Aboriginal Men's Programs Tackling Family Violence: A Scoping Review

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Academic and community research identifies that Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are at a greater risk of being exposed to family violence than non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders. While much of the literature has had a clear focus on the protection of Aboriginal women and children, there is a dearth of research that has examined the nature and efficacy of Aboriginal programs that seek to address men's use of violence. In recent times, governments, policy makers, and community organisations have all sought to gain a greater understanding of how men's group programs, that are specifically aimed at tackling family violence, are addressing these issues.

Utilising a scoping review methodology, this paper examined and summarised the available Australian and international literature available pertaining to these programs. Furthermore, from the findings of the scoping review the authors present a conceptual model for the purpose of discussing the complexities of tackling family violence issues in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men's group programs.

Keywords

Introduction

Kinship, family and country have formed the foundation of Aboriginal wellbeing for thousands of years. However, for the last 25 years it has been widely reported that Australian Aboriginal communities are being torn apart by family violence (Atkinson 1990a, 1990b; Kahn 1980; Keel 2004; Lawrence 2002; Memmott, Stacy, Chambers & Keys 2001; Weatherburn 2010). Family violence is a systemic global issue and in Australia it is evident that Aboriginal communities are particularly vulnerable. Male perpetrated family violence features significantly as a reason for the over-representation of Aboriginal babies and children in out of home care (Jackomos 2015) and in the lives of *Aboriginal women* who are disproportionately overrepresented as victims and

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survivors of family violence in comparison to non-Aboriginal women (Al-Yaman, Van Doeland & Wallis 2006; Blagg 2000; Day, Jones, Nakata & McDermott 2012; Keel 2004; Memmott et al. 2001).

It has been reported that Australian Aboriginal women are 12 times more likely to be victims of family violence (Blagg 2000; Keel 2004) and 32 times more likely to be hospitalised when compared to non-Aboriginal women (SCRGSP 2014). It is argued that statistics under-represent the level of violence in some Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities with up to 90% of violence not being disclosed .

Dr Carmen Lawrence argued sixteen years ago that "after decades of ignoring violence in Aboriginal communities, government agencies and community leaders are now beginning to examine the problem more rigorously" (Lawrence 2000: 8). To date there have been numerous inquiries in Australia examining family violence within Aboriginal community (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Taskforce on Violence 2000; Al-Yaman F, Van Doeland M & Wallis M 2006; Gordon, Hallahan, & Henry 2002). While most of the literature has had a clear focus on protecting Aboriginal women and children, little research has examined the nature and efficacy of Aboriginal men's programs seeking to prevent family violence.

Similarly, other research has highlighted that the supporting infrastructure for such programs, including funding, resourcing and training, are not being adequately and critically examined. It is argued that long term investment in programs is crucial to allow them to become adequately established within a community (Brown & Languedoc 2004). Furthermore it is maintained that current short and medium term funding structures do not support the process of the healing journey (Brown & Languedoc 2004). Program sustainability is highlighted by Cripps and Davis (2012: 6) as critical to violence reduction stating that current funding models "can compromise the effectiveness and impact of programs". It is with an acknowledgement of this financially unstable environment that this article reports on a literature review of Aboriginal men's programs.

The purpose of this scoping review is to extend the current knowledge base and understanding of Aboriginal men's family violence programs. The review provides the foundations for the Aboriginal strand of the Fathering Challenges, Australian Research Council funded research program.

Utilising scoping review methodology, the paper examines and summarises the available literature pertaining to Aboriginal men's programs that are specifically aimed at addressing issues of family violence. The paper begins with an outline of the scoping review method followed by a discussion of the key themes arising from the literature. Finally, a discussion section provides a model based on a synthesis of the literature as well as a guide for future research needs in this area.

Method

It is argued that a scoping study is generally undertaken to examine the extent, range and nature of research activity; to determine the value of undertaking a full systematic review; to summarise research findings and to identify research gaps (Arksey & O'Malley 2005). This review utilised the comprehensive scoping study framework developed by Arksey and O'Malley (2005), including

refinements made by Levac, Colquhoun, and O'Brien (2010). Underpinning the scoping study methodological framework are five stages: identifying the research question, identifying relevant studies, selecting studies, charting the data, and collating, summarizing and reporting the results (Arksey & O'Malley 2005).

The research questions

The starting point for the scoping review was to identify a broad research question that would guide the development of the search strategies (Arksey & O'Malley 2005). Levac et al. (2010) argued that researchers should consider combining a broad research question with a clearly articulated scope of inquiry defining the concept, target population, and outcomes of interest. The authors, which included all members of the Aboriginal reference group worked collaboratively to develop the following research question:

How have Aboriginal men's programs addressed issues of family violence?

Identifying relevant studies

This scoping review followed a model of balancing both what is feasible and what is considered to be a broad and comprehensive search (Arksey & O'Malley 2005). Levac et al. (2010) argue that decisions surrounding feasibility should not compromise the ability of the researchers to address the research question and secondly that researchers need to have expertise within the proposed field of study to make informed decisions when limiting the scope.

The authors of this paper have wide-ranging backgrounds of both clinical and academic experience encompassing both (Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal) academic research knowledge and Aboriginal community-informed knowledge which assisted in defining the scope and limitations of the review. The review period extended from January 1990 to December 2015, and included international English language literature. In addition, grey literature was included to ensure inclusion of community based practice reports and evaluations. The start date of 1990 was chosen because it was felt that Judy Atkinson's articles on violence within Australian Aboriginal communities (Atkinson 1990a, 1990b) were seminal in the development of the discourse in Australia.

