Deconstructing Male Violence Against Women: The Men Stopping Violence Community-Accountability Model

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Men Stopping Violence

Men Stopping Violence (MSV), a 24-year-old metro Atlanta-based organization that works to end male violence against women, uses an ecological, community-based accountability model as the foundation of its analysis of the problem of male violence against women and of its work with individuals and in communities. The MSV community-accountability model of male violence against women offers a view of the cultural and historical mechanisms that support violence against women. The model, and the strategies and programs that have grown out of it, demonstrate the potential for disrupting traditions of abuse and dominance at the individual, familial, local, national, and global levels.

Keywords: *community accountability; ecological model; male violence; prevention*

Beyond Batterers' Intervention

Since the last quarter of the 20th century, classes offered through batterers' intervention programs (BIPs) have become a common strategy for working with men to intervene in cases of violence against women. Although Men Stopping Violence (MSV) offers a 6-month BIP for men, this program represents only part of the larger work of the organization. MSV's analysis of male violence against women indicates that greater involvement by men who are not identified as batterers—involvement in the course as well as in other MSV programs—has the potential for increasing the safety of the women who live in those communities. In addition to the BIP, a significant segment of MSV's work is identifying, educating, and organizing these male allies and potential male allies and includes such efforts as

Authors' Note: This model and the accompanying ideas presented here are the result of 24 years of work by the Men Stopping Violence community. The authors would like to acknowledge the leadership of founding Executive Director Kathleen Carlin and current Executive Director Shelley Serdahely, whose contributions made this work possible.

1. The Because We Have Daughters™ initiative, which helps men look at life through their daughters' eyes, heightening their awareness of the culture of violence and beginning the dialogue necessary to create change. The program is a series of fun and educational activities for men and their daughters but also provides opportunities for them to talk about difficult and challenging issues.
2. Community education and training: MSV provides an average of 30 community education presentations yearly to religious institutions, colleges, criminal justice organizations, other nonprofits, corporations, government agencies, and civic organizations.
3. The Community Restoration Program (CRP), which provides a setting in which volunteers and men who have successfully completed the BIP continue to give and receive support, complete community projects, and educate the community about violence against women.
4. The MSV Internship Program, for young men who are interested in becoming allies in the work to end violence against women. MSV provides mentors who demonstrate how to deconstruct long-held notions of manhood and support young men while they do the hard work of self-examination and advocacy.
5. Parenting classes, which MSV offers to address the needs of families in which violence has destroyed the fabric of healthy parent–child relationships. The program teaches effective, nonviolent parenting skills and emphasizes a collaborative approach.
6. The Mentor Training Program (MTP), which trains male college students to mentor high school boys who are having disciplinary problems and are at risk for dropping out. The MTP focuses on training mentors to rely on strategies that value education and reflect healthy definitions of masculinity.

Why a Community-Centered Approach?

In developing its programs and strategies, MSV uses an analysis of the global patriarchal system to educate men about the causes of male violence against women. This analysis uses a definition of patriarchy that closely parallels that espoused by author and activist bell hooks (2004), who writes that patriarchy is

> A political–social system that insists that males are inherently dominating, superior to everything and anyone deemed weak, especially females, and endowed with the right to dominate and rule over the weak and to maintain that dominance through various forms of psychological terrorism and violence. (p. 18)

MSV's analysis views this political–social system as an ideological, global one that is sustained and strengthened by smaller, related systems at the familial, local, and national levels. The analysis focuses on the roles of interconnected community systems in both socializing men and reinforcing patriarchal male behavior.

MSV advocates a shift of focus from intervention to prevention strategies that seek to educate a critical mass of men to work in their communities. In this way, not only men who are identified as batterers but all men can become potential change agents.

There are a number of reasons for this community-based focus. First, research indicates that nationally, the number of men attending BIPs represents only a fraction of those who commit violence against women; most BIP participants are court-referred, but a significant number of incidents of violence against women never make it to the courts. The National Institute of Justice has reported that approximately 80% of the men participating in BIPs surveyed nationwide were court-referred (Healy, Smith, & O'Sullivan, 1998). At MSV, at least 50% of men in the BIP at any one time are court-ordered. However, information gathered by the Bureau of Justice Statistics shows that between 1993 and 1998, an average of 47% of the incidents of intimate partner violence that occurred in the United States (about 400,000 incidents) were never reported to the police (Rennison & Welchans, 2000). Given all of these reasons, there is a need for solutions that engage a greater number of men in order to increase the safety of those women and girls who do not turn to the criminal justice system for relief.

Also, the make-up of intervention classes, including those conducted by MSV, does not reflect the demographic diversity of men who batter. While domestic violence crimes are committed by men in all race and socioeconomic categories, men of color and working-class men are arrested and prosecuted for domestic violence crimes in disproportionate numbers.

