for women and children – provides over 40 domestic violence services in Ireland. Of these 21 provide 24- hour emergency accommodation. On their website, it is stated that

“We are directly linked to women and children who experience Domestic Violence. We work to bring public voice and understanding to the causes and impact of Domestic Violence. We respond to thousands of women and children affected by Domestic Violence in Ireland every year” (SAFE Ireland, 2017)

Women’s Aid Organisation is an organisation located in Dublin, Ireland, that provides support and services for victims of domestic abuse.

“We work to make women and children safe from domestic violence, offer support, provide hope to women affected by abuse and work for justice and social change. Over the course of 40 years the organisation has built up a huge body of experience and expertise on the issue, enabling us to best support women and children and share this knowledge with other agencies responding to women experiencing domestic violence.” (Women’s Aid, 2017)

Sonas – Freedom from domestic abuse – is the largest provider of frontline services to women and children experiencing domestic abuse in the greater Dublin region. Sonas provide support women and children experiencing domestic abuse and advocate on women and children’s behalf with other services and on issues that impact on the safety, welfare and wellbeing of women and children experiencing domestic abuse. (Sonas, 2017)

Adapt domestic abuse services is another service in Ireland that provides support for victims of domestic abuse.

“ADAPT Domestic Abuse Services is a voluntary organisation which was set up in 1974 to provide a wide range of supports to women survivors of domestic abuse and their children across Limerick City and County. ADAPT runs the largest refuge in the country providing emergency accommodation for women and children who have to leave their homes because of domestic abuse” (Adapt, 2017)

MOVE – Men overcoming Violence works in the area of domestic violence, with a primary aim of supporting the safety and wellbeing of women and their children who are experiencing, or have experienced violence/abuse in an intimate relationship. This service is for men who want to change their harmful behaviour and to learn how to have relationships that are based on love and trust and not on power and control. (MOVE,2017)

AMEN – Abuse against men is an organisation which supports male victims of domestic abuse. The mission of Amen stated on their website is to provide best-in-class support and practical assistance to male victims of domestic abuse in Ireland, to promote increased awareness and understanding among the wider public of the issues surrounding domestic abuse. Amen is located in County Meath. (AMEN, 2017)

The organisations mentioned above are bigger national organisations which are available across Ireland. From the research, it is obvious that there is a big gap between the services provided for men and women. From six national organisations, there is only one which caters for men who suffer from domestic abuse. The organisation which caters for men is located in Co. Meath, which means that if a man from Kerry is suffering from domestic abuse and wishes to seek help from an organisation, they need to travel across the country to access the services. The support service provided for men in Co. Meath is strictly a counselling and a support service with no refuge service facilities currently available. Traveling to another county to access a service is facility based, means based, resource based, choice based and one thing often with the victim is that the one thing they don't have is a choice. (Finch 2017)

3.1 Sociological cultural factors

As all the services for the focus group seem to be located in the bigger cities of Ireland such as Dublin and Limerick, it raises the question why?

Ireland remains a remarkably non-urban society with 42 per cent living rurally compared with an EU average of 27 per cent. In the past 20 years, the population of the Irish countryside hasn't declined but has increased by almost 200,000. Based on the figures mentioned above, it seems as large numbers of Irish people favour the idea of living and raising families in rural areas. While rural Ireland faces many challenges, population decline isn't the central one. As John O'Dwyer mentions in his article "Lack of services, not lack of people is what is killing rural Ireland";

"I have noticed it is economic activity, rather than people, that is shifting towards urban centres. What they are genuinely concerned about, however, is maintaining local services. In most Irish villages there are sad rows of derelict buildings that previously housed the shops, banks, post offices and Garda stations that were the backbone of local economies." (O'Dwyer 2016)

A clear lack of services in all ranges is existing in rural areas of Ireland, of which a good example is 139 closed Garda stations across Ireland in 2013. (Danial McDonnell, 2016) When there aren't any services around for example the Gardai, there are no statistics on reported domestic abuse cases – and without statistics there are no base on creating a support service for victims of domestic abuse. Another issue that arises from living in a rural area, is that If you are seen to walk into a service in a rural area, there most likely is a person next door who knows you and therefore the service user loses it anonymity immediately. This may lead to the situation, where a person rather suffers in silence than might get recognised walking into a service. This factor had also been noticed by Margaret Finch during her career

"I know a number of the people along the way that I have worked with or worked alongside and spoke with – they prefer to get a train to Ennis to do a days' workshop for the fear of anyone here seeing you into a particular service. So, it's like maintaining the confidentiality, so even if you look at the female services you have ADAPT, and that's one service for female victims but there would be lots of other subtler services that you are not known walking in the front door what you're going in for, and that seems to be a big thing in Kerry." (Finch 2017)

Over the past 40 years in Ireland gender role attitudes and behaviour have been changing drastically. Per a nationwide research conducted by Margret Fine-Davis the impact of the change of gender role attitudes and behaviour has had is that the women's participation in the labour force has increased in the past years. One of the main questions that the research focused on was if the changes in gender role attitudes and behaviour influenced family formation.