Databases searched

A formal search of the following databases was conducted using the online library resource at The University of Melbourne: SocINDEX, Family-ATSIS, Family & Society Studies Worldwide Search, PsycINFO, MEDLINE, and Applied Social Sciences Index and Abstracts. Three primary search term groupings were constructed to form the database search strategy.

Search terms utilised

Search Term 1
"domestic violence" OR "domestic abuse" OR "family violence" OR "family abuse" OR "lateral abuse" OR "lateral violence" OR "intimate partner violence" OR "intimate partner abuse" OR batter* OR "Elder abuse" OR "Elder violence" OR "interpersonal abuse" OR "Interpersonal violence"

Search Term 2
Aboriginal OR Aboriginal* OR "Torres Strait Islander*" OR Maori* OR "First Nation*" OR Inuit* OR "Native American*"

Search Term 3
dad* OR father* OR men*

Within each database the three grouped search terms outlined above were combined using 'AND' to create a final search grouping. The search of key databases was expanded using a search of google scholar and google generally. Finally the researchers mined the reference lists of studies selected within the review. In total 1032 potentially relevant articles were identified.

Selecting studies

A set of inclusion and exclusion criteria were developed to assist in eliminating studies outside the scope of the research question. After conference proceedings, interviews and duplicate articles were removed, authors 1 & 2 blind reviewed each remaining abstract. Studies that specifically referred to Aboriginal men's programs and family violence issues were retained. The authors then came together to discuss individual decisions. Where the authors had a split decision on an abstract, the study was reviewed in full and a decision was made in collaboration. It was found that a large number of the initially identified articles were not relevant to the scoping study question due to a lack of primary focus on men's family violence programs.

Charting the data

In total eleven articles were included in this review (see Table 1). All the articles originated from either Australia, Canada or New Zealand. Three broad themes were evident within the literature reviewed: 'Contributing factors to family violence and impacts of colonisation'; 'program structure and design'; and 'evidence and perceived effectiveness'. The themes were selected using stages four and five of Levac et al., (2010) and are explored further in the findings below and later in the discussion.

Limitations

Over the last twenty years there has been significant growth in the number of programs that have been designed to work with men on a myriad of social issues. These programs range from men's sheds to healing programs, parenting groups, and group programs that assist men to deal with health and other social determinant issues. Whilst it would be of interest to discuss the invaluable role these programs potentially play more broadly in the prevention of issues of family violence, the purpose of this paper was to investigate the programs that were operating with a specific content focus on working with men on issues of family violence.

Findings

Contributing factors to Indigenous male perpetrated family violence

The evidence clearly establishes that there is no single defining factor that may be attributed to the occurrence of family violence in Aboriginal communities but rather multiple, layered and interconnected factors (Al-Yaman et al. 2006; Arney & Westby 2012; Atkinson 1990b; Cheers et al. 2006; Cripps 2007; Day et al. 2012; Mals, Howells, Day & Hall 2000; Memmott 2010; Partnerships Against Family Violence 2000). Memmot et al. (2001) present a framework that categorises causal factors of family violence into three categories: precipitating (triggers), situational (social environment) or underlying (historical context). Colonisation, as an historically contextualised factor, has exposed Aboriginal communities to massacres, genocidal policies, dispossession and other acts of colonial violence which have contributed to an intergenerational experience of collective grief and trauma (Al-Yaman et al 2006).

      As a result, Aboriginal communities face significant social issues that reflect a history of trauma and violence including greater levels of socio-economic disadvantage, unemployment, homelessness, contact with the justice and child protection systems. Aboriginal people are also much more likely to experience loss of identity, comorbid chronic disease, racism, mental health issues, drug and alcohol dependency, all of which are 'situational' factors for family violence, where one factor may compound and increase the likelihood that another factor will be present (AAV 2008). When categories of causal factors are layered (Memmott et al. 2001), the burden of family violence risk factors and the vulnerability caused by the associated powerlessness are significantly increased for Aboriginal communities.

      Within an Australian context it has been argued that some Aboriginal communities view "male violence less as an expression of patriarchal power than as a compensation for lack of status, esteem and value" (Partnerships Against Family Violence 2000: 3). Colonisation is considered by many Aboriginal people to be an ongoing phenomenon manifesting itself in contemporary experiences of colonial constructs within Aboriginal peoples' political, social, economic and cultural lives. Taiaiake and Corntassel (2005: 599) described colonisation as "a powerful assault on Aboriginal identities" which reinforce Radford and Stanko's (1996) description of it as a power structure which has contributed to the incidence of family violence within Aboriginal communities. As a component of lateral violence (violence within a

disadvantaged community), family violence in an Aboriginal context can therefore be seen as an expression of 'internalised colonialism' (Australian Human Rights Commission 2011).

