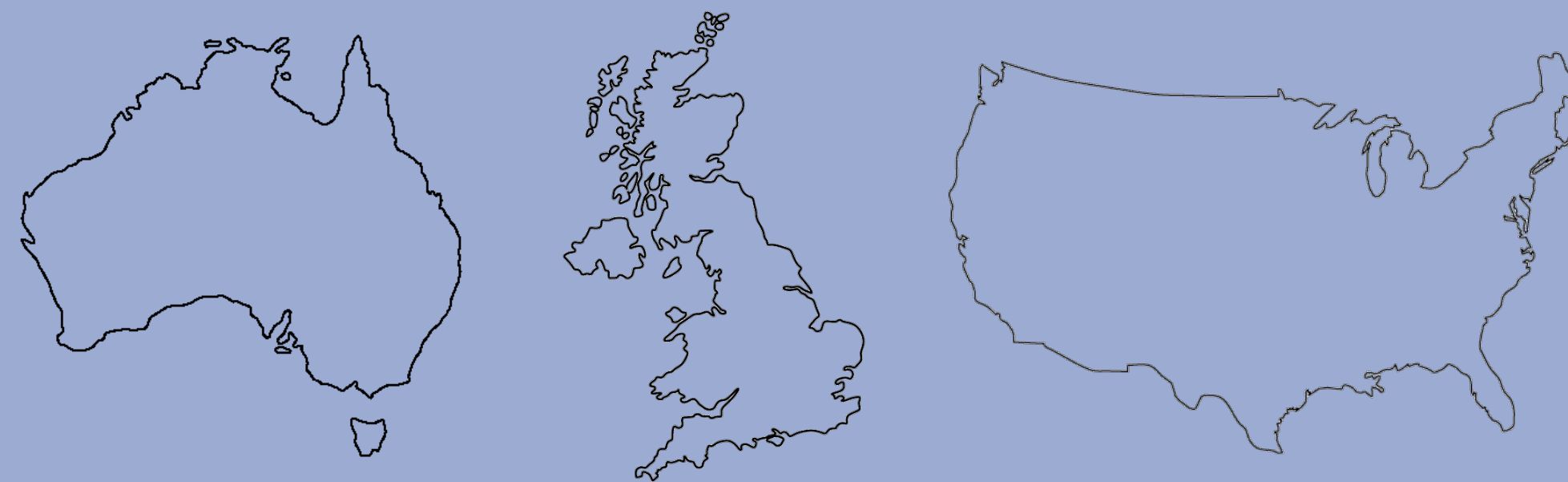


How have domestic violence perpetrator programmes adapted their work during Covid-19?

A comparative analysis of Australia, UK and US



Rosanna Bellini and Nicole Westmarland



Introductions

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Project Context

- Responds to the lack of knowledge (identified by *Bellini and Westmarland (2020)*; and *European Network for the Work with Perpetrators of Domestic Violence (2020)*) documenting the change in service delivery for evidence-based practice guidelines for digitising new or existing services.
- **Taking Work with Perpetrators Online:** *Pathways to Family Peace*: a national pilot project lead to conduct a men's non-violence batterer's intervention program using videoconference software (VCS), co-presented with Melissa Petrangelo Scaia of Minnesota and Jon Heath of Maine
- No outcome studies on the extent to which online or digital 'live' programmes 'work' in behaviour change or management: a risky mode of delivery to leave under-researched (Vlais and Campbell, 2020).

Research Activities

- Ran between **July 2020** and **September 2020**
- Challenges and opportunities for organisations before COVID-19 ‘hit’ (pre-March 2020), during COVID-19 (March - September 2020) and its theorised future impact (post-September 2020).
- Sent 39 invitations via email, response rate 97%; acceptance rate 92%
- 36 semi-structured interviews
 - 25 front-line services; 9 second-tier / peak body / coordination
 - 14 United Kingdom; 12 United States; 9 Australia
- Still in the process of performing a comprehensive thematic analysis of all this data: identified **key themes and comparisons**

Which Country?

Match which country (UK, USA, Aus) each of these quotes belong to:

“...We had onesie Wednesday where they worked in their pyjamas and we really tried to lighten the mood.”

“Every member of staff was sent hand sanitiser and a few sweets. We don't have money to give people extra pay but they really appreciated the little gestures.”