The study found that both men and women had a positive view regarding women's financial independence. Despite these positive views, women's progress in their jobs was seen as a possible threat to some men. Working class men were more likely to perceive a women's career advancement as a threat, than men in the middle and/or higher socio-economic groups. Margaret Fine-Davis found that most of the focus group agreed that "while men recognise that women have to spend less time on housework, they don't recognise that they have to contribute more than they used to." It was found that there was a very strong impact of gender roles, with women much more likely than men to perceive a male reluctance to share the housework in a shared household. The issue of housework was found to be linked with perceptions concerning men's respect for women. (Fine-Davis 2011)

Sarah Browne conducted a research under the heading of "The Transition of Masculinity in Post – Recession Irish Society" in 2014. In this research, it was discovered that men appear to recognize that inequalities exist for women in Irish society today. Despite the fact that men are more involved with domestic duties than in recent times, it was discovered that men do recognize that misuse of women in household duties still exists. The data gathered by Sarah Browne indicated that the male focus group used in the research do not think economic dependence was still existing with women in the Irish society; they seemed to have found a decline in the breadwinner role and agreed that women are more independent in contemporary society. This indicates that Irish society has become more gender neutral and balance between domestic work and labour is becoming more equal. (Browne 2014)

Even though the Irish society has progressed in becoming a more gender-neutral nation, there are still a lot of existing inequalities in the genders. These inequalities are mostly based on existing stereotypes regarding gender roles such as what society links to the role of a man. Due to the existing gender roles, men who are victims of domestic abuse may often be viewed as emasculated and weak. The concept of

masculinity is constructed to exclude weakness and assumes men are physically the dominant partner over women. In sociologist Paul Kivel's "act-like-a-man box" graph (Appendix 2) the very concept of the generalisation of the male gender is explained. It may be expected from men to be aggressive and in control, while suppressing their emotions whenever obstacles are faced in life. When a man steps outside of this "act-like-a-man box" he may be perceived as not being a "real" man.

This view of masculinity may have a negative impact on male victims of domestic abuse who look for support. The stigma around male victims of domestic abuse can have such a big impact that some men rather suffer in silence than report the possible abuse. There are men who do come forward with the experienced abuse and share their stories to their families, friends and the Gardaí. The problem in this is, that even if men do have the courage to report the abuse, there isn't enough support available in Ireland that these men would have somewhere to go. (Poole 2014)

3.2 Men as victims

"Male victims (29%) are over twice as likely than women (12%) to not tell anyone about the partner abuse they are suffering from. Only 10% of male victims will tell the police (26% women), only 23% will tell a person in an official position (43% women) and only 11% (23% women) will tell a health professional." (Mankind Initiative, 2016)

The clear majority of recorded incidents of domestic violence are of men on women. Society, although aware of the male victim, treats him as a joke. He is a man in fear, a man in isolation, a man stigmatised as weak. Why? Because he does not conform to the stereotypical male image. In law, a male victim faces two obstacles; firstly, to prove he is a victim, and secondly, to ensure that his children are protected and do not become the new victims. Most men react by staying silent. Often this silence is encouraged by factors such as fear of ridicule and, the realisation that it is unlikely his partner

will be evicted. Male victims may feel that they need to stay silent and maintain the abusive relationship because of

- The fear of losing if they leave, their partner will harm your children or prevent you from having access to them. Obtaining custody of children is always challenging for fathers, and even when a man might feel confident about this, they might still feel overwhelmed about the thought of sole custody.
- The shame related to being a victim of domestic abuse. Many men feel ashamed that they've been beaten by a woman or failed in their expected role as the protector and provider for the family.
- Due to low self-worth, some may believe that the abusive relationship is all they deserve.
- Many victims may be in denial regarding the situation. Denying that there is a problem in the relationship will only create a long and painful cycle in the abusive relationship; the victim may believe that they can change the perpetrator or they may believe the perpetrators promises to change. (Robinson & Segal 2017)

Even when a man has proved he is the victim it seems his only course of action is to leave the home. He is then separated from his children and often has trouble in obtaining realistic and regular contact with them. He is in fact treated as the perpetrator rather than the victim. (Amen Ireland, 2015)

Domestic and sexual abuse is neither a men's issue nor a women's issue; it is a societal and human rights issue (Cosc,2009). The issue of domestic abuse is always severe, never minding the gender of the victim. The issue with male victims of domestic abuse is that men may suffer from humiliation and victimization of many, including the Gardaí. There is also the humiliation in the fact that they "are getting beaten by women".