All the articles reviewed in this scoping review argued that the impacts of colonisation within Aboriginal communities have caused systemic social, economic, health and wellbeing issues which have contributed to the incidence of family violence. Some of the underlying and situational factors discussed in the articles include oppression and dispossession, disempowerment, substance misuse, gambling issues, low socio economic status, unemployment, poor health outcomes, and lack of educational opportunities (Franks 2000; Gregory 2008; Jia 2000; Kiyoshk 2003; Kowanko et al. 2009; McCalman et al. 2006; Prince 2015; Zellerer 2003). It is argued that in a colonial context Aboriginal men are faced with significant additional issues to those of their non-Aboriginal counterparts which add to the complexities of family violence within Aboriginal communities (Franks 2000). The intergenerational trauma experienced within Aboriginal communities was also highlighted by Franks (2000) who argued that many of the men who participated in his program had themselves been victims of physical and sexual abuse.

The need for Aboriginal men's programs to address the underlying factors of colonisation within family violence programs was expressed in several of the articles (Cunneen 2002; Gregory 2008; Tsey, Patterson, Whiteside, Baird & Baird 2002; Zellerer 2003). Cunneen (2002) argued that Aboriginal community programs move beyond just seeing Aboriginal men simply as perpetrators of violence but seek to address the long term impacts of colonisation and marginalisation in parallel with immediate behaviour change. Tsey et al. (2002: 280) also acknowledged the need to address impacts of colonisation when working with men but added the caveat that this is required in parallel to addressing men's behaviour, "while it is important for men, especially Aboriginal men to understand how they have been hurt by society's treatment of them, it is also vital for men to appreciate how they in turn hurt women". Franks (2000: 13) argued that "through facilitating the re-establishment of holistic health, body, mind and spirit, the domestic violence cycle can then be broken and not passed onto the next generation".

Program design, and structure

A wide variety of programs were discussed within the articles reviewed including fathering programs, family violence programs, men's group programs and healing programs. Excluding Brown and Languedoc (2004), Cunneen (2002), and Kiyoshk (2003), the remaining eight articles were focused on a single program type. Brown and Languedoc (2004) interviewed Aboriginal family violence program administrators and service providers to determine the perceived essential components needed in Aboriginal based family violence intervention programs. Cunneen's (2002) article was focused on a broad discussion of Aboriginal programs aimed at the prevention of violence against Aboriginal women. Kiyoshk (2003) reflected on the 'Change of Seasons' treatment model and how it can be utilised in the treatment of violent Aboriginal men in Canada. The depth of detail provided about the design, structure and implementation of the programs within each article varied considerably.

Program design

Despite the differentiation in the type of program discussed, within each of the articles it was found that the stated program objectives were comparatively similar. Broadly speaking, the purpose of many of the programs was to engage Aboriginal men on a wide range of social and emotional issues, to support the empowerment of men, and to facilitate a journey of healing. Whilst family violence was not noted as the primary focus in the development of some of the programs, it was evident across all the articles that dealing with issues of family violence was central to the work undertaken with men. For example, it was stated in Jia (2000) that men involved in a fathers program designed to assist young Aboriginal men to cope with fatherhood and to support their partners were engaged in conversation about wanting to break the cycle of family violence.

Discussed within a majority of the articles was the perceived essential program elements needed to successfully work with Aboriginal men and communities on issues of family violence. These included the need for community 'buy in' and ownership of programs; supporting the healing of men; an holistic approach; meeting cultural needs; and educating men on issues of family violence (Brown & Languedoc 2004; Cunneen 2002; Gregory 2008; Prince 2015; Zellerer 2003).

Community buy in

It was argued that community 'buy in' and ownership of programs was developed through extensive community engagement and consultation in all aspects of the design, implementation and evaluation of programs (Brown & Languedoc 2004; Gregory 2008; Prince 2015).

Furthermore, giving decision-making rights to communities across the design, implementation and evaluation components of programs and having Aboriginal people involved in the delivery of programs was also noted as vital parts to building community 'buy in' and ownership (Brown & Languedoc 2004; Jia 2000; Zellerer 2003). The need for community 'buy in' was generally assumed rather than discussed. Jia (2000) identified that because program facilitators were not from community, it raised questions with participants regarding trust. In contrast, Prince (2015: 51) argued that co-design meant participants "felt the facilitation of the program was valuing their culture and their knowledge system". In the wider literature, it is maintained that Aboriginal people self-determining the community issues to be addressed and how to address them is part of the more general community healing process in the context of colonisation. Prince (2015) outlined the extensive consultation process that the Healing Foundation undertook to ensure that communities were involved in all aspects of the healing programs. In a different cultural context, the ritual of gaining permission to work with local communities is a part of Maori tribal custom (Gregory 2008). Tribal leaders were approached for their permission and blessing to establish the He Waka Tapu Maori men's group as a way of building community buy in (Gregory 2008).

Supporting the healing of men

Within many of the articles reviewed, it was held that there is a group of Aboriginal men who, as a consequence of trauma and grief suffer from low self-esteem, are uncertain about their role within community and have been disconnected from their culture and identity (Cunneen 2002; Franks 2000; Kiyoshk 2003; Kowanko et al. 2009; Prince 2015; Tsey et al. 2002; Zellerer 2003). Present within the wider literature on Aboriginal programs is the key concept of healing and healing methods utilised by community to address the impacts of colonisation (Arney & Westby 2012; Shea, Nahwegahbow & Andersson 2010). Within the present literature review, it was evident that healing work with Aboriginal men was encompassed in the design of programs (Cunneen 2002; Gregory 2008; Kowanko et al. 2009; Prince 2015; Tsey et al. 2002; Zellerer 2003).