"We were celebrating a staff members birthday and her husband organised a parade to go by her house and sing happy birthday to her"



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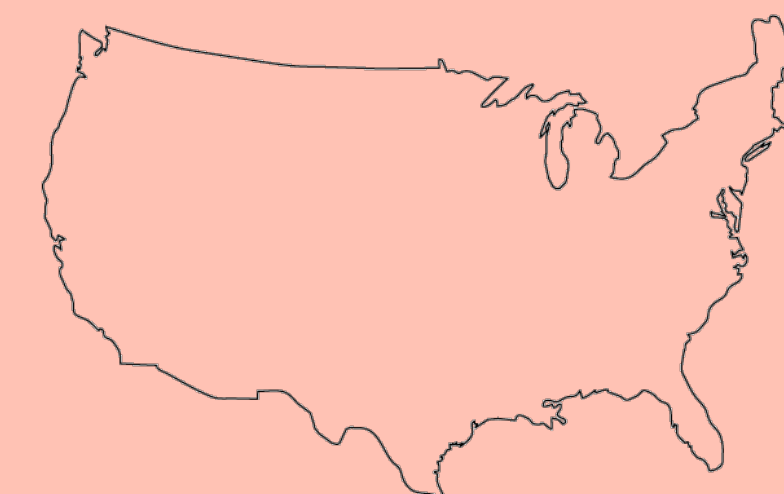
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United Kingdom

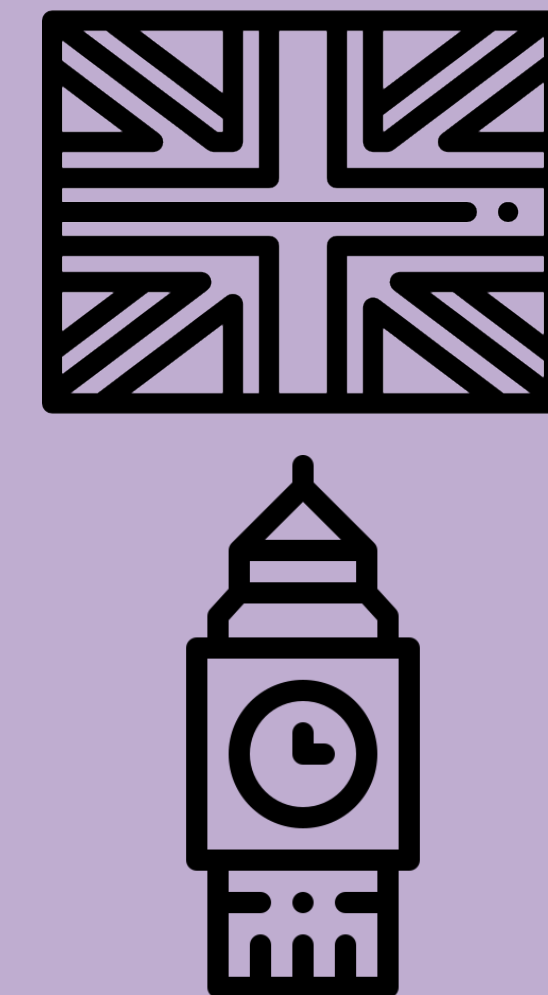
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United States of America