So recently as in November 2015 there was no statistics on male victims of domestic violence in Ireland

"This appalling absence of updated information on domestic violence crime rates is inexplicable and only further highlights the stigma which

male victims of domestic violence and abuse experience.” (Irish Journal, 2015)

Per the National Office for the Prevention of Domestic, Sexual and Gender-based Violence it is now widely accepted in Ireland that both men and women can be victims and perpetrators of violence in the home.

- 15% of women and 6% of men suffer severe domestic abuse
- 29% of women and 26% of men suffer domestic abuse when severe abuse and minor incidents are combined
- 13% of women and 13% of men suffer physical abuse or minor physical incidents and
- 29% of women (1 in 3) and only 5% of men (1 in 20) report to the Gardaí. (COSC, 2017)

According to the COSC website, both men and women have the same rights to be safe in their own homes, and men are protected by exactly the same laws as women - anyone who has assaulted another person, regardless of the gender of either, can be prosecuted.

The services listed in the website state that

“Men who are living with domestic abuse can contact Amen which is a voluntary group which provides a confidential helpline, information and a support service for male victims of domestic abuse.”
(Cosc, 2017)

4 COMPARING IRELAND AND FINLAND

Finland is a small country located in the north of Europe. The population of Finland is 5,495 million, which makes up just 0.07 per cent of the world's population. For a small country Finland is one of the best countries to live in. Finland is one of the leading countries of Europe regarding education. It's consistently one of the highest performing developed countries on the Program for International Student Assessment

(PISA), an important tool for measuring education systems worldwide. (Jackson 2013)

Finland may be the best place in the world to be a mother or a student, but the figures of domestic abuse in Finland are almost twice as much as the average in Europe, at 43.5 %, according to Naisten Linja, a hotline for victims of family violence. (Hopkins 2013) Approximately 16 % of men in Finland have experienced domestic violence or abuse. Domestic violence occurs in all socioeconomic classes of Finland. (Nurminen 2017) Many ascribe Finland's history of violence - five wars in the twentieth century, and the remaining indication of obligatory military service for men.

“To do violence is not taboo in Finland, but to be victimized and to be vulnerable and weak, that is much more taboo, In a way or another, we respect that kind of strong agency, the way that people survive on their own.” (Jackson 2013)

In a research conducted by the Office for National statistics it was concluded that in 2014 in domestic violence cases there were 4300 cases where the woman was the victim – men were victims in 950 cases. However, in severe domestic abuse cases it is more common that the perpetrator of the violence is the woman. In over half of grievous bodily harm cases and homicide attempts the man was the victim – there were 292 bodily harm cases in 2015, of which men were victims in 157 cases. When investigating these crimes, even when the man was the victim over half of the suspects were men. According to director of the mental health society's crisis centre, Outi Ruishalme, men as victims of domestic abuse is still a taboo. (Hietanen 2016)

“The subject of women being violent is discussed in a different way than before. In shelters for domestic abuse victims there is a few men occasionally. The threshold for men to talk about being a victim of domestic abuse is tremendous.” (Ruishalme 2016)

The issue of domestic abuse is relevant and severe in both Ireland and Finland, for both women and men. There seems to be slightly more available services for men experiencing domestic abuse located in Finland compared to Ireland, keeping in mind that there is still room to improve the existing services and implement new services in both of the countries mentioned above. In Ireland, there is one helpline and service for male victims of domestic abuse, Amen. In Finland, there is also one national support organisation for male victims of domestic abuse, and two national help-lines.

The numbers of domestic violence are shocking in both of the countries above, with both of the countries being member states of the European Union, it raises the question if there is anything in place regarding domestic abuse within the regulations created by the European Union.