Prince (2015) outlined the use of eight critical themes to support the healing of men: education, employment, health, identity, law, relationships, resources and safety. Franks (2000: 13) contended that a key element of the healing process "must involve each man acknowledging his actions, and effects they have within the family unit and on the community". Similar arguments were also made by Cunneen (2002), Tsey et al. (2002) and Zellerer (2003). These authors provide a clear understanding that healing approaches needed to address both the impacts of the past on individuals whilst also holding them accountable for their actions in the present. It was argued that healing was supported by a combination of contemporary therapeutic methods and Aboriginal cultural practices (Prince 2015; Zellerer 2003). The Canadian Stony Mountain Institution prison program is one such example with a design combining cognitive, pro-feminist, psycho-educational, and social- learning approaches with appropriate cultural practices (Zellerer 2003). Brown and Languedoc (2004) reported that program administrators and service providers perceived cultural practices and teachings to be essential in the healing process. Cunneen (2002) cited several program examples where a combination of therapeutic methods were utilised. The use of cultural practice and teaching was present in all of the reviewed articles focused on individual programs and is discussed further within the theme 'meeting cultural needs of participants'.

Zellerer (2003) argued that the importance of a continuum of service for Aboriginal men in programs was linked to men's healing journeys. A similar point is made by Kowanko et al. (2009) that the healing process takes time, while Brown and Languedoc (2004) reported that program administrators and service providers recognised the need for programs that were not time-limited and that were available as needed by participants to support the healing journey.

Holistic approach

A very strong theme in all articles is that the mainstream approaches based on Western models of intervention developed to address family violence within Aboriginal communities have rarely worked (Cripps 2007; Kiyoshk 2003). Instead, Aboriginal communities have widely advocated a need for an holistic approach to tackle family violence (Arney & Westby 2012; Blagg, Bluett-Boyd & Williams 2015; Cheers et al. 2006; Cripps 2007; Olsen & Lovett 2016; Shea

et al. 2010). This includes recognition not only that women and children are victims but that "If men are said to be part of the domestic violence problem, they also need to be part of the solution" (Franks 2000: 13). Already discussed within the current literature review has been the conscious approach taken in programs to tackle the contributing factors to family violence and the combination of cultural practices and teachings and contemporary therapeutic models. As such these components of the holistic approach are not revisited in detail however, it is necessary to reinforce their importance to program design.

Many of the articles stated that holistic programs in an Aboriginal context should cover all aspects of an individual's mental, physical, emotional, and spiritual health (Gregory 2008; Kiyoshk 2003; Kowanko et al. 2009; McCalman et al. 2006; Prince 2015; Tsey et al. 2002). Brown and Languedoc (2004) discuss the need for a multi-dimensional approach. This included work with perpetrators and victims; work with men, women and children; evidence-based clinical approaches underpinned by cultural practices and teachings and conducting group work alongside individual counselling (Brown & Languedoc 2004). Part of the work involved in the Maori men's group was to make sure that the partners and children of the men in the program were offered a range of support services. The workers involved in the women's and children's services worked closely with the facilitators of the men's group to discuss safety and accountability issues (Gregory 2008). In the broader literature it is argued "a holistic approach that recognises that all family members are affected by violence is a vital precondition to effectively combating the problem" (Cripps 2007: 14). The program design outlined in Kowanko et al. (2009) concurred that a multidimensional approach was needed. The community healing program had four distinct activity streams working with women, young people, men, and the wider community across a wide range of activities which brought together a range of service providers (Kowanko et al. 2009). This approach adopted in the healing program was considered essential to addressing social, cultural, spiritual, emotional and physical dimensions of wellbeing. Underpinning the program was the use of the Medicine Wheel used by First Nations' people as a contemporary symbol of their integrative philosophies (Kowanko et al. 2009).

Meeting the cultural needs of participants

Universally advocated in all reviewed articles was the importance of understanding and fulfilling the cultural needs of participants within programs (Zellerer 2003; Brown and Lanquedoc 2004). All stated in different ways that the use of cultural components within programs could facilitate healing; the nurturing of trust with participants; community buy in; the modelling of positive and respectful behaviour; the creation of 'safe places'; strengthening of cultural identity; engagement of men and behaviour change (Brown & Languedoc 2004; Kowanko et al. 2009; Prince 2015; Tsey et al. 2002; Zellerer 2003).

For example, Kiyoshk (2003: 246) argued that ceremony and ritual were intrinsically linked to "establishing the tone and energy for the activity to follow". Furthermore, Kiyoshk (2003) argued that culturally competent programs were more than just ceremony. The complexity of cultural competency is emphasised in Jia (2000: 18) who stated that his work with Aboriginal fathers was not "based on theoretical knowledge but comes from the heart. It comes from understanding and living the culture". Within the articles that discussed specific

men's programs the use of a variety of cultural activities and tools were present. These included:

- the use of elders (Gregory 2008; Kowanko et al. 2009; Prince 2015);
- talking / knowledge / sharing circles (Gregory 2008; Kiyoshk 2003; Kowanko et al. 2009; Prince 2015; Zellerer 2003);
- smoking ceremonies (Kiyoshk 2003; Prince 2015);
- message sticks (Kowanko et al. 2009);
- sweat lodge ceremonies (Kiyoshk 2003);
- pipe ceremonies (Kiyoshk 2003); and
- dance and chant (Gregory 2008)

The importance of creating a culturally safe space for Aboriginal men to gather, talk and heal together was noted in Prince (2015) and Tsey et al. (2002). In the wider literature it is argued that the creating of safe spaces allow for culturally-informed methods of transferring knowledge between Aboriginal men and Elders (Bulman & Hayes 2011).