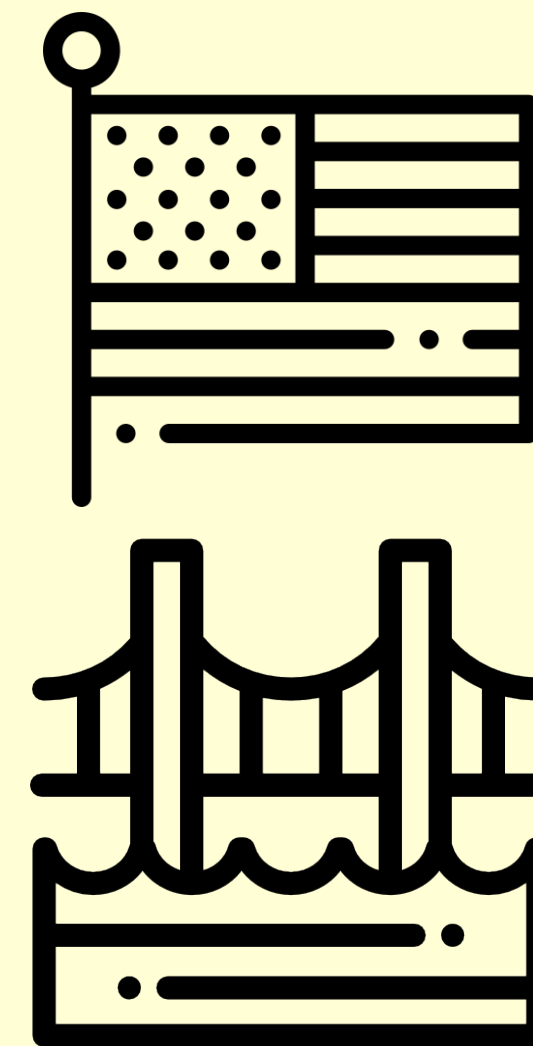
United Kingdom

- Well-established sector connected to coordination body.
- Working with women's sector is a key, standard way of operating.
- Criminal justice and non-criminal justice operate differently.
- Same date of lockdown for each nation of the UK: 23rd March.
- Job retention scheme or 'furlough'; government provides 80% of staff wages, gradual reduction until October



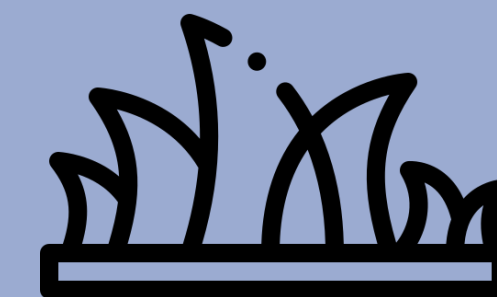
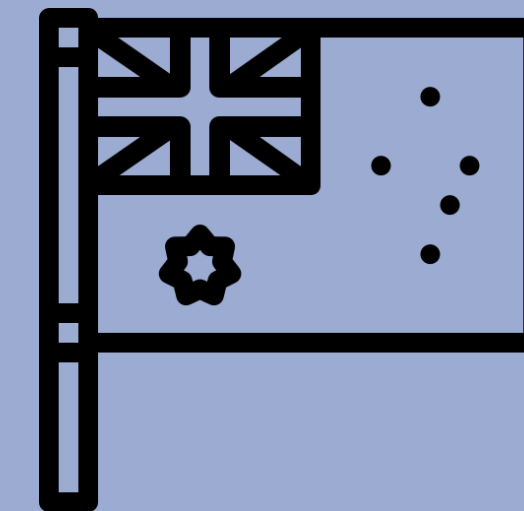
United States

- Combination of religious, community-driven organisations and state oversight responses.
- Some programmes entirely linked to the criminal justice system.
- State-dependent dates and approach to 'lockdown' and easing; (32 of 50 states ordered citizens to stay at home)
- CARES act providing up to a one-time payment of \$1200 to most adults



Australia

- Multiple peak bodies across the country
- Little to no inter-community transmission; infection from abroad; move travel warning to ban.
- Rapid move to stricter quarantine after outbreak in Victoria.
- Jobseeker payment doubled, fortnightly coronavirus support payments (Aus \$550) in place for six months



Cross-Comparison Differences

1. Funding and financial difficulties
2. How and to what extent did COVID impact on their work
3. Consideration given previously to using remote tech
4. Coordination bodies reaching other contexts while front-line services experience decision fatigue

Funding and financial difficulties

“Employment has gone up for the sector – I don’t know any [sector] workers that had to go onto job-keeper and there’s lots of services that are now being funded to support more people ... our funding from government is safe” [AUS]

“our contracts come from across such a major city that we’re always in demand, we didn’t have to let anyone go for financial reasons and i’m so thankful for that”. [UK]

versus.

“I think I’m worried about money ... each 35-week programme costs per session and we charge the men for each time, but what if they can’t afford that because they’ve lost their job due to COVID ... what if they drop out at 12 weeks?” [US]

“I was stunned that the referrals was going to dry up and the machinery was going to grind to a close ... I mean were limping in the financial sense” [US]

How and to what extent did COVID impact on their work

“everything stopped ... we had to stop groups completely” [UK]

‘It really was no warning ... I thought things would change a bit ... and that was the Friday and by the Monday the decision was to close the group.’ [US]

versus.