4.1 The role of the European Union

The values guiding the European union and its member states are in place to promote inclusion, tolerance, justice, solidarity and non-discrimination. The values guiding the member states of European union are: Human dignity, Freedom, Democracy and Equality Rule of law Human rights. (Europa.eu 2017)

In 2011, the European Commission proposed a set of actions to ensure a minimum level of rights, support and protection for victims of domestic abuse across the EU, regardless of their background. This included a proposal for a Directive on mutual recognition of civil law protection measures. The directive was due to ensure that victims of violence (such as domestic violence) could rely on restraint or protection orders issued against the perpetrator of violence if they travel or move to another EU country. The second proposal for the directive was created in 2012 after the European Parliament authorized it with a majority in September 2012. The directive sets out minimum rights for victims. It will ensure that:

- victims are treated with respect and police, prosecutors and judges are trained to properly deal with them;
- victims get information on their rights and their case in a way they understand;
- victim support exists in every Member State;
- victims can participate in proceedings if they want and are helped to attend the trial;
- vulnerable victims are identified – such as children, victims of rape, or those with disabilities – and are properly protected;
- victims are protected while police investigate the crime and during court proceedings.
- Member States now have three years to implement the provisions of the Directive into their national laws. (European Commission,2013)

In the press release created by the European commission it is stated that the EU law will benefit women in particular: around one in five women in Europe have suffered physical violence at least once in their life, according to surveys. (European Commission, 2013) Though the creation of the directive is and was necessary, the exact number of how many support services each member state should have, has not been distinguished.

In 2015 the European Commission published the Strategic engagement for gender equality 2016-2019 document. In the Strategic engagement, the following subjects are prioritised:

- Increasing female labour market participation and equal economic independence;
- Reducing the gender pay, earnings and pension gaps and thus fighting poverty among women;
- Promoting equality between women and men in decision-making;
- Combating gender-based violence and protecting and supporting victims;
- Promoting gender equality and women's rights across the world. (European Commission, 2015)

The equality between women and men has been an issue that has been improving in the recent years – equality, equal pay and equal rights for women has been advocated by European states. The equality between women and men is something that should be in place all over Europe, but the question that was raised when researching the role of the European union in the issue of domestic violence was, why isn't the existence and equal rights of male victims of domestic abuse been recognised in any of the existing legislations?

5 COMPLETING THE THESIS

The working process for the thesis started in January 2017 when I started my second work placement in Arlington Lodge, Tralee Co. Kerry. During my five-month placement I had the opportunity to observe the existing services and their functions from a professional perspective and I had the opportunity to familiarise myself with the area and the services around me, which helped me to prepare myself for the work laying ahead

of me. In this particular field of work, there would be plenty of subjects to research and develop, but I personally noticed a big gap in the lack of services for this certain focus group in Kerry. A big factor in this was the fact that I moved to Tralee just before starting to work on my thesis, so I had a fresh perspective regarding the existing services.

As I began working on the thesis, the support I got from the staff and management of Arlington Lodge was significant – when I was in the need for support I got advice and guidance to where to go next in the work. As previously said, one of my strengths in the work was that I brought a fresh perspective with me when starting my work placement, but it also proved to be a struggle for me as I didn't have all the information of local or national services as what an Irish national would have had. Therefore, the information and support I got from the staff and management from Arlington lodge was vital – the gaps I had in knowledge of local services – they easily fulfilled.

The question I wanted my work to answer was “Is there a need for a support service for male victims of domestic abuse in Kerry?”. To focus my work and underline the title, I used two questions as a guideline as I started working on the subject. The questions I used to guide me throughout the process were

1. Is there any services around?
2. If not, why?

As a part of my thesis I used an interview as a research method. I interviewed the Irish criminal justice consultant Margaret Finch, I concluded that the best research method considering the situation was an interview, as I had the opportunity to ask more questions from Margaret as we proceeded with the interview. Prior to my interview with Margaret Finch, I had the chance to be one of her students – I had a small idea on her past professional career which helped me when creating the interview questions. As I had previous knowledge on her professional career I came to the conclusion of writing a lot of open ended questions for the interview in order to gain as much information from her as possible.

During my research process, I also e-mailed interview questions to different organisations across Ireland; AMEN, Cosc, and MOVE. The reason I outlined these three organisations to interview was to gain relevant information from organisations in the field, but to also keep the number of interviews fairly small in order to be able to use

the information gained in the research. I decided to carry out these interviews via email due to the various locations of the organisations named above. Unfortunately, the only organisation that agreed to answer my questions was AMEN. Due to the lack of information gathered through organisations, it was challenging to conclude the results of the thesis.

5.1 Interview

Qualitative research is multimethod in focus, involving an interpretive, naturalistic approach to its subject matter. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them. Qualitative research involves the studied use and collection of a variety of empirical materials – case study, personal experience, introspective, life story, interview, observational, historical, interactional, and visual texts - that describe routine and problematic moments and meanings in people's lives. (Blending qualitative and quantitative research in theses and dissertations, p. 1-2)

Picking a research method for the thesis was a difficulty – due to the sensitive nature of the research work and due to confidentiality issues as well as anonymity it was impossible for me to find a focus group of male victims of domestic abuse to interview. I attempted in composing up anonymous questionnaires which I conducted with the male residents of the service, but the problem I faced was the fact that I wasn't able to get people to fill out the questionnaire forms when it was explained what the subject of the work is – as well as I wasn't ethically comfortable letting people fill out the forms when they weren't aware of the real purpose of the surveys. During this time, I was struggling with gathering relevant research material, as mentioned above, I didn't feel comfortable gathering information from the male residents without their knowledge of the research, as well as I personally as a conductor of the research did not feel right using their answers as a source under these circumstances.