Second, in interactions with men in BIP classes over the years, MSV facilitators have come to believe that community-based strategies are key to affecting lasting social change. BIP classes, therefore, are not closed and confidential but focused on men in relation to their communities. That is why the process of deconstructing the context of men's sociocultural reality has taken a central role in the work that MSV undertakes in the BIP. MSV facilitators believe that without knowledge of how interconnected familial and community systems rooted in patriarchy have influenced individuals, men cannot be in possession of the tools needed for true change of their behaviors and attitudes. MSV works on the premise that gaining insight into the way their life patterns are formed and informed by patriarchal systems allows men to disrupt those patterns by coming together to support each other in the process of change and hold each other accountable for abusive and sexist behaviors.

However, even those men who are somewhat successful in changing their attitudes and behaviors through work in the BIP deal with the ongoing challenge in resisting socializing patriarchal messages. This speaks to the need for a nonpatriarchal cultural paradigm and to the need for men who will create it.

MSV's answer to these challenges is to develop programs outside of the realm of batterers' intervention such as Because We Have Daughters and the CRP that create a climate of community accountability. The organization seeks out, educates, and supports men who demonstrate both the interest and the will to take on the work of ending violence against women.

The MSV Community-Accountability Model

The MSV community-accountability model of male violence against women is a representation of the context in which violence against women occurs and the foundation of a strategy that seeks community-based solutions to addressing that violence.

This ecological model is central to the work MSV does with men in the classroom and in communities, because it offers a view of the cultural and historical mechanisms that support violence against women. Being able to view these mechanisms in relationship to each other assists in creating intervention and prevention strategies that have the potential to disrupt traditions of abuse and dominance. It indicates that corrective actions at every level of community—individual, familial, local, national, and global—have the potential to shift cultural norms toward a more egalitarian standard.

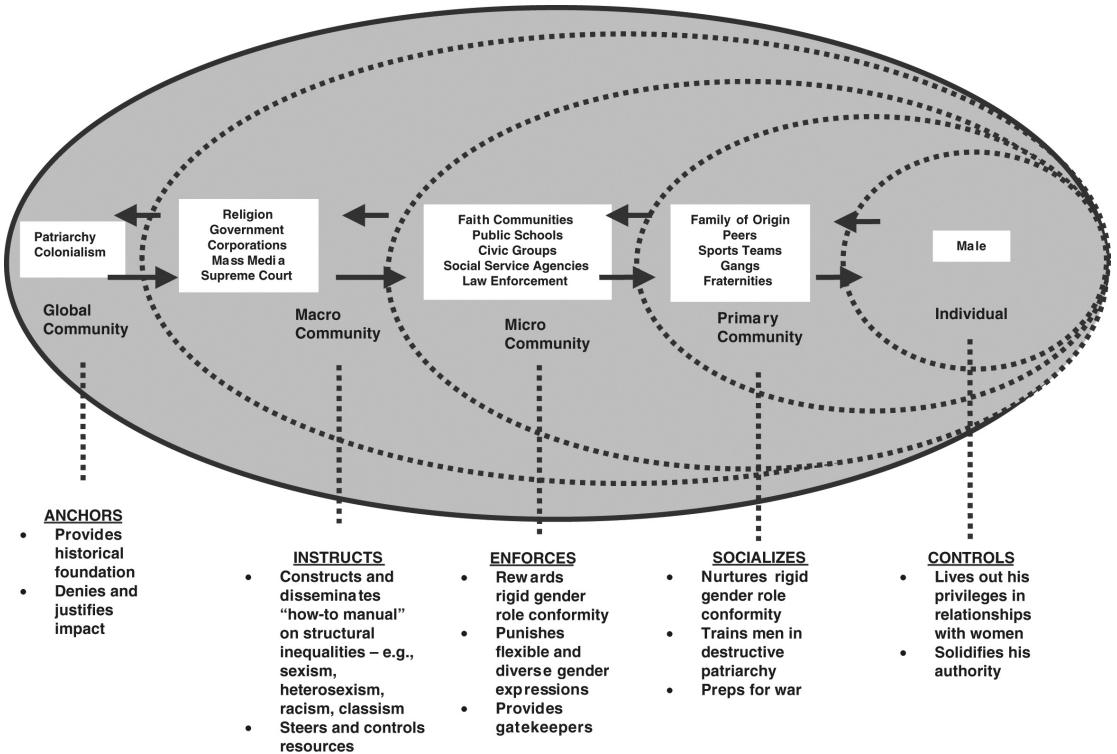
This model allows MSV to view men—batterers or not—not only as individuals who sometimes engage in "bad" behavior but as people in relationship with their environment and with other individuals and groups that perform socializing functions. MSV's work seeks to not only intervene at different community levels to encourage individuals to change but also to train men to become catalysts who shift social norms toward nonviolent, nonsexist, nonpatriarchal manifestations. MSV views community accountability in this sense as more than sanctions imposed by the criminal–legal system, social service agencies, and other government entities. MSV strategies seek to augment intervening actions from these official systems with nongovernmental actions initiated by individuals making up a number of different kinds of communities—for example, family, the workplace, faith communities, and schools.

