

Conference Report



**Organised by Tayside Domestic Abuse and Substance
Misuse Project**

Thursday 17th July 2008

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FOREWORD

The “No Boundaries” Conference, which was held in July 2008, was the culmination of almost two years of hard work by a wide range of partners from across the substance misuse and domestic abuse sectors within Tayside (and sometimes beyond!). The aim of the conference was to raise awareness of the links, for women and children, between domestic abuse and substance misuse, to challenge current practice in this area and, consequently, to inspire change. It was also an important opportunity for us to introduce the many resources that the Project has developed and to distribute these to partners from outside the Tayside area.

We were delighted to be joined by almost 200 delegates from all across Scotland (and some from further a field). Delegates were drawn from a wide range of professional backgrounds, and ranged from frontline practitioners to chief officers. We were also very pleased to welcome a number of fantastic speakers and hold an extremely powerful performance by the Geese Theatre Company. Feedback indicates that all speakers were well received and provided interesting and useful inputs. However, I have to give a special thank you to Marai Larasi for her inspirational and challenging input. I think she summed up in a short space of time the message the Project was keen that all delegates took away from the day; **“that services can work with women positively if they are committed to doing so and are imaginative in their responses”**.

Feedback from the afternoon workshop sessions was also largely positive. We are pleased that delegates took the opportunity to hear about the resources developed by the Project in Tayside, and we certainly gave away a large number of DVDs, reports, leaflets etc. on the day. As the Project Leader I am also delighted to be able to report that since the conference we have had a number of requests to provide inputs at seminars and conferences, and for permission and support to adapt and implement project resources in other areas. This wider interest, and action, has helped the Tayside Project to fulfil its wider aim of ensuring that the work we have done is replicated in as many areas of Scotland as possible.

So, a huge thank you from all of us in Tayside to everyone who provided inputs, attended on the day and helped with organisation behind the scenes. If you were not there on the day and see things in this report that interest you or you want to know more about, please, please get in touch!

Kathryn Sharp
Project Lead, Tayside Domestic Abuse and Substance Misuse Project.

SPEAKERS BIOGRAPHIES

Stewart Maxwell (MP) was born in Glasgow in 1963 and was educated at King's Park Secondary School and Glasgow College of Technology (now Glasgow Caledonian University) where he completed an honours degree in Social Science. Prior to being elected Stewart worked for Strathclyde Fire Service for over 10 years first as the Manager for Central Command and subsequently he worked on the development of the new Management Information IT System.

Stewart was elected to the Scottish Parliament in 2003 as a Regional Member representing the West of Scotland. In the last session of the Parliament Stewart was the Shadow Minister for Sports, Culture & Media. He was re-elected to the Scottish Parliament in 2007 and holds the position of Minister for Communities & Sport in the new Scottish Government.

Stewart first joined the SNP in 1992 and has held a number of posts within the party including: Vice-Convenor in charge of publicity; Member of National Executive Committee. Shortly after being elected in 2003, Stewart began the process of introducing a Member's Bill 'The Prohibition of Smoking in Regulated Areas'. The original intention of this Bill was to prohibit smoking in certain enclosed areas. This Bill was later taken up by the previous Executive, with Stewart's support. It was through this process that the existing Smoking, Health and Social Care (Scotland) Bill came about.

He is married with one daughter and lives in East Renfrewshire.

Lily Greenan has been active in the women's movement since 1981, working in Edinburgh Rape Crisis Centre as an unpaid worker from 1981 to 1988. She became the centre's first development worker in 1992, and in that role chaired the Promoting Women's Safety Working Group which developed the first multi agency strategy to tackle violence against women in Edinburgh. She was instrumental in developing the Scottish Rape Crisis Network, and represented SRCN in the early stages of the Scottish Partnership on Domestic Abuse.

Partnership working has been a consistent theme in her work, with a particular focus on how interagency partnerships work at an operational level. In 1999, she moved to the role of Project Manager for the EVA Project, an NHS Lanarkshire initiative tasked with improving services for women who had experienced violence. Whilst at EVA, she played an active role in the North Lanarkshire Domestic Abuse Working Group and was involved in the development of the MARAC pilot.