The solution that I came up with was to be in contact with organisations which work with the mentioned focus group, as mentioned in paragraph 5, and try to get research material through this channel. However, this also became an issue during my research project, due to the lack of services that support male victims of domestic

abuse in Ireland - there was only one existing organisation that was able to even remotely answer the interview questions created.

The questions created for the organisations:

1. Could you please describe how a service user is referred to you?
2. Have you seen an increase in service users over the past year? If yes, what percentage?
3. If possible, would you be able to provide any information if you have had service users from Co. Kerry?
4. Do you find that there is a need for a larger scale of services around the issue of domestic abuse, if so, why?
5. During my research I have found that a lot of the services especially for male victims of domestic abuse are located in the larger cities of Ireland, do you agree? If yes, what would you see as the reason for this?

The interview with its answers is attached as Appendix 3.

5.2 Analysis

The results of the thesis are mostly based on the case studies made during the research process as well as the interviews conducted. Due to the lack of information it is important to analyse all the information from a critical perspective. The subject of male victims is a sensitive and a taboo subject, which makes it fairly hard to research. Due to the stigma around the subject and everything that relates to being a man suffering of domestic abuse as per discussed in chapter 3.2, the implementation of the service is a difficulty. Due to the shame of being a male victim of domestic abuse, the service isn't being discussed and its absence is harder to recognise when there isn't demand for the service. Supply follows demand, and without demand there is no service, so in order to implement a service and to recognise the need for such service it would be important to keep all the track records regarding male victims of domestic abuse.

As per discussed in chapter 2.3, when all domestic cases aren't being recorded properly when being investigated, it suggests that there aren't male victims of domestic

abuse, and without possible service users no service will be implemented. As per Margaret Finch stated in her interview

” I would think that yes we have to focus on a male service in Kerry, but a lot of the early intervention prevention work, if we could de gender it to just one human to another that it is unacceptable. So, I think more generic pre-intervention would be really good.” (Finch, 2017)

Because of the stigma around the subject, a low threshold service or a disguised service for male victims of domestic abuse could be a more suitable approach for a county such as Kerry, this way the service users would be able to maintain their anonymity when accessing the services provided. However, as Margaret Finch stated in her interview regarding early intervention, that could be the best first step to take regarding domestic abuse. Because the stigma and shame is so strong within the focus group, implementing a service could prove to be extremely difficult. By taking on an early intervention approach, the problem could be targeted before its forming to a serious issue in the individuals’ life – this way it would be easier to take into consideration the children who have to witness domestic abuse. This would also minimise the conditioning that children would be exposed to, which would hopefully reduce the numbers of domestic abuse in the far future.

In my own opinion, it would be necessary to focus on both a service for male victims of domestic abuse as well as an early prevention service in order to reach the best results possible.

5.3 Results

The results of the thesis conclude that the impacts and effects of domestic abuse can be significant in one’s life, and this is an issue that cannot be ignored. As per mentioned in chapter 3.2, 6 per cent of the men in Ireland have reportedly experienced domestic abuse during their life. There are approximately 2.35 million men currently residing in Ireland, 6 per cent of which have suffered from some instances of domestic violence. 6 per cent might not sound like a lot but 6 percent is the equivalent of 140,000 men. With 140,000 male victims of domestic abuse across the country, there is only one service to support this demographic, which is not enough taking into consideration the time and resources available and that the male victims from Co. Kerry would have to travel a minimum of 2 hours to access a potential service. 140,000 men as victims of domestic abuse in a country of the size of Ireland itself sounds like an incredible

amount, but it is important to keep in mind that the 6% comes from men who have come forward with the experienced violence – majority of male victims suffer in silence with their experience. The reality of the problem is not known, and will not be known before the issue of male victims of domestic abuse is being discussed and recognised. Creating the thesis was difficult due to the lack of information and statistics around the subject due to the silence around the subject matter. However, throughout the working process I kept in mind that if that barrier stops people from researching the subject, the issue will never be acknowledged and therefore it would never improve. Ministers and leaders of the country should be made aware of the figures and come to some sort of a consensus to help eradicate the problem. Bringing the issue in front of the European Union might be a start as funding maybe available to help expand services not only around Ireland but other European State members. This is an issue which will continue to grow if it is not acted upon.