Interlocking Communities

The MSV Community-Accountability Model depicts five levels of community influence: the individual, the primary community, the microcommunity, the macrocommunity, and the global community. The individual male, his actions, and the forces that act upon him, are represented by the smallest ellipse in the model (see Figure 1). The primary community is that group just outside of the individual, consisting of his family of origin, school friends, clubs, gangs, or any group that fulfills a familial role. Beyond this is the microcommunity (faith communities, school systems, civic groups, social service agencies); the macrocommunity (religion, governments, mass media, high level courts such as the U.S. Supreme court, corporations); and the global community (patriarchy and colonialism).

The arrows indicate the flow of energy and influence among these communities and how they act upon each other and how actions at each level influence the other levels. Energy and influence flow not only from the global community through smaller levels down to the individual, but also in the opposite direction; actions that occur in each community have the potential to affect change in other communities or to maintain the status quo.

Figure 1
The Men Stopping Violence Community-Accountability Model of Male Violence Against Women



The patriarchal cultural system upheld by interactions between communities ensures that boys and men encounter powerful messages establishing male supremacy as the historical and cultural norm. Men and boys of every race, nationality, ethnicity, class, and sexual orientation internalize the notion of male privilege and use it in their everyday lives. Major and minor norm-setting institutions send explicit and implicit messages to boys and girls, men and women, about the superiority of men. Girls and women also internalize the message that male dominance is an established norm that must either be accepted or resisted, and neither choice ensures a woman's safety from male violence.

The Classroom as Catalyst for Change

The MSV community-accountability model views the individual male who acts abusively and violently as being obedient to a cultural mandate to dominate and control women and willing to defend the structure of the patriarchal system. Although most male behavior toward women and children cannot be legally defined as battering, most men and boys are highly competent in the use of dominance and control in a variety of conscious and unconscious ways. Protecting this male privilege takes many forms, of which physical and sexual violence are at one end of the continuum. Men *not* identified as batterers support the destructive mythology of patriarchy by using emotional manipulation, economic control, sexist behaviors and language, threats and intimidation, or by merely being silent in the face of other men's sexist and violent behaviors. Though he may not physically abuse women, the nonbatterer can contribute to the climate in which violence occurs, and he lives as both a tool and a puppet of a culture that devalues women's lives.

African American men and men in other marginalized groups also encounter powerful cultural messages and internalize the notion of male privilege. MSV's analysis recognizes that these men may be victims of racism, classism, and heterosexism and simultaneously exercising male privilege in relationships.

Based on this analysis, MSV uses programmatic tools to influence change at the *individual* level, change that in turn has the potential to shift norms at other levels. The 6-month BIP, which is open to all men, focuses on the causes of male violence against women; the responsibility of men to be accountable and hold each other accountable for violent, abusive, and sexist behaviors; and on strategies that any man can use to encourage both personal and systemic change.

Learning about violence against women and its historical and cultural context invites individual men to shift the way they view the world and their place in it. They are taught that the use of coercion, dominance, and control in relationships with women reflects their internalization of social norms that have been communicated to them through their day-to-day interactions within primary communities, microcommunities, and macrocommunities. They are challenged to accept responsibility for making choices that prevent destructive behaviors.

The coursework requires participants to hold each other accountable within the classroom and also requires them to bring men from their communities, workplaces, and families into class as witnesses who will act as accountability partners outside of the classroom. The aim of inviting these community witnesses is, in part, to help men who complete the program to sustain change. But just as important, the inclusion of men from outside the program provides those men with opportunities to question and challenge themselves and exposes them to the work of ending violence against women. For example, the experience that Bill, a man from suburban Atlanta, had in the BIP changed him and changed the dynamic of his family life, but his experience also affected the lives of the four men from his church whom he brought to class to witness his work. When Bill died, two of those men spoke at his funeral about the changes Bill had made in his life. Bill's family invited MSV facilitators to speak at the funeral, and his wife and daughters also talked about the changes that they had seen in him because of his involvement with MSV. Bill's personal transformation created a ripple effect that touched his family, his friends, his workplace, and his church. His willingness to examine his beliefs and behaviors changed his life, but just as important created changes in awareness at the primary and microcommunity levels that continue to affect those communities long after his death.

Updates to the curriculum that are presently under way will take this community involvement further by requiring program participants to create community projects that address violence against women.

