

Barbara Hart. Speech at BISC-MI, *Miles to Go*, November 1, 2017.

It is a great honor and privilege to join with you in the critical conversations of this 2017 International Conference of the BISC-MI, *Miles to Go*. Thank you, BISC-MI for bringing us together for honest, cordial, critical conversations. We surely will traverse many miles in our discourse in the next three days. I am confident about the power of collaborative dialogue. We will create change through the mix of continuing conversations during and after *Miles to Go*.

I am humbly honored by the precious award you are conferring on me today. Honored to receive an award established by BISC-MI to celebrate the legacy and courageous leadership of my good friend, Ed Gondolf. Ed's example of dignity in discourse, integrity in design and evaluation of BIS/BIP modalities, generosity in promoting scholarship in the field, and dedication to development of this emerging BIS/BIP discipline are extraordinary. Thank you, Ed. I am deeply honored to receive an *Ed Gondolf Compass Award* for facilitating systemic efforts to protect survivors of intimate partner violence.

Over the past 40 years, it has been my great joy to engage with women activists seeking to end violence against women. I have been blessed with male colleagues and friends who welcome robust discourse about strategies for work with men to end misogyny and violence against women.

Within the movement, we've had fierce conflicts, cordial conversations, and stunning problem-solving deliberations. Discourse has been guided by a handful of principles. We seek the leadership of battered women and women's advocates. Differences are embraced. No truth is immutable. We recognize that adverse collateral consequences may compromise the privacy, agency, safety and well-being of battered women, and, therefore, we are circumspect in seeking to minimize strategies that undercut survivor interests. Further, while seeking safety and justice for survivors, we also endeavor to devise meaningful opportunities for perpetrator learning, growth, violence elimination and accountability within environments that constrain future violence while respecting perpetrator rights and dignity. Likewise, we eschew competitiveness and pursue honest discourse among providers who are developing various experimental approaches/curricula designed for assisting men to reject misogyny, the subjugation of women, gender-based violence, and coercion and control of intimate partners. We have shaped and transformed BIS/BIP¹ education and intervention through these pivotal discourses. We have moved ideas to action, creating systemic reform and cultural change.

For more than 25 years, it was my honor to facilitate the Batterer Intervention Services (BIS) Network of Pennsylvania. BIS providers and advocates met every 6 weeks or so to consider issues related to batterer intervention work in the Commonwealth. We called these gatherings "Continuing Conversations." Among other things, we produced *Principles and Standards* for BIS Practice. Some of the most important of these are: BIS accountability to DV programs and advocates; Monitoring of BIS groups by advocates; Guidelines for Partner Contact; BIS 'Duty to Warn' and 'Duty to Protect' foreseeable victims; Limits on Confidentiality of BIS Participation; BIS Funding Guidelines for State Criminal Justice Grants; BIS participation in County Task Forces on Domestic Violence; and BIS Responsibilities for Compliance Oversight. Consistent with our commitment to democratic process, we agreed that the *Principles and Standards* would be voluntary; subject to self-monitoring by individual BISs, monitoring by local DV program and the PA Coalition Against Domestic Violence, and monitoring by the BIS membership as a body.

BIS Network members also agreed not to select any one practice model. Therefore, programs varied in approaches from 'batterers anonymous' to 'faith-based,' 'men's movement,' 'clinical,' 'probation counseling,' 'neighborhood/community-based,' 'cultural/ethnic,' 'peace movement,' 'youth,' and 'Duluth adaptations.' Several programs for 'women who use violence in intimate partnerships' emerged. Another

¹ BIS (Batterer Intervention Services) is the term used for programs serving adults who batter in PA. BIP (Batterer Intervention Programs) is the term more commonly throughout the country. In this speech, I refer to PA programs by the former and programs in the rest of the country as BIPs.

initiative was a 15-week program embedded within the criminal justice system. Models were shared with BIS Network members, and portions of various models were incorporated by other members. The senior leader of one 'faith-based' group offered a free, 3-year internship for prospective group leaders. The BIS Network member from the Commonwealth Office on Community Corrections invited the BIS Network to develop a model state contract for batterer parolees that included protections for battered women.

The BIS Network attempted to secure funding for evidence-based evaluation of the various models. Unfortunately, the number of participants in all but one program was too small to attract funding. Many programs utilized the findings of the national study (Pittsburgh site) by Ed Gondolf. And BIS members developed and shared informal methods of evaluation – by participants, leaders, battered women, and DV programs.

'Continuing Conversations' offered BIS providers experience in critical thinking, analysis, policy development and democratic/inclusive process that enabled them to lead policy, program and research deliberations in the Commonwealth and beyond. For example, one transformative conversation occurred in the mid '80's in a cabin in northern MN. Picture winter without electricity and only an outhouse, kerosene lanterns, jugs of water, and a woodstove. Ellen Pence and Michael Paymar invited friends (a battered woman, 'national' female advocates, and EMERGE men) to review and offer feedback on the draft of their new educational curriculum in which they detailed the underlying cause of domestic violence as batterer lack of 'anger management' skills and capacity. The participating invitees, I among them, strongly objected to their characterization of the underlying cause of DV and argued that the ultimate cause of DV is the profound belief of abusers in male entitlement to power and control over intimate partners, coupled with a conviction that abusers have a right (or even obligation) to use violence to maintain or regain dominance over intimate partners. Six months of hard work by these Duluth BIP leaders was thus fundamentally challenged. Two days of tender and candid deliberations followed. The Duluth folks took the discussion to battered women active in their community groups, and the 'Power and Control' Wheel was conceived and constructed. The 'Wheel' now has global reach. (Note. Anger was not eliminated from the educational lexicon, but anger was identified as an emotional response of abusers to the resistance by battered women to batterer tactics of control and intimidation.)