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ATTACHMENTS

Appendix 1.

Interview - Irish social justice and criminal behaviour consultant Margaret Finch

Q1. What did your work include before coming a lecturer?

- I was what would be called an applied psychologist which means I took the psychology and I worked in many different settings so one of my settings was forensic psychology, where I was working with young people who had committed crimes as if they were adults they would have been sentenced to fourteen years in prison- or more. It took in a lot of gang violence, rape, arson, murder. Other than that, a lot of my work was community based youth work facilitating marginalized kids back into the mainstream, whether they were marginalized because of class, culture, disability and again a lot of delinquency, so a lot of children coming from families with addiction drugs, violence.

Q2. In your career, have you encountered with the subject matter of male victims of domestic abuse?

- Yes. So, in the early years the first time I came across with the subject of domestic violence for males was in young couples. I was working mostly with males, but working with young males who were involved in street crimes and drugs. One of the side issues that would come up is that on the street they were violent but in their relationships, they were victims of domestic violence and nobody knew. It was something that they very rarely talked about. So, that was quite a surprise as at this time it was the late 1980's when nobody would be talking about the subject.

So, it was still a taboo?

- Yes, totally taboo never mind for a fifteen/sixteen-year-old strong street kid who was running drugs but yet going home at night and getting a slap from their girlfriend who was only 15-16. So, that was interesting because again working with them you found out that this was something they had witnessed themselves at home when they were growing up. After that in England when I worked in England there was a lot more established services, there was a lot more spoke about. There was a lot of services in England where you could refer these kids on. When I came back to Ireland the subject had begun to be talked about around the year 2000. So, you would begin to see programs even or media campaigns about the subject but it was still a social subject as people thought as these men must be weak men. It must be soft men and very aggressive women. There was still stereotyping of it even though Ireland had come to terms with domestic violence as male to female. It wasn't always the biggest man who was hitting his wife, but they didn't really transfer that to the other way around. The first organization I would've worked with around the subject would be MOVE in Ennis in Claire. I would've had the most contact with them as referring people on to them, and again encouraging students to research the subject. Which itself was interesting, we had an undergraduate doing a research about the subject, and over conversation the subject was discussed in class. The number of students that came forward in class stating that "hey, I'm actually doing this to my boyfriend". So just a change in social awareness that just because it is female to male, it isn't just an argument and it does cross the line to abuse. So, MOVE is very interesting, in terms of the amount of work they do in the Claire area they are constantly trying to raise the issue and create the debate. So, you know again they have created a lot of space for males to come out and talk, plus they provide a sort of a rounded service you know, so they are supporting the male victim but also like that those who want to maintain the relationship it assists in the relationship work. What is it that is causing this, because the notion that it is one or the other is usually not true. There is usually a course of line, where the violence is, that someone has to leave, and having to leave and hide and escape as such. But then there is also a lot where the whole relationship has to be rebuilt and re-explored – they have to learn new

ways of communicating, so MOVE is really good with that because it provides space both for the male victim and the female perpetrators to come together in groups to discuss it and it has a nice drop in type of feel to it.

Seems like Limerick and Clare have the good services

- Yes, they really do yeah.

There was one service, I think it was in Kerry but it was only for male perpetrators, there was nothing for male victims.

- Yes, I haven't heard of anything in Kerry. Now again that is interesting because that can be about taboos as well. So, in fact it's not that we don't know that we have male victims in Kerry, but often in fact I know a number of the people along the way that I have worked with or worked alongside and spoke with – they prefer to get a train to Ennis to do a days' workshop for the fear of anyone here seeing you into a particular service. So, it's like maintaining the confidentiality, so even if you look at the female services you have ADAPT, and that's one service for female victims but there would be lots of other subtler services that you are not known walking in the front door what you're going in for, and that seems to be a big thing in Kerry. Some victims in Kerry are very much like "I'd rather do without a service than risk someone seeing me going in the door of a service"

So, something like that that would be disguised would be easier?

- Yes, and again what MOVE I know have explored and there is AMEN Ireland you have probably heard of them as well, and COSC – there is a number of different ones. Looking online, cause again the younger male victims are more techno confident and I know there is like with mental health stuff there is more online availability like chat forums and support

forums – and that also is a good thing because it gives the younger generation (15-20-year-old) are more able to explore “Am I experiencing this”. This is the key question, is it abuse?

To recognize the signs of abuse

- Yes. Because the self-reaction can be “Oh just get over it, it was deserved, you should be tougher”– it can be easily justified. All of those things can be excuses that the male victims rationalize in the same way as the female victims will. But also because is such conceptually new. Even in the schools there is a lot of induction of themes, there is like in secondary schools now there is a new programme coming in about welfare, but it’s not on that at all. Gender identity, you know, there have been a lot of taboos that have been broken but male victims of domestic abuse is still not generally discussed or acknowledged. So, the online stuff is good to helping to explore it without self-exposure.