She is the author of a literature review on Violence Against Women, published by the Scottish Executive in 2004. She was a member of the Expert Committee on Violence Against Women which drafted the Strategic Framework on Violence Against Women.

She moved to her current post as manager of Scottish Women's Aid in April 2006. In that capacity, she sits on the National Group to Address Violence Against Women.

Sarah Galvani Joined the University of Warwick in January 2008 after 6 years at the University of Birmingham. Her main research interest is in the overlapping issues of substance use and domestic violence, which stemmed largely from her work experiences in the late 1980's. Sarah worked primarily in London and New York with homeless men and women, many of whom also had mental health problems. Sarah's research focuses on two main areas, substance use and domestic abuse and social work education and substance use. Her research has included women's views of alcohol's role in violence against women, and the impact of violence and abuse in the engagement and retention of women in substance use treatment. She has published a number of journals including Violence against Women, Practice, Addiction Research and Theory, Social Work Education, Drug and Alcohol Review, Journal of Substance Use and Alcohol Concern's Acquire Bulletin.

Marai Larasi has been serving as the Executive Director of the **Nia Project** (formerly Hackney Women's Aid) since January 2000. She has worked in Women's Aid for over 10 years. Marai is passionate about combating violence against women and inequality generally, and sees education and awareness raising as key instruments of change in her work. In addition to her daily management of the organisation, Marai is involved with a range of communities, steering/working groups and forums. The **Nia Project** provides a range of services for women and children that have experienced domestic violence and other forms of gender violence.

Geese Theatre Company are a team of internationally renowned BAFTA and Butler Trust Award winning theatre practitioners working with socially excluded and marginalised groups. The company regularly works with offenders in prison and on probation; young people who are seen to be at risk of offending and who have offended; patients in mental health settings; young people who are looked after; other vulnerable, marginalised or excluded groups; and professionals who work with these client groups. Geese also regularly creates interactive performances for local, national conference and training events.

OPENING SPEECH

Lily Greenan, Conference Chair welcomed **Stewart Maxwell**, Minister for Communities and Sport to open the conference.

Mr Maxwell thanked the Project for inviting him to take part in the event. He welcomed the conference and highlighted its importance in thoroughly exploring the links between substance misuse and domestic abuse; both at a theoretical and practical level. More specifically, he referred to the significant legacy of materials and learning which will be applicable to work across Scotland as well as in Tayside.

Mr Maxwell explained why the Scottish Government had chosen to fund a project focussing on domestic abuse and substance misuse; the reason was, quite simply, the facts and figures. He referred to the substantial amount of research carried out over the years looking at the connections - which the Tayside Project has now also added to - bringing a much needed Scottish perspective to what we know. Mr Maxwell went on to highlight some of the, what he referred to as "*alarming*", figures;

- A study of hospital records found that women who had experienced domestic violence were 15 times more likely to abuse alcohol and 9 times more likely to abuse drugs.
- Significant evidence also exists to show that a male partner often introduces women to drugs or alcohol.
- In the Tayside Project's own research, half of the women interviewed thought that their substance use was used as an excuse by their current or ex partner for their abusive behaviour.

Mr Maxwell then went on to clarify the Scottish Government's understanding of the links between domestic abuse and substance misuse;

"...drugs and alcohol are not the cause of domestic abuse. Reviews indicate that rates of alcohol abuse and dependence among perpetrators of domestic abuse may be significantly higher than the general population. However, reducing the perpetrator's substance use while sometimes reducing levels of physical injury, has not been shown to reduce the actual occurrence of domestic abuse. "

He highlighted the importance of proactively identifying women experiencing domestic abuse and misusing substances in order that they can access services, and of service providers being adequately trained to provide an appropriate and holistic service. Mr Maxwell referred to the need for practitioners in both sectors to be aware of the possibility that domestic abuse and substance misuse will be co-occurring for women within their service. He reinforced that training has a key role in raising practitioners' awareness of this possibility, and in developing known links between the children affected by parental substance misuse agenda and domestic abuse and substance misuse.

In closing, Mr Maxwell thanked all those who had participated in the work of the Tayside Project and expressed his belief that it's learning, good practice and research will add significantly to all our work in this very important area.