Understanding the impacts of colonisation, as already discussed is an important aspect of developing culturally sound programs. It can be argued from the literature that programs that do not have a strong connection to culture or with the participants themselves are less likely to succeed in changing violent men's behaviour. Gregory (2008: 165) argued that the need to connect on a cultural level is extremely important for Maori people so much so that "it must happen before any work around issues of domestic violence can happen successfully".

Structure

The majority of programs were described as operating on an ongoing basis. Exceptions lay with Gregory (2008), Kiyoshk (2003) and Zellerer (2003) who discussed closed ended programs. The Maori program described in Gregory (2008) was based on twelve, three hour long sessions. The family violence specific program conducted in a Canadian male prison was structured around 29 sessions, each 2.5 hours long, and conducted over a period of four months (Zellerer 2003). The program was divided into four sections with each representing an element of the traditional medicine wheel (to see, to do, to think, and to know) utilised by North American native communities (Zellerer 2003). In another Canadian example Kiyoshk (2003) discussed the 'Change of Seasons model' that was developed for working with assaultive Aboriginal men. He stated the model was structured around a 28- session psycho-educational group counselling model (Kiyoshk 2003).

The ongoing nature of many of the programs is reflective of the argument made by Brown and Languedoc (2004) of the importance of working with Aboriginal clients in a non-time limited environment as part of an individual's journey of healing. Whilst the Canadian prison program was closed ended, Zellerer (2003) stated that it was also important to transition men who had successfully completed the block prison program into an ongoing support group post-release to provide a continuum of service. In a majority of the articles it was difficult to determine facilitation arrangements of programs (i.e. number or gender of facilitators).

Programs were described as having mostly voluntary participation, whilst Franks (2000), McCalman et al. (2006) and Prince (2015) stated some men were referred or mandated to attend and in Zellerer (2003) all participants were mandated. Within the articles reviewed, limited and mixed evidence of the success of engagement of men in voluntary programs can be drawn. At one extreme, Prince (2015) stated that more than 400 men had actively participated on a regular basis across the three healing programs over a two year period. Whilst at the other end of the participation scale, McCalman et al. (2006) argued that for various reasons low attendance of men was a significant challenge faced by the men's group they studied.

Within the programs, group-based work was the primary interaction with men. In addition to group-based work it was noted that some of the programs also offered individual counselling (Gregory 2008; McCalman et al. 2006; Prince 2015; Zellerer 2003). Zellerer (2003: 181) stated that group work with men helped to "decrease men's isolations and dependency on women, provide support, teach interpersonal skills, confront men's denial, and assist men in taking responsibility for their behaviours".

Program content

Coinciding with the cultural content was discussion on general program content. Within Brown and Languedoc (2004), it was argued that programs needed components that addressed gaps in participants' education. Highlighted within all the articles reviewed was the need to provide participants with family violence education including identification, types, and impacts of violence on partners, children and community. Brown and Languedoc (2004: 482) stated that this information needed to "promote an Aboriginal perspective of causes and effects". It was argued that family violence information was important because there are many men and women in denial or unaware of the magnitude of such behaviour (Franks 2000).

Tsey et al. (2002) reasoned that an important component of the development of the Yarrabah men's group was the work to create a vision statement that reflected the beliefs, attitudes and behaviour expected of men. Tsey et al. (2002) argued that the created set of basic guidelines could be used by facilitators and participants to help men reflect on their behaviour and hold them accountable for their violence. Zellerer (2003) describes an aspect of the prison program which spends time working through the 'cycle of violence' with participants. Franks (2000) said that a form of partner contact was used in the MEND group to evaluate the home environment and changes in participants. As previously discussed partner contact was also a key component of the He Waka Tapu program (Gregory 2008).

A range of other issues were evident across programs. The inclusion of content regarding parenting roles; the needs of children and the impacts of violence on children was prevalent in some programs (Franks 2000; Jia 2000; Prince 2015; Tsey et al. 2002; Zellerer 2003). Other programs provided men with opportunities to attain and develop skills that could increase their employment opportunities (McCalman et al. 2006; Prince 2015; Tsey et al. 2002). Content related to drug and alcohol use was present in some of the programs (McCalman et al. 2006; Prince 2015; Tsey et al. 2002). The various

components of program content exemplify a multi- dimensional or holistic approach.

Evidence and perceived effectiveness

The perceived effectiveness of Aboriginal men's programs in addressing issues of family violence is presented in this section. Only articles that reported findings from an Aboriginal men's group program were included. An important caveat is that it was not the authors' intention to present a formal assessment of the quality of the evidence presented within the articles. Four of the ten articles reviewed had an evaluation component: Kowanko et al. (2009), McCalman et al. (2006), Prince (2015), and Zellerer (2003). Both Kowanko et al. (2009) and Tsey et al. (2002) note the lack of available evidence within the literature on the efficacy of Aboriginal men's group programs aimed at tackling issues of family violence. Tsey et al. (2002) argued that what is reported is mostly anecdotal, whilst Kowanko et al. (2009) noted that the lack of evidence was partly because there are few programs targeting family violence in Aboriginal communities and partly due to funding models which do not allow for robust evaluation.