Q3. Do you feel as men in abusive relationships are treated differently than women?

- I guess it really depends on the context. I think in Ireland we are very confused about what’s strong and what’s weak in our social concept, and we always have been. So, again, it’s only my perspective of the tradition in Ireland historically, agriculture based society, large families – it was always that there was a strong matriarch woman running a household – the man was the primary earner but it was always the concept that the woman was always in charge. Even if you look at caricatures and everything going back the notion of the larger woman slapping the husband on the back of the head and he going out drinking and she roaring at him when he comes back. That kind of concept of women being volatile to their husbands was kind of always there, it was almost a norm. But if the man is being violent to a woman I do think always was wrong and just hidden. But there kind of is a bit of a thing in the Irish culture of that Irish women can be rough to

their men if that makes sense. And I think that's kind of what has been a danger, so it has been misperceived as that's how a strong woman is.

So, it's harder to identify that I'm actually a victim of domestic abuse

- Yes, harder to identify as the victim and even harder for the woman perpetrator to identify for them doing something wrong. The imbalance of the power – it's challenging to understand. In male violence towards female there is a conceptual thing of imbalance of male and female and it's kind of always understood that it's wrong. But a lot of male victims feel or they are made fee that you have got to kind of accept so much because women are weaker anyway, so the women have to act up. So I think if they come in contact with services it is pretty equal isn't it, but I think society wise in Ireland the concept of the victim is still somehow " you brought it on yourself, you're weak " whether male or female. I know it's not a nice thing to say but I do think that as when the society becomes more and more self-interested it's also a way of saying "don't bring your problems to me". So even friends, family, I think we are seeing an increase in it whether it is victim of abuse or addiction etc.

That problems are supposed to be solved in the comfort of your own home

Q4. Do you think that the subject of male victims of domestic abuse is stigmatized in modern society?

- Absolutely yes, that whole de individualisation of society where we want no collective and you've got all your rights so now get on with it. And then that of course is all loaded with the whole male versus female, you know. I do think as well that even the younger generation of males feel more pressure in terms of image, body shape, all of these things. There was an interesting thing in the tele even, in the show called Big Brother. One of the girls in it – very popular, everybody liked her and all the rest - but her boyfriend came to visit her in the house and the first thing she said to him

was “oh no you’ve put on weight”. That was really interesting because that’s just not something that wasn’t seen as an issue.

And if a man would have said that to a woman it could have possibly been seen as an issue.

- Yes, and that created this whole debate of exactly that, and yet she could say it and he took it. Where as if it was the other way around it would have been seen as an issue, now in that context it wasn’t an issue, but I’m just saying that it was an example of how couples interact differently and I think there is a new learning of what is strong what is weak, what is male what is female, what is ok what isn’t ok, and nobody really knows what that is. A young girl said to me recently that she finds saying things that are more meaningful is more challenging in 20-30 year olds now, everybody is talking but nobody is saying much meaningful stuff.

Q5. In your professional opinion, would this service in Kerry benefit men, their mental health and the issue of domestic violence in the long run?

- Oh absolutely, I think there is the need for one. I think how it looks and what shape it would take needs a lot of exploring and asking the people who would use it how would they like it to be, but I think it’s necessary because traveling to some place like Ennis or another county to access a service is choice based, facility based, means based, resource based, choice based and one thing often with the victim is that the one thing they don’t have is a choice.

And then if you have to go to that extend of having to travel you might just leave it off

- Yes, exactly. I think you are already probably somewhere good in your coping and in your healing if you’re able to make a choice to travel for a