On behalf of the management board of the Multiple and Complex Needs Project Lily welcomed **Dr Sarah Galvani**

SPEAKER NOTES

Dr Sarah Galvani

Dr Galvani began by outlining the myths and realities in relation to substance misuse and domestic abuse, and stated that there was no direct causal link. In other words, substance misuse does not cause domestic abuse. The nature of the relationship is complex with no simple solution and Sarah expressed her concerns that the quest for simplicity leads to risky beliefs and risky responses.

Sarah continued to outline some research findings and dispel some myths:-

Substance use by the perpetrator has been found to;

- increase the frequency of Domestic Abuse (Brookoff et al 1997, Fals-Stewart 2003, Leonard and Quigley 1999, Leonard and Senchak 1996)
- increase severity of injuries inflicted (Brecklin 2002, Graham et al 2004, Leonard and Senchak 1996)
- increase mental and physical health problems of the partner (Dawson et al 2007).

The myth of women using alcohol or other drugs deserving or provoking violence was also highlighted and later dispelled by the research finding:-

- Women drank/used drugs to numb or escape the physical and psychological pain of abuse (Clark and Foy 2000, Corbin et al 2001, Galvani 2006, Miller 2001 and Miller et al 2000).
- The impact of domestic abuse is traumatic and long lasting. Sarah quoted the work of (Barron et al) in relation to Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, and in addition, she described the changes in cognition and motor coordination following substance use, but stated that there was no evidence to support that these changes caused violence.

Clear links were identified in research between perpetrating adult domestic abuse and child abuse (Cawson 2002, Morley and Mullender 1994, Hester et al 2000, Barth et al 2005). Children have reported witnessing and often experiencing extreme violence (Cawson 2002, Gorin 2004, Mullender et al 2002).

Sarah summarised the research by saying that drugs and alcohol alone were not to blame for domestic abuse. The relationship is a complex one involving individual choice, substance effects; expectations defined by culture; triggers; environmental factors; and gender role assumptions. Sarah highlighted the need to address all elements, take a holistic approach to the assessment of individuals and families, and develop effective multi-agency partnerships to better meet the needs of women and children.

Marai Larasi Inspired the room by describing the work of the NIA project (based in London), who work towards ensuring the safety of women and children who experience domestic abuse and sexual violence. She described

the importance of operating the service with an "open door" policy as being of huge importance in relation to client engagement. This operational policy gives the women the message that staff are "*fighting her corner*" regardless of her "issues", providing a sense of safety and encouraging women to feel valued.

The Nia Project is proud to operate from a feminist perspective and their identity was formed in grass roots activism. NIA is a voluntary sector organisation which was established thirty years ago, they currently employ 35 staff members and around 15 volunteers.

Service provision includes refuge accommodation in six refuges, a resettlement service and a legal and advice service which employs solicitors and advice workers. The family support service works with women around parenting and child protection, and has recently started working with children around their experiences with domestic violence. This work has focussed on prevention and investing in the future. The project also provides training and group-work, which includes working in two women's prisons. Women offenders are often not seen as credible victims, or survivors, of abuse. Other services include professional training and an administration service to hold everything else together.

Women who experience domestic violence who also have substance misuse problems are being turned away from refuge because their needs are seen as too complex. Many workers lacked the skills, knowledge and confidence to work with women with both sets of needs. "*Most refuges do not accept women with drug and alcohol issues as workers fear they cannot deal with them. Working with the overlap of substance misuse and domestic violence can present big challenges on resources and workers' energy.*" Marai also highlighted that women were more likely to seek help from voluntary organisations as fear of having their children removed from their care made them reluctant to engage with social services.

The importance of service providers accepting women's complex needs and working with them holistically was a powerful theme for the conference.

Kathryn Sharp provided an overview of the work of the Tayside Domestic Abuse and Substance Misuse Project which aims to improve services for women and children experiencing domestic abuse and substance misuse. The project is one of 14 pilot/demonstration projects working across different sectors. There was a 6 month research stage and 21 month development work stream which is due to end in December 2008.