The evaluation conducted in Kowanko et al. (2009) was focussed on the six program objectives identified by the program's funding body; these included building community capacity to support safe families; equip Aboriginal people with the skills for effective communication and conflict resolution; support families in crisis; build capacity of mainstream agencies and services within the region; workforce development and data and evaluation. The evaluation undertaken through focus groups and interviews with workers and participants explored all areas of the program including working with women, young people and men. When reviewing the reported findings across the six program objectives it was evident that there was limited reference to men's outcomes. However there was a clearly articulated perception that participants were better equipped with the skills for effective communication and conflict resolution. Participants perceived that they had learnt a wide range of skills which had aided them in addressing family violence issues.

Utilising a participatory action research methodology, McCalman et al. (2006) reported findings from the Ma'Ddaimba-Balas Men's Group. Their evaluation was informed by what they described as regular debriefing with individual leaders; interviews with key local informants and service providers, and key members of the research steering committee (McCalman et al. 2006). It was claimed that despite minimal resourcing, the program had contributed to addressing a broad range of social issues including family violence (McCalman et al. 2006). It was perceived by participants in the evaluation that drugs and alcohol were a primary contributing factor to social issues faced within the community (McCalman et al. 2006). Some participants perceived the men's group to have had an impact on the reduction of breaches of domestic violence orders by men. It was argued that the education and counselling provided to men on family violence orders were a contributing factor in the perceived reduction in breaches of the orders. Furthermore, it was argued that there was some statistical evidence to indicate that the men's group activities had diverted them from incarceration. It was acknowledged by McCalman et al. (2006) that at the time of the evaluation there was a lack of available data to effectively evaluate the men's group initiatives (McCalman et al. 2006). In their final

discussion of the program McCalman et al. (2006) identified four interrelated key challenges that the program faced. These included: low attendance at Men's Group meetings; a lack of management and infrastructure support; a lack of leadership and conflict resolution skills, and a lack of consistency of educational/therapeutic programs.

As part of the evaluation of the 'Our Men Our Healing' program, Prince (2015) conducted formal and informal meetings with men who participated in the program, women from the communities who had a connection to program and partner agencies. Utilising the stories provided by the three cohorts, Prince (2015: 53) argued that "tangible evidence of change" was evident across all program sites. It was reported that the key outcomes that emerged from the pilot programs included:

- A reported decrease in incidence of family and domestic violence and less violence generally in communities,
- reduced observable rates of self-harm and suicide during the life of the program in two of the communities,
- at Wurrumiyanga where the program has been running the longest, a reported 50 per cent reduction in the number of men registered with the NT Department of Correctional Services and a significant reduction in rates of recidivism and reoffending over the life of the program,
- women feeling safer and more supported by the men in their families and communities. One site spoke with women who were very supportive of the program had seen improvements in men around accountability, involvement in parenting,
- increased health and emotional wellbeing among men in the communities and increased leadership as men take responsibility for their past, present and future, and
- an increased re-emergence of cultural celebrations and ceremonies, some of which had not occurred in the communities for decades (Prince 2015: 5).

Within his conclusion of the evaluation Prince (2015) argued that there was evidence that showed that the program was making a significant difference across the eight healing themes: education, employment, healing, identity, law, relationships, resources, and safety.

Zellerer (2003) discussed the evaluation of the Ma Mawi/Stony Mountain program. She stated that the evaluation of the program occurred at two time points (Years 1 and 3) and was reported on internally (Cyr and Gitzel 1994; Proulx and Perrault 1997)). Both reports were unable to be sourced originally by the authors. Zellerer (2003) stated that the evaluation was not focused on recidivism: Year one focused on the perceptions of the implementation and delivery of the project; Year three focused on inmates' expectations, satisfaction, effectiveness, applicability, and the cultural relevance of the program. It was argued that the evaluation found the outcomes of the program for both participants and correctional staff was positive (Zellerer 2003). Participants stated that they were satisfied overall with the program and that the group discussions and cultural activities were the most liked program components (Zellerer 2003). Zellerer (2003) argued that a majority of participant perceived that they attended the program because they wanted to

address their issues with violence. Furthermore, participants stated that their involvement in the program had provided them with an opportunity to strengthen their understanding of their Aboriginal heritage; helped them to understand and control their violent behaviour and improved other aspects of their lives i.e. communication skills (Zellerer 2003)

Discussion

Aboriginal people have been proactively confronting the issues of family violence within their communities for many years. As a result of this work, vital knowledge has been developed that can be used to inform and strengthen our approach to stopping family violence. The findings from this review highlighted three central ideas. Firstly, programs targeted at Aboriginal men need to have components that address multiple power constructs. Secondly, having a greater understanding of multi-dimensional or holistic approaches to family violence will better inform policy, program and practice responses. Finally, there is a need for more in-depth evaluation of Aboriginal men's programs to build our understanding of what works in family violence prevention with men who use violence. These points are discussed in greater detail below.

