

The beginnings in Europe:  
Norway's ATV programme  
(Basic characteristics and latest developments)

International symposium on Intervention  
Programmes for Domestic Violence Batterers

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# The beginning / Background Scenario

- A gras-root initiative
- Womens's movement
- Women shelters since early -70's
- The Brussels Tribunal 1976

# The first batterer programmes

- 1977: Emerge, Boston, USA
- 1980/81: Duluth model, Minnesota, USA
- Initiative taken by women – and men being «children» of the feminist movement.
- The profeminist approach:
  - Men's patriarchal attitudes
  - Violence as a learned behaviour
  - Violence is not about mental illness
- 1987: ATV in Oslo, Norway  
(Founded by Skjørten & Falsen)



*Alternativ til*

**WORLD**

# Alternative to Violence (ATV)

- First European intervention programme for men being abusive in intimate relationships
- ATV was born by the women's movement
- Leaning on:
  - The profeminist approach
  - The stories of battered women and battering men
  - Psychology

# ATV: Developments

- Diverting somewhat from the North-American tradition (pro-feminist based psychoeducational programmes).
- The pro-feminist approach is important and necessary – but not enough!
- Domestic violence constitutes a complex problem:
  - Human rights and gender equality
  - Social and cultural conditions
  - Health aspects
  - Violence as a crime against women and children

# ATV and the Nordic countries

Combining the feminist analysis of domestic violence (DV) with psychological perspectives and explanations

- Violence as a problem in itself
- Violence as a (masculine) expression of psychological problems and difficulties
- Adult abusive behaviour and consequences of having experienced family violence as a child

# The men's programme at ATV

- ***67% of the men who come to ATV make contact themselves by phone.***
- ***Other referrers are: partners (8%), child protection services (9%), specialist treatment centres (6%), psychiatric hospitals (3%), court services/police (6%), friends/colleagues (1%)***
- ***65% are between the ages 25-45***
- ***60% are employed***
- ***60% are in a relationship with a woman when they make contact***
- ***45% have used violence towards more than one partner***
- ***42% have never attended any form of treatment (both for violence problems or other kinds of treatment)***
- ***83% were exposed to or witnessed violence as a child or adolescent***
- ***10% have alcohol or drug problems, a few have mental health problems***
- ***23% report also having used violence against their children***

# Patriarchy and Psychology combined: ATV's treatment model (principles)

## **1. FOCUS ON VIOLENCE**

-Detailed and expanding reconstruction of the violence (*behaviour*)

## **2. FOCUS ON RESPONSIBILITY**

-Focus on choices and intentions. Get in touch with own need for control and own control strategies (*responsibility*)

## **3. FOCUS ON THE CLIENT'S PERSONAL HISTORY RELATED TO VIOLENCE**

-Re-establish the connection between own "life learning" on masculinity, manhood, attitudes towards women etc, childhood experiences, significant aspects of adult coping strategies and the use of violence (*connections*)

## **4. RECOGNISING THE CONSEQUENCES OF THE VIOLENCE**

-Empathy with the victims (partner/children) of the violence. Recognising the pain inflicted on others (*consequences*)

# THERAPEUTIC APPROACH

## 1. RESPECTFUL CONFRONTATION

Averting denial, externalisation, minimisation, and rationalisation

## 2. RESPECT & EMPATHY

Recognition of anxiety, feelings of inferiority and vulnerability, shame, guilt and powerlessness (“non-masculine feelings”)

## 3. LINKING

Creating psychological meaning and continuity, preventing fragmentation

# ATV: Recent developments

- Treatment work with men, women and children
- Abusive men living in different cultural contexts
- The drug/alcohol and violence equation: What accounts for what?
- 66% of ethnic Norwegian men (at ATV) has been exposed to DV in their upbringing family. The effect of DV on psychological development (attachment)
- Is patriarchy still present?
- Violent men as fathers

# Violent men as fathers - I

- Work with the men's images of themselves as fathers
- How the violence is affecting the child - father relationship
- How the violence is affecting the child - mother relationship
- How the child is affected by the violence – both on a short term and long term basis
- Educate the men on the basic needs of children within a developmental perspective – and how the presence of violence is obstructing the coverage of these needs.