Research was undertaken with Drug and Alcohol services, Domestic Abuse services and service users from both sectors. 29 out of 34 respondents disclosed dual issues of domestic abuse and substance misuse. Women reported that they used substances to dull physical pain and to escape reality. Over half of the women felt that their substance use was used as an excuse by their (ex) partner for his abusive behaviour. A number of key barriers to accessing services were identified during the research: stigma and shame,

failure to acknowledge the problem, fear, long waiting times, inflexible working hours, ineffective advertising of the service and hard to reach vulnerable clients.

The development of the project identified 4 main action areas:

Action 1: Improve access to appropriate services

Action 2: Develop cross-disciplinary resources

Action 3: Improve satisfaction with service and outcomes

Action 4: Ensure professionals are knowledgeable and adequately trained

Tangible outcomes included the development of a range of joint publicity materials, a training DVD and the development of women friendly environments within Drug and Alcohol services. Training was developed and delivered to practitioners which enabled them to work more effectively with women experiencing the "dual" issue and in support of running women only spaces.

A working group of 19 agencies plus volunteers supported the development of a good practice toolkit, which includes guidelines for information sharing, and inter-agency referral. Other aspects of the project included a short creative consultation process which was initiated with children and young people. This process generated a "Day in the Life" exhibition which highlighted the issues of substance use and violence. An interactive tabletop training event was developed with volunteers, service users and agencies. The event used live actors to further raise awareness of multiple and complex needs and focus on what services are available and what these services could offer.

A two-day training course on the "dual" issues has also been developed in partnership with Scottish Training on Drugs and Alcohol (STRADA), Scottish Women's Aid and the Tayside Project. This will this will be piloted across Tayside in the near future.

The final stages of the project will ensure distribution of the resources and implementation of learning across Tayside. The work across all these action areas is being evaluated at a project and national level.

PANEL QUESTIONS

Questions to the speakers from the floor included...

Marai Larasi was asked what services were put in place for young people? Marai stated that interventions had been mainly preventative focussing on young women's sexual exploitation.

Sarah Galvani was asked what research had been done around the issues of domestic abuse and substance use and what interventions there were in this area?

She stated that there was not a great deal of research around and pointed instead to the work of the Stella Project (London) and a US project which was integrating substance misuse and domestic violence. Motivational Interviewing was an important intervention across the board.

Dr Galvani was also asked to clarify her perspective on the cycle of violence where she reiterated there being no direct causal relationship, but that substances were certainly a risk factor in escalating violence.

Kathryn Sharp was asked if it had been difficult to bring agencies together to progress work?

She responded to say it was always difficult because of time and resources but what helped was to get individuals together and offer food. There was lots of natural networking and informal chat which led to relationships being formed and work being progressed.

GEESE THEATRE PRODUCTION

The theatre company, which has extensive experience in using interactive theatre as a training tool, were commissioned to write a drama that would highlight the specific dilemmas facing women who have experience of both violence against women and substance misuse. The drama was an extremely powerful and effective way to increase an understanding of the issues by conference delegates. A "fool" introduced the characters and explained that each of the characters wear masks as a "front" - at any stage the "fool" or audience could ask a character to lift their mask and say what they were really feeling. This highlighted what a support worker might be told versus the true feelings of a client which could be revealed with sensitive exploration and support.

The drama highlighted:

- The build up of domestic abuse in terms of frequency and severity.
- Coercive control in relation to domestic abuse and sexual violence
- Substance misuse is a social issue not an illness with profound implications for housing, social exclusion, isolation, work and family life.
- Agencies need to see the whole picture, see the woman and recognise that substance misuse is a symptom.
- Women experiencing domestic abuse/survivors of sexual abuse/substance misuse issues will be likely to have complex needs. This can result in too many agencies becoming involved all thinking their area of support is most important.
- Clients are asked to address too many issues simultaneously. It is difficult to address a drug problem if an abusive partner is controlling a woman's life and he doesn't want her to change.
- Woman being pulled in too many ways at once - it all gets to be too much.

Some examples of questions put to the audience:-

Question: What might Gina be scared of? What else might be going on for her beneath her mask?

Question: What do Karen and Phillip need? Which agencies could support them?