“COVID hasn’t affected us very much at all” [AUS]

“it’s hard to not shake people’s hands” [AUS]

“we kept going into work and they didn’t stop us” [AUS]

Consideration given previously to using remote tech

“digital service delivery was at the fringes of work with men, though we admit we did do phone work with women” [UK]

“we didn’t even think [digital] was an option as we didn’t have the time or resources to think”. [US]

versus.

“digital delivery has come up and been floating around for a while” [AUS]

“more organisations were using digital means to deliver services ... more than we realised, it came as a shock to us as we’re meant to know about this” [AUS]

Coordination bodies reaching other contexts while front-line services experience decision fatigue

“we did the local relief in terms of food parcels ... so we were able to use that to get the men out of their homes so we could talk to the women” [second-tier, AUS]

“our organisation has a zoom account, we’ve a licence and it’s what we know from our research arm people have access to ... so I use it” [coordination body, UK]

versus.

“...I don’t have any admin to help me on this ...I’ve been doing every group myself and I’ve had to keep up with zoom, g-suite, it takes a long time to research what’s safe and effective to use and I don’t have time to train people up either.” [front-line, US]

“I try and manage challenges for my boss ...I know she’s working flat out” [front-line, UK]



Discussion

Using breakout rooms

What three differences can you identify within your groups?

Cross-Comparison Similarities

1. Access to technology, internet and technical proficiency
2. Staff morale, vicarious trauma and blurring the work-life boundaries
3. Limited engagement with women's groups and CCRs
4. Hesitation toward the unknown
5. Never going back (to normality)
6. Better connected to the national and international sector

Access to technology, internet and technical proficiency

“I think the challenges for our clients are privacy, access to technology. Lots of people do not have a laptop with a webcam, most people have their phone ... that and strong enough internet” [US]

“... age is a really big factor, you can't shift everything online and not expect hiccups for the older generation, they're not used to it” [AUS]

“It was really time consuming to work out what worked for everyone, some government departments ban zoom ... and then you have to learn something new all over again” [UK]

Staff morale, vicarious trauma and blurring the work-life boundaries

“I was very concerned at the staff’s wellbeing all of that extra vicarious trauma, we need to be a lot more weary of how we look after them. There is a massive detrimental impact on their wellbeing. I mean we all enjoy physically being together and working together as a family” [AUS]

“I mean I did a presentation with <Larry> in my bedroom for 250 people and I don’t quite want them there!” [US]

Limited engagements with women's groups and CCRs

“We asked the women, most said that it was important and that they wanted it.” [US]

“We did a phone around of partners, would they bring things up they heard their partner say if they said untrue? All of them said yes.” [US]

Hesitation toward the Unknown

“One of your first questions was about did you think about doing online programmes? Our answer would have been a resounding no but now we’ve found it works.” [UK]

“They learned more about the men on the phones (trust with other men in the group e.g. ex-military”. [US]

““You’d think it would be different, and the voices are obviously the same, but honestly I don't think it [the masks and the distancing] made that much of a difference. It’s just we all have masks this is what it is. It really didn’t seem to make a difference.’ [US]

Never going back (to normality)

““I feel like I’ve been given permission to try new things out and be innovative. Until now its been like you can’t do this you cant do this, I mean I don’t even know where this has come from, but I feel freer now in this new world.” [UK]

“Covid has given us the impetus to put things in place to try to reach men who couldn’t reach us.’ ‘I think the pandemic stopped us getting too set in our ways!” [UK]

“Its done [travel for face-to-face training]. Its over.” [US]

“We won’t go back to face to face practitioner meetings.” [AUS]

Better connected to the national and international sector

“Despite being more socially isolated than ever ... I’ve never felt more connected to bodies internationally that are actively offering information” [US]

“Before COVID came along we didn’t do a joint-sector meeting when everyone comes ... you get to hear the problems firsthand. It does feel like a family environment, you don’t feel as isolated because you’re chatting a lot more with people who are doing this kind of work. Once you get to see someone there is more of a connection because there’s less guess work.” [UK]



Discussion

Using breakout rooms

What three similarities can you identify within your groups?

Feedback and any Questions?

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