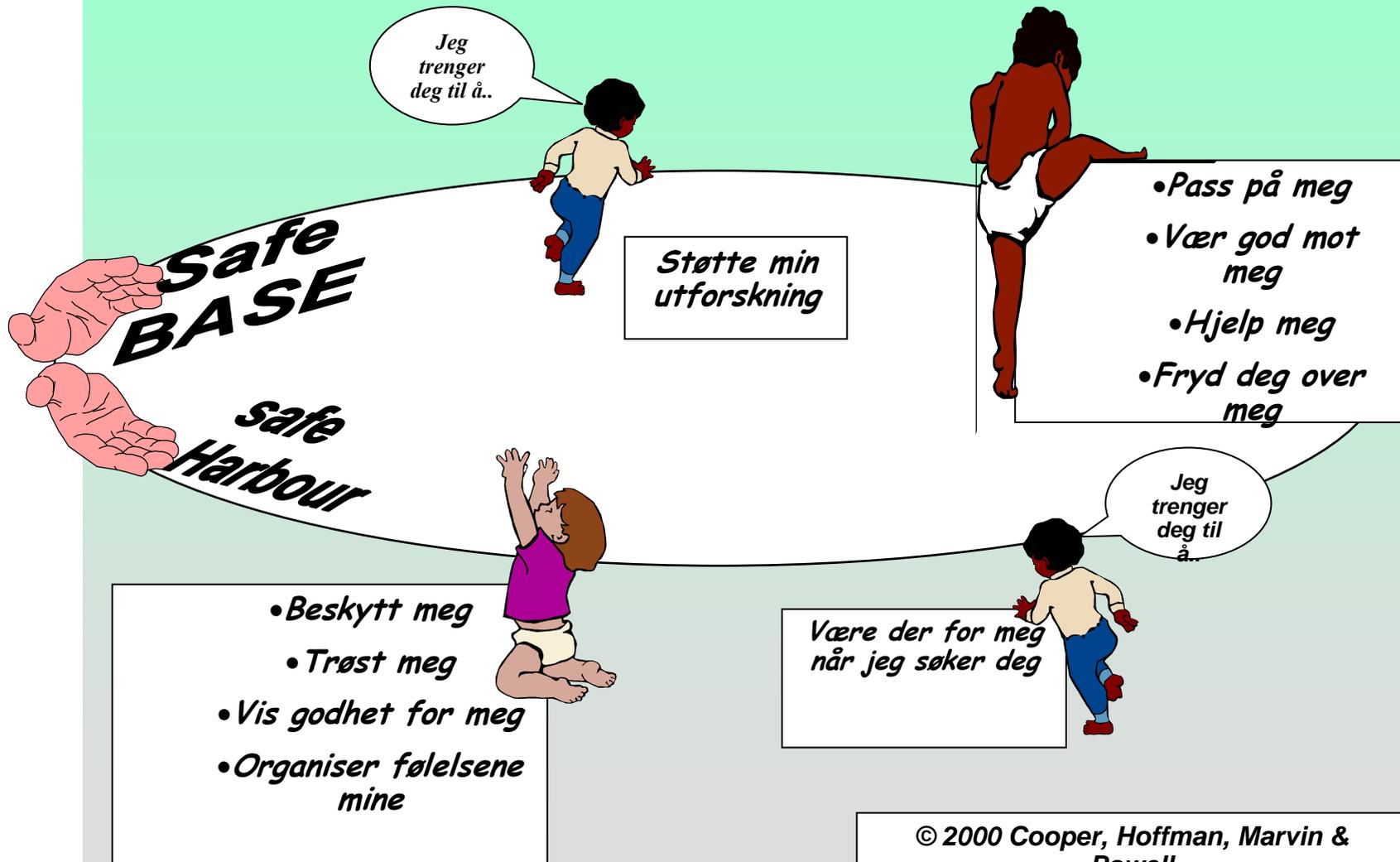
(Råkil, 2006)

# Violent men as fathers II

- Personalizing the client's representation of their children
- Focus on trauma
- Focus on attachment
- Focus on neuropsychological consequences of violence
- Focus on possibilities for growth and development

# Circle Of Security

Focus on the need of the child



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Avoid couple therapy / family therapy for violent men without separate screening and safety precautions. It can be dangerous!

# Litterature

Råkil, M. (2006). Are men who use violence against their partners and children good enough fathers? The need for an integrated child perspective in the treatment work with the men. In: Humphries, C. & Stanley, N. *Domestic Violence and Child Protection* (pp. 190-202). London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers Ltd.

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