Question: Which agencies need to be involved at this point? What effect might that have on Gina?

These questions gave the audience an opportunity to think about the issues and how they could support the individuals involved. It was useful also for the audience to think about their particular remit and service structure in relation to the level of support they could offer, who they could work with and how this would be approached.

WORKSHOP REPORTS

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE WORKSHOP

Karen Macmillan (Perth & Kinross Domestic Abuse Partnership) and Heather Duncan

'A DAY IN THE LIFE OF..'

Was an exhibition put together by children and young people who used photography, pictures & words to explore the issues of domestic abuse and substance misuse.

There were 4 stages to the project which have been outlined below:-

Stage 1 : Planning

- Initial multi-agency meeting to agree format, resources, IT support, venues, risk assessment
- Written brief of project: In order to ensure consistency all staff involved were provided with a written brief of the project.
- 3 sessions, the group agreed to run 1 session in each of the following areas:
 - Perth & Kinross, Angus, Dundee

Stage 2 : Implementation

Violence, Drugs & Alcohol.

As part of a decoding exercise, each young person was asked

- What do these words mean to you?
- What are the first things that come to mind?

Go out into 'your' world. What images represent those words.

Using photography and art the young people photographed images from their surroundings that they felt represented the words/texts they had used.

They then combined the images with the words/text.

Stage 3: Exhibition : A day in the life.

- Opening: Arbroath : Café Project : opened by Sheriff Stein
Lunch: families & young people invited
- Children and Young people: each young person was presented with a digital camera and a thank you certificate.

Stage 4 : Evaluation

- Pan Tayside : huge geographical area.
- Ensuring communication & a consistent approach : due to the large geographical area and the numbers of staff involved it was difficult to maintain effective communication hence the decision for a written brief.
- Staff intensive: it proved to be staff intensive but could be easily run as part of a children/young people summer programme.

- Time: the project ran to a very tight timescale – more time was needed. When working with the young people to combine pictures, texts, an afternoon was allocated whereas a full day would have been beneficial.

Process

- ‘A day in the life of..’ Model : The model which was used within the project proved to be an effective method for engaging with children & young people.
- The **process** is as important as the end result. This model offered children and young people an opportunity to explore their thoughts/feelings in a safe, non-threatening environment. They had the opportunity to discuss issues with other young people/workers. Experienced staff worked with the young people in order to provide support with any issues which arose for them – this is not a model which should be implemented without experienced staff in place.
- The children and young people who participated were eager to discuss their experience of the project and feedback was very positive :

“ I think today was really good and I would say I was excellent at being patient and taking pictures on the cameras”

“I had a really GREAT day today”

“How I felt, I had fun, it was great”

TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOP

Nel Whiting (Scottish Women's Aid)

Gillian Ferguson (Tayside Council on Alcohol)

The purpose of the workshop was to disseminate information about the various training and learning approaches taken during the life of the project. Training, learning and networking were key to the success of the Tayside Project: practitioners learning about the dual issues, about other practitioner's roles and about how they could work together to support women experiencing domestic abuse. Various approaches were taken to try to stimulate interest and encourage learning and partnership working. The workshop focussed on 4 main areas of work:

1. Domestic abuse/substance use links training which was undertaken with practitioners working in substance use projects in Tayside. This training was undertaken to support the role out of the pilots for 'women only' spaces, another aspect of the project.
2. Plans to develop a focused domestic abuse/substance misuse links course with Scottish Women's Aid and STRADA (Scottish Training on Drugs and Alcohol). It is envisaged that this course will, post the pilot phase in Tayside, be run through STRADA in partnership with local VAW forum/training consortia. This is in addition to the inclusion of a domestic abuse case study in the STRADA introductory course. The aim of this strand of the work undertaken by the project was to raise awareness of the dual issues and mainstream an understanding of domestic abuse to a wider field of practitioners.
3. The table-top training event held during the life of the project. This innovative event brought together practitioners from domestic abuse projects, substance use projects, live actors, health, housing, social work and the police to learn about the issues, each other, and their roles in working together to support women with multiple and complex needs. The event aimed to break down barriers to joint working through the promotion of networking opportunities and to overcome fears about 'not knowing about the issue' by providing a safe space to explore the connections.
4. The training DVD that came out of the table-top training day but which had been produced for use in a variety of training settings country-wide and to encourage other areas to host a table-top event themselves. Part of the DVD was shown to delegates and all those attending the conference took a DVD away with them for use in their local area.