service. So, it's the earlier stage of dealing with and coping with that needs support. I think as well some things like the GP, the training of GP's and public health nurses, A&E staff to understand signs and to understand how to behave. And to start trying to talk about domestic violence as a non-gender based issue. So I think that the focus has been for years to look out for a woman who has been experiencing domestic violence, I know that in terms of dealing with the Gardaí – I know that in the last number of years even in the Kerry area but also nationally they were surprised how many domestic violence incidents they've come to on everything assuming it's the woman who is the victim only to realize after couple times of going back to that location that it in fact was the man who was the victim. So, it's definitely the seeking of services is increasing but we are not responding yet. There is more and more of the need. In Kerry it just happens if you happen to meet someone who knows something. But it's not a standard within any of the services that we do provide that they should have a knowledge base, it's only a hit or miss. If you go to a place like Arlington lodge, all of the staff there are going to have concept and insight and an opinion, but then you go to the A&E, not necessarily if you know what I mean. IF there is a staff member who saw a guy who came in who said that this is how it actually happened, but in general it's not there even in undergraduate training I often think of cross degrees. Even things like If you pick up a general psychology books you get a huge amount of information and statistics of women who have experienced domestic violence and then there is a small little paragraph "it does happen to men too." And also I know something someone said to me before as well was like, and there is some children who witness domestic violence, but there is not a lot. It's kind of until they start showing impact of witnessing violence when the services kick in. I remember reading an article from Sweden or Finland who is more advanced in research saying like anything, not saying that those are the children that who will go on to be violent, but it is likely that their relationship will be a percentage more violent whether they're accepting violence of others or that perpetrating violence compared to a child who hasn't witnessed violence, cause their tolerance levels have been effected. So, yet it's the same thing isn't it, like again we're doing lots of anti-

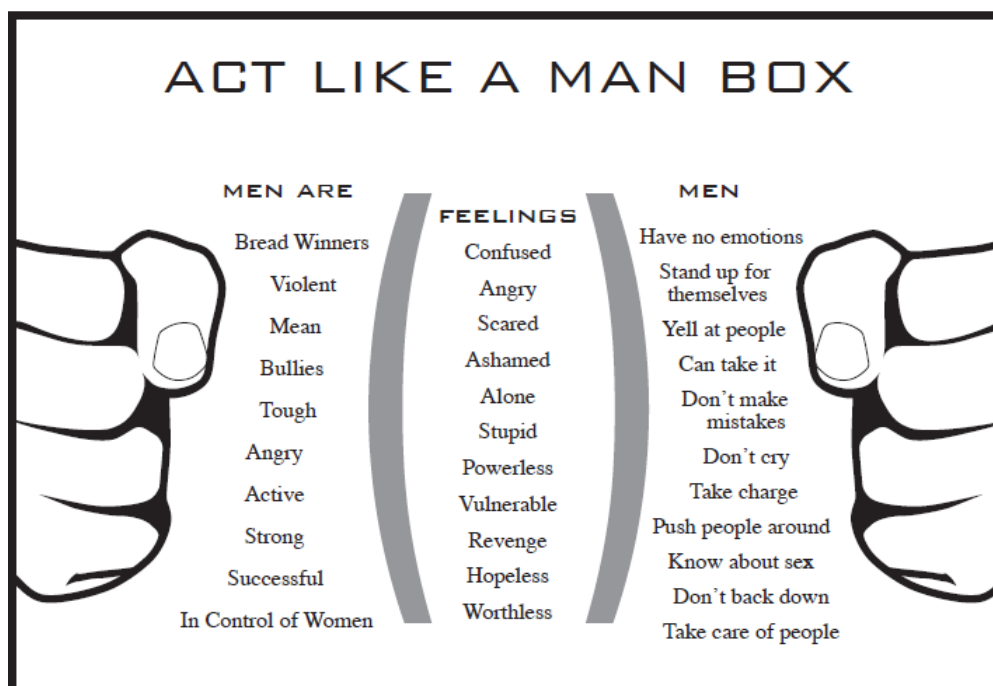
bullying campaigns in schools and things but like that it has to encompass the wider concept of perpetrating violence from one to another. Me, I would think that yes we have to focus on a male service in Kerry, but a lot of the early intervention prevention work, if we could de gender it to just one human to another that it is unacceptable. I think that as well generations now don't think of the gender imbalance. You ask young people are boys treated differently than girls they'll go "no". The concepts are different because now in Ireland they all can do football, and I find that young people seem to switch off when any sessions start going about focusing one gender to another, they go "here we go again". So, I think more generic pre intervention would be really good.

Q6. Do you think there is a need for such service needed in Kerry?

- Absolutely yes.

Appendix 2.

Kivel Paul Act like a man box



Appendix 3.

AMEN Interview

1. Could you please describe how a service user is referred to you?
 - All self-referred
2. Have you seen an increase in service users over the past year? If yes, what percentage?
 - Check annual reports.
3. If possible, would you be able to provide any information if you have had service users from Co. Kerry?
 - No available data on specific locations
4. Do you find that there is a need for a larger scale of services around the issue of domestic abuse, if so, why?
 - Yes, outreach services commencing in Oct in various locations throughout the country, nearest to Kerry is north Cork or Ennis.
5. During my research I have found that a lot of the services especially for male victims of domestic abuse are located in the larger cities of Ireland, do you agree? If yes, what would you see as the reason for this?
 - There are no other services for men in Ireland apart from Amen. Amen is the only dedicated funded service for male victims of domestic abuse.