Power constructs

The importance for Aboriginal men's programs to contextualise and address issues of colonisation with participants is evident. Colonial power continues to have a significant impact upon many Aboriginal communities' social and emotional wellbeing which is consistently reasoned to contribute to the incidence of family violence within our communities (Memmot et al 2001). Acknowledgment of the impacts of colonisation on Aboriginal men is an important feature of their individual and collective healing journey. However, there is the potential risk for facilitators to collude with men's violence unless they are skilled in addressing impacts of colonisation without allowing men to use this as an excuse for their violent behaviour. It is important to note that the authors of this paper are not suggesting this issue was evident within the papers reviewed but want to draw attention to the possibility of such an issue arising.

Furthermore, a sustained debate within the wider literature sets the importance of addressing the power structures of colonisation in opposition to that of the a priori western feminist discourse of patriarchal power (Moreton-Robinson 2000). We would contend that both the cultural and gendered lens are important. Whilst the importance of addressing all components of oppression for Aboriginal women in the context of family violence has only recently been acknowledged (Moreton-Robinson 2000), we argue intersectionality (recognising different dimensions of power) is the preferred framework for programs addressing Aboriginal men's violence. This, in essence, fundamentally shifts the focus of men's programs from that of achieving change for individuals to achieving collective, transformative change within a community.

An approach to Aboriginal family violence

Emergent from the literature reviewed was the notion that a multi-dimensional or holistic approach to dealing with family violence issues within Aboriginal communities is favoured and that the conventional, linear Western approach has not worked. Within an Australian context, this finding is supported by recent works by Arney & Westby (2012), Blagg et al, (2015) and Olsen & Lovett (2016). Utilising an Aboriginal world view and the findings from the scoping review, a proposed visual representation of a multi-faceted model to tackle the complexities of Aboriginal family violence is presented below (see figure 1.1).

Figure 1.1
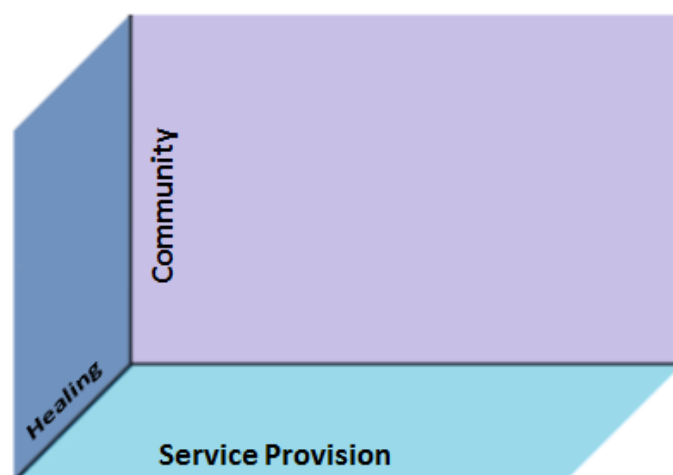
The three dimensional geometric model identifies the intersection of three primary components (community, healing, and service provision) as fundamental to achieving the three central ideas about program development synthesised from the literature. From the point of origin (where the axes meet) each of the primary components radiates out to form a shared interface as represented in (Figure 1.1). Contained in this created space are a number of features that interact with, respond to and connect with one another. These features form part of one or more of the primary components, they are not exclusively positioned within one component. For example, the features of the community axis could include men; women; children and young people; elders; victims and perpetrators. Features of the healing axis could include cultural, spiritual, physical, and emotional wellbeing; and power constructs of gender and colonialism. Within the third and final axis, the features of service provision could include resourcing; community buy in; program length; agency; evaluation; accountability; cultural knowledge and education. It is important to note that the number of features that populate the interface is not confined to those listed above nor are they structured in a hierarchal order.

On a practical level the populated model (Figure 1.2) demonstrates as an example some of the features that may need to be considered across each of the axis; community, healing, and service provision in designing and operating an appropriate community program response to family violence. More broadly figure 1.2 highlights two important notions. First, the Aboriginal family violence space is a challenging paradigm of both opposing and corresponding factors that intersect and correlate according to their positioning within the multi-

dimensional space. Second, and more significantly, the model shows that the interface which community, healing and service provision creates through their intersection for strong family violence prevention and early intervention is a contested decolonised space where two world views collide. Using Bhabar's (1994) concept of the third space, this interface challenges western family violence discourse. 'The third space', identified in figure 1.2, offers a resistance to the colonial constructs of family violence in Aboriginal communities, and the way it should be defined and addressed, and offers a decolonised space to facilitate a *re*construction of the family violence discourse for Aboriginal people.

Figure 1.2
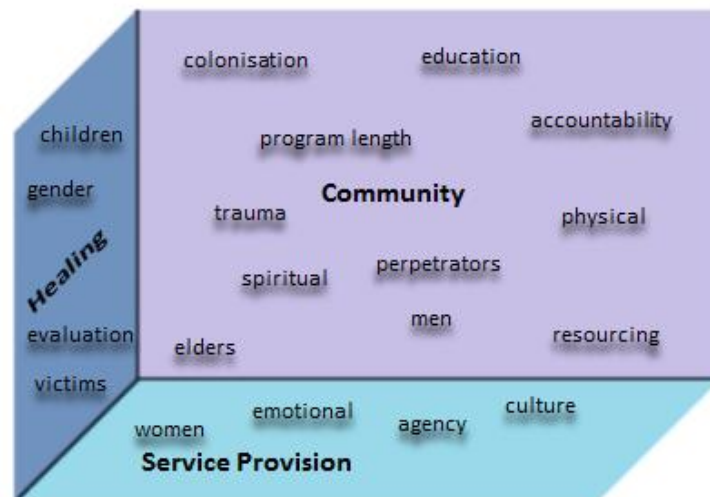
The need for program evaluation