Delegates at the workshop were encouraged to think about whether they could use any of the learning from the Tayside Domestic Abuse and Substance Misuse Project in their local area (including the resources produced) and were hopefully sent away inspired to try!

POLICY AND PRACTICE WORKSHOP

Iain Turnbull (Angus DAAT)
Ingrid Hainey (Cair Scotland)

The purpose of the workshop was to outline the background and the process of the policy and practice work stream of the Domestic Abuse and Substance Misuse Project. Specifically it outlined the work undertaken in relation to the development of good practice guidance, joint publicity and women only spaces.

The workshop outlined the context of the Domestic Abuse and Substance Misuse Project as a whole including the research element and the project development work. The high level commitment from the partnerships and others was critical to the success of the project.

The policy and practice work stream brought together practitioners and managers from both domestic abuse and substance misuse agencies. Although a core group continued with the work group throughout the project all the agencies initially involved were consulted on all the material produced by the group. The working group developed a shared understanding of relevant issues.

The aim of the work stream was to raise awareness of substance misuse and domestic abuse and promote good practice & joint working. This was achieved through training, a desk top exercise/seminar and the development of poster and leaflets to be distributed to domestic abuse agencies, substance misuse agencies universal services and public outlets.

Key to progressing the issues of domestic abuse and substance misuse is keeping the issue high on the agenda. It was not clear that so many services would have kept involved if there hadn't been someone to support the development within each organisation. We can all ask about domestic abuse at screening but in order for us to fully support someone we need to be aware of the issue throughout our work and really adopt the working practices.

The future work was outlined as follows - promoting the good practice guidelines and supporting agencies to develop their procedures, protocols and work to further assist women suffering from domestic violence with substance misuse problems; further training to help practitioners understand the issues and feel confident to discuss them with service users.

Finally participants were encouraged to consider implementation of "No Boundaries; - Domestic Abuse and Substance Misuse: A Practice Guide" and specifically to do this within the context of joint working and development.

RESEARCH WORKSHOP

Kathryn Sharp (Project Lead)

Rona Dolev (Independent Research Consultant)

Kathryn introduced Rona and herself and set the scene for the workshop. She explained the initial plans for and purpose of the research; to determine the overlap between domestic abuse and substance misuse in Tayside and to identify areas of good and problematic practice within current service delivery. The group were informed that the original research project had encountered a number of difficulties which had led to Rona being appointed to undertake a secondary analysis of the original data collected and to produce the final research report (which had been disseminated on the day).

Rona presented the final research report published by the project. She briefly described the methodology employed by the initial researcher and described some of the difficulties she encountered in the data collected. She explained that the original methodology was modelled on Humphreys, Thiara & Regan (2005) Domestic Violence and Substance Misuse: Overlapping Issues in Separate Services? This consisted of:

- 41 service user questionnaires
- 12 service user interviews
- 28 interviews with workers from domestic abuse and substance misuse agencies

Rona then went on to highlight the main findings generated from her secondary analysis of the data, which can be found in the summary research report published by the project. These findings demonstrate:

- links between women's experiences of domestic abuse and substance misuse within Tayside.
- A range of explanations for women's use of substances in relation to their experiences of domestic abuse.
- Specific barriers to women seeking to access services in both sectors where they have dual experience of domestic abuse and substance misuse.
- Clear links to other needs, such as poor mental health, for women with experience of the dual issues.
- Mixed perceptions of the current state of multi-agency / sectoral work on these issues and as to how this might best be taken forward in the future.