When controversy emerged about the 'role of men in the movement,' Ellen Pence, Susan Schechter and I wrote a "Green Paper," calling for a conversation on the 'role of men' before proceeding to train on BIP methodology. To that end, PCADV convened a national meeting of BIP leaders and battered women's advocates. Over the course of three days, we considered myriad issues – men's cultural work, eliminating racism in the movement, community organizing by men, confronting sexual harassment in BIPs, men's participation in 'coordinated community response' and local task forces on DV, male/female group leaders, and women's supervision/oversight of BIP initiatives. We reached consensus on virtually all topics, including the importance of BIPs as but *one* important component in multi-faceted men's work to end domestic and sexual violence against women.

Another example of a critical conversation contributed to a change in research on the efficacy of BIPs. Ed Gondolf invited Oliver Williams, Ellen Pence and myself to deliberate on ways to measure the "success" of BIPs. What emerged from that conversation was agreement that "success" should not be measured only by the behavior of batterers (in terms of program enrollment/ attendance/completion and/or the lack of post-conviction arrests or recidivism). We concluded that "success" could also be measured by a partner's sense of "well-being," "autonomy," and/or "reduced fear" of the BIP participant. Ed incorporated this measure of "success" – and other researchers have subsequently added "success" to their program evaluation instruments.

One final critical conversation, also early in the movement, occurred at the University of New Hampshire International Conference on Family Violence in 1984. A group of 'social action' researchers and advocates suggested that the conference planners emphasize dialogue between researchers and practitioners. Negotiations with the UNH planners failed to produce a conference program rich in discourse among traditionalist and feminist researchers and between researchers and DV practitioners. Instead, the program was designed for traditionalist researchers to acquaint feminist scholars and advocates with their research and its implications. Nonetheless, feminists decided to attend. However, prior to the conference, a number

of activists held informal conversations. Feminists asked to present our conceptualization of DV, and the reasons that BIS providers generally base assessment and intervention approaches on feminist theory. We suggested a debate on the importance of revising or replacing the Conflict Tactics Scale (CTS) as a measure of domestic violence.² Once it appeared that feminist perspectives were not welcome in the discourse, we organized. About 25 feminist/activist researchers and advocates met at the conference to devise strategies for intervening in the instructional format to ensure presentation of feminist perspectives. We decided to split up to attend all of the workshops, both to monitor the content and to offer rebuttal, where appropriate. After each session, we brought feedback to the activist group. We became increasingly concerned about the resistance of the speakers to our messages. It was apparent that only interjecting our responses to traditionalist speakers in plenary sessions was an insufficient method of fully articulating our perspectives. And we concluded that the audiences were becoming uncomfortable with activists interposing our commentary during the ‘question and answer’ portion of sessions. Our ‘truths’ were increasingly perceived as merely antagonistic. We needed the “power of the podium” to offer meaningful explanation of both our critique and our alternate framing of issues. We asked the planners to add a plenary to offer feminists the opportunity to describe the fundamentals of BIP programs and DV shelters/services and the corresponding implications of these perspectives for research agendas, policy and practice. We also asked to articulate our critique of the CTS. They resisted. We persisted. They conceded. We quickly organized to select topics and speakers. Our plenary presentations persuaded – at least some in the audience – of the importance of conversation from both perspectives. And conversations erupted. Mostly over dinner and drinks. And continuing post conference. However, dialogue did not emerge between the planners and feminist organizers. In fact, it is fair to say that differences between these two groups solidified. Yet, conversations between feminist organizers, many young scholars/researchers, and unaligned conference participants blossomed – producing much new discourse, debates, research, and alliances. Similarly, conversations between the planners and other sectors of the audience continued and subsequently intensified. The divide remains. However, vibrant deliberations, exploring commonalities and new constructions of ‘truth,’ continue among a small cohort of traditionalist and feminist researchers and advocates.

These are but a few of the early ‘critical conversations’ that shaped BIP practice, IPV/DV research, and the battered women’s movement.

Thank you conferees for your robust participation in *Miles to Go* deliberations this week. May your conversations here inspire and transform future work with men and women to end violence against their intimate partners.

Barbara Hart
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² Our critique of the CTS was that it did not measure sequence, injury, severity, self-defense, context, coercion, strangulation, stalking, and sexual violence. Because of these significant deficits, the CTS researchers had concluded that women perpetrate domestic violence as much, if not more than, men. CTS proponents also asserted that the cause of DV was the inability or lack of skills of perpetrators for resolving conflict and managing anger. The feminist perspective was that men embraced the belief that they were entitled to control/dominate their intimate partners and correct/punish them for any resistance to batterer demands/expectations. (See a subsequent paper I wrote – “Rule-Making and Enforcement.”)