

## RESPONSE TO STAN WOODY'S ASSERTIONS ABOUT THE WSIPP

I found myself a bit confused by Stan Woody's response to the WSIPP review and recommendations regarding batterer intervention. It rightly makes the point that regardless of the Duluth model, the five experimental studies that form the foundation of the WSIPP meta-analysis are single site evaluations from a variety of settings—and NOT Washington programs and NOT very recent. As the NIJ introduction to a summary of three of them points out we really don't know the extent to which the results represent a problem of program integrity, program operation, court response to noncompliance ---or the problems with the implementation of the experimental design and particularly the random assignment and follow-up. The Cochrane Collaboration (the internationally acclaimed group devoted to metaanalysis) concluded that the experimental studies in our field are inadequate to make a determination of effectiveness, and these studies quite glaringly do not conform to the established CONSORT criteria for evaluation implementation. As Woody's statement further points out that several researchers have identified effects for batterer intervention through different analyses that are not given sufficient consideration in the WSIPP review. Interestingly, all these studies include some version of the Duluth program (a gender-based cognitive behavioral approach), and the statistical modeling of the multi-site study of batterer intervention (that addresses the major conceptual and methodological shortcomings of the conventional experimental evaluations and simulates an equivalent comparison groups) shows at least a moderate effect associated with the batterer programs.

The part that confuses me is the appendix that then draws on Dutton's and Mills' books to denounce the Duluth program without at least acknowledging the counter information to their assertions and claims. It must be said that both those books have a clear agenda or point of view that they are promoting, and they consequently are highly selective in the research they present and misrepresent not only the Duluth program but information that supports it. There is substantial generic evidence, as well as criminal justice research, and community corrections policy that supports the basic principles of the Duluth program and its broader model. We've gone to great lengths to summarize that research in our most recent book, "The future of batterer programs: reassessing evidence-based practice," as well as in several journal papers. There are as well several other papers and research reviews that do the same (see attached). There is also an increasing body of literature, program curriculum, and research on women who are violent and use force—in fact, Duluth is one of the programs with a model program for such women. A recent special issue of the Violence Against Women journal is devoted to women's violence and further counters the main characterizations and assertions about gender and treatment in Woody's summary statement. Two other points: One, the use of Ellen Pence's 1993 book on the Duluth program is very misleading. The book on the Duluth program has been revised and updated twice since then with Michael Paymar now as lead author ("Violent no more"), and the manual and training have been updated as well. The descriptions of the Duluth program in the Woody summary are a caricature of what is intended and taught. Two, the implication that Mills' and Dutton's (as well as Hamel's ) gender-neutral approach is more effective is highly questionable, and in fact has less substantial evidence to support it than the Duluth program. The few couples studies, as well as the one of Mills' approach evaluation, for instance, draw on a highly selective samples (and small in size) that are unrepresentative of court referred clients. There is much, much more to substantiate all of this.

This is not to say that Duluth program approach doesn't have some limits or that a more integrated or eclectic version might have added effects. But to dismiss the Duluth program out-of-hand based on the Dutton and Mills books ignore a much broader and more accurate state of information and debate. It also fails to account for the evolution of the Duluth program as well as the fundamentals it has helped to establish. There are more substantial ways, I think, to question and challenge the WSIPP review.

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