From the findings of the review it can be argued that Aboriginal men's program evaluations are at an early stage. This finding is more broadly supported by the work of Olsen and Lovett (2016) who argued that only a small number of studies provided sufficient evidence on the efficacy of programs designed to reduce violence against Aboriginal women. Determining the efficacy of Aboriginal men's programs is vital to understanding which approaches are most effective in the behaviour change of men who use violence. From the available literature it can be surmised that there are several reasons why a lack of evidence may currently exist in this space. These include: the focus on Aboriginal men's programs are at an early stage; a lack of funding available to adequately evaluate programs; and evaluative measures used are not always appropriate for Aboriginal programs.

A persistent theme throughout the literature reviewed is the inextricable link between freedom from violence and human rights. A framework for evaluation, therefore, requires a multi-level approach; program-level efficacy measures as well as wider social and community-level outcome measures that are underpinned by Aboriginal research principles. Further investigation is needed to explore appropriate methodologies suited to Aboriginal research and evaluation of men's programs. Tsey et al. (2002) discussed the establishment of an evaluation framework for the men's health group at Yarrabah. They argued that the participatory action research model is one method for developing appropriate evaluative processes.

Concluding Comments

Academic and professionals alike have only relatively recently begun examining Aboriginal men's programs. This is partly due to the fact that men's programs more broadly have gained greater acknowledgment as an important preventative component to stop violence against women and children. In this article we have chosen to focus on those programs specific to working with Aboriginal men and family violence. While the evidence base is slim, there is rich development of practice frameworks which weave cultural practices, attention to social justice and the components of behaviour change into the prevention of family violence. There are remarkable consistencies across Australian, New Zealand and Canada in providing these elements in a holistic approach to Aboriginal men and their families and communities.

Table 1 (Reviewed articles)

Reference	Origin	Article Type	Background	Type of Program
Brown & Languedoc (2004)	Canada	Descriptive	Investigated the perceived essential elements of successful Aboriginal-based family violence prevention programs in Canada. Interviews were completed with 14 government funders and 7 community service providers. Interviewees were a mixture of non-Indigenous, Native, Mertis, or Inuit persons who had experience with either funding or developing programs for Indigenous people	NA
Cunneen (2002)	Australia	Descriptive	Article highlighted a broad range of Indigenous family violence programs aimed at male offenders and or non-offenders. Programs discussed ranged from fathers groups, general men's groups, sports programs, and men's behaviour change programs	NA
Franks (2000)	Australia	Descriptive	The paper discussed the development of the 'Koori MEND' program. The main objective of the program was to assist other Aboriginal men in finding their place in society as a result of the effects from colonisation and other contributing factors to domestic violence.	Men's Group
Gregory (2008)	New Zealand	Descriptive	Book chapter that discusses the development of a culturally sensitive family violence program for male Maori perpetrators	Men's Group
Kiyoshk (2008)	Canada	Descriptive	In this paper the author provides their reflection on the use of the change of seasons model with Aboriginal men in domestic violence treatment.	NA
Komla et al. (2002)	Australia	Descriptive	Described the activities of an Aboriginal men's group within a rural town in North Queensland, Australia. The Ma'Ddaimba-Balas Indigenous men's group was established as a vehicle for health promotion.	Men's Group
Kowanko et al. (2009)	Australia	Descriptive / Evaluation	Reported findings from the Aboriginal Family and Community Healing program in Adelaide. The program was designed to provide an effective response to family violence whilst taking account for the complexities of Indigenous families and communities. The program had four activity streams including working with; women, young people, the community, and men.	Healing Program
McCalman et al. (2006)	Australia	Descriptive / Evaluation	Provided an analysis of the formative stages of a participatory action research project aimed at supporting members of the Yarrabah Mens Health Group to plan, implement and evaluate their activities. The Yarrabah men's group based in North Queensland, Australia began in 1998 as a general support group for Aboriginal men to come together to discuss health education topics of interest and to promote social skills.	Mens Group
Prince (2015)	Australia	Descriptive / Evaluation	An evaluation of three pilot Indigenous men's programs located in the Northern Territory of Australia being supported by The Healing Foundation. The programs were designed to strengthen, support, and empower Indigenous	Healing Program

			men through a range of cultural, educational and therapeutic activities (Prince, 2015). The key aims of the program was to engage men on a wide range of social and emotional issues within the communities including family violence (Prince, 2015). It was stated that more than 400 men had actively participated on a regular basis across the programs over a two year period.	
Thomas (2000)	Australia	Descriptive	Described the development of a young Indigenous fathers support group in Queensland, Australia. The support group was designed to help young fathers cope with fatherhood and to support their partners.	Fathers Program
Zellerer (1994)	Canada	Literature Review	A literature review on Aboriginal family violence treatment programs for men within North America.	NA
Zellerer (2003)	Canada	Descriptive / Evaluation	Discussed the development and evaluation of a culturally competent family violence program for Aboriginal men in prison. It is argued that the Stony Mountain Correctional Institutions family violence program specifically for Aboriginal male offenders was the first of its kind within the Canadian prison system	Family Violence

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