Following the presentation of the final research report Kathryn went on to describe some of the difficulties the Tayside Domestic Abuse and Substance Misuse Project had encountered during the initial research project. She also shared some of the learning partners had taken from this experience in order that other areas might learn from this experience and avoid similar difficulties in the future. The main points highlighted were:

- The time consuming process of gain ethical consent, especially through a medical ethics committee who are not set-up to consider social research.
- The impact that full economic cost charges have when engaging with any Universities.
- The difficulties of recruiting and employing an appropriate researcher within a short time scale and in gaining reassurances of their knowledge and skills.
- General problems of working to very tight timescales, particularly where the research project relies on co-operation from a wide range of partners
- That projects need to find a balance between perseverance and not jumping through endless hoops to ensure projects get off the ground quickly.

Due to limited time the group did not have the opportunity to have a group discussion or question and answer session. Participants were invited to leave any questions on the board at the front of the room, however none were received at this time. Following the conference, however, a number of requests were received for further copies of the research report and to ask follow-up questions regarding appointing a researcher.

EVALUATION DATA

The evaluation data was collected on a rating system of 1-5, 1 (not at all well) and 5 being (very well) or (not at all interesting) -(very interesting).

Overall, participants were asked how well the conference met their expectations, 82% of those who responded rated the conference at 4 or 5.

Speaker presentations were rated at 4 or 5 with the majority (59%) finding them very interesting. Speaker information was rated in terms of practice development and 43% of respondents felt the information given would benefit their practice.

68% of respondents found the theatre performance was very interesting, 48% felt the performance would benefit their practice.

Respondents rated the workshops at 4 or 5 with the training workshop rating the highest.

Here are some of the comments participants made in response to some of the evaluation questions -

- **What difference will the information from this conference make to your practice.**

'Awareness of related issues will benefit service delivery and service user support, specifically the need to secure women only space in the service which can then be protected. Helped to dispel some of the myths on these topics to co-workers'

'Multi-agency approach is essential to strategic planning - good to hear about practical example'

'Will enable us to establish firmer partnerships between substance misuse services and domestic abuse services'

'Helps me redress the excuses given by perpetrators, and understand some of my young offenders better'

'The conference provided a good framework with the research evidence and went on to the practicalities of enhancing local service provision - all very relevant to my job'

- **Describe the most important messages that attendance at the conference highlighted to you**

'Firstly it heightened my perception and strengthened my motivation to look a step further when dealing with clients. Secondly, I felt that the strength is still there for women helping women but that the message still needs spread further'

'That agencies are still afraid to ask direct questions'

' The importance of partnership approaches'

'Vital to take into account domestic abuse when talking about substance misuse with clients'

'You need to work with substance misusing women on the basis that there is likely to be some form of abuse/violence/coercive control which influences the ability to change'

- **How valuable was the theatre performance in relation to your practice**

'The opportunity to discuss what happens next with colleagues was very interesting to listen to other points of view. I also think the use of masks was fantastic, it really made me consider the difficulties service-user's face when discussing their lives with professionals, especially when they feel that there will be consequences rather than support'

'An excellent means of encouraging thoughts about effective communication. The use of masks as a very visual metaphor for people covering up their feelings, views and concerns was great, social theatre at it's best'

'Makes me more aware of what may be happening in an abusive relationship and to look closer and listen'

Other Comments on the Conference Event

'Interested to hear the local perspective'

'The breadth of the multi-agency backgrounds of attendees at the conference clearly showed a shared interest in addressing these issues across the statutory, voluntary and public sectors, We need to continue to develop and ensure a shared commitment towards offering practical, meaningful and appropriate shared support to victims of abuse including those hardest to reach due to their locality, or cultural/social barriers. We also need to collaborate on identifying, implementing and evaluating effective practice in working with the perpetrators of abuse and strive to address the root causes. Both aspects require a committed shared management of current and future resources with 'ring-fenced' funding from Government to adequately cover operational and research needs - I live in hope!'

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We would like to thank the following individuals and organisations for their support of this conference.

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Geese Theatre Company
Ingrid Hailey - Cair Scotland
Rona Dolev
Heather Duncan
Karen Macmillan - Perth & Kinross Domestic Abuse Forum
Iain Turnbull - Angus Drug Action Team
Nel Whiting - Scottish Women's Aid
Gillian Ferguson - Tayside Council on Alcohol
Irina Pelc - Dundee Domestic Abuse Forum
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Mark Watson - Angus Domestic Abuse Forum
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