The Primary Community

The acceptance of male privilege may be so deeply embedded in a man's identity that separating himself from cultural definitions of manhood is often a wrenching and frightening experience, especially because he first learns them within the circle of family. At the level of primary community, which includes familial and fraternal groups such as gangs, clubs, or Greek-letter organizations, spoken and unspoken rituals teach gender-determined behaviors and responsibilities.

These groups provide the blueprint of the socializing process for males and females, and in doing so establish explicit rules about how to see and treat those who are labeled superior and inferior, whether because of their gender, race, sexual orientation, or some other label. Familial groups are the primary rule makers and a direct link to a male child's knowledge about his place in the world.

In this process, boys and men are socialized to be aggressive. War imagery and language are well integrated into everyday cultural life, and boys learn primarily from male models that there are rewards for exhibiting certain behaviors—lack of emotion, aggression, hardness, detachment, and unquestioning obedience to authority. These same behaviors—cultivated in boys on the field of sports, in the classroom, or in relationships—are the same as those used to train men and women in the military. Essentially, the culture prepares boys to go to war.

One of the biggest challenges for men who complete the course is attempting to retain a worldview in which manhood is not defined by aggression. The BIP seeks to ensure that a high percentage of men who complete it engage in specific actions that make their environment safer for their partners and for other women in their communities. They are then invited to not only anchor themselves in nonviolence but also to become agents of community change.

As previously mentioned, men are invited to seek out other men in their lives who may become part of a support network while still involved in the BIP. They are required to bring male visitors to class—for example, family, pastors, coworkers, and fraternity brothers—to witness the work they are doing to end violence in their lives. These are some of the men who make up an individual's primary community, and merely having witnesses to the work going on in the BIP can change what happens in that community. For example, in cases where sons witness the work that their fathers are doing, men in class will have the chance to hear directly how their violence has affected those close to them. In this way, the individual, personal transformative work a man does begins to affect the primary community, in this case the family of origin.

In addition, men visiting the class will most likely recognize things about *themselves* that feed the culture of male dominance and violence or be inspired to take action in ways that affect change in the primary community and beyond. One such visitor to the MSV classroom, a minister, was inspired by what he experienced during that one-time interaction to begin a ministry in his church dealing with violence against women; he made educating his congregation about the issue a priority. Therefore, one man's involvement in that program (individual level) inspired another man in his personal circle (primary community level) to bring the work to a larger community (microcommunity level).

The CRP, made up primarily of men who have completed the 6-month program, engages in a number of activities to affect change in the primary community, microcommunity, and macrocommunity. This group acts on a number of levels—as a men's accountability group, as support for other MSV programs, and as a community group concerned with issues of women's safety.

Another program that addresses primary community messages and socialization is the parenting class, which gives men who have completed the BIP tools to help address damage to family life caused by their violence and to establish healthy parent–child relationships. The program emphasizes effective, nonviolent parenting skills and a collaborative approach to providing positive guidance and creative limit setting for children.

The Microcommunity

The terms of male socialization into the familial environment are supported and further mandated by the microcommunity—religious entities, social service agencies, the legal system, the workplace, and educational and other community institutions.

These arbiters of what's moral and immoral, sane and insane, profitable and wasteful enforce patriarchal codes in communities. They are the immediate interpreters of what it means to be male and female in their community and what means should be employed to maintain and reinforce gender-based social roles. It is still primarily men in faith leadership positions who define and interpret what is right and wrong for their congregations. It is primarily men, white men, who define and interpret the meaning of the medical model and how to "treat" the "ill" in social service agencies as well as who manage and set policy for most workplaces.

However, among the men who are part of these microcommunity entities are possible male allies who have the potential to challenge social and cultural norms. Those men who have completed the BIP have an educational foundation that has prepared them to take on that role. They—along with other men in the community who have an interest in ending violence against women—are invited to join the CRP. In its function as a community group, CRP works on projects that educate the community about violence against women.

Most of the men in CRP have been involved in the BIP. But in many ways, the bigger challenge has been involving men who are not identified as violent. Early on in the development of community-based programs, MSV recognized a number of obstacles to identifying potential male allies and providing the programmatic structure that would successfully involve those men in the work.

One way in which Men Stopping Violence met this challenge was to undertake, through the Internship Program, the education and training of young men, particularly young men of color who are often underrepresented in programs that focus on male violence against women. The creation of meaningful and relevant ways of engaging young men and the development of relationships with partner agencies and female advocates have allowed MSV to mentor more than 30 young men, including 9 who went through intensive summer internships in 2005 and 2006. A number of the men who completed the internship have committed to continuing social justice work related to violence against women, including two who work at the Georgia Commission on Family Violence, the agency that certifies family violence intervention and prevention programs for the state. Other young men who have completed the internship have taken their advocacy education into careers as lawyers, ministers, and military officers as well as back to college campuses.

A young man who recently completed the Internship Program helped launch Because We Have Daughters, an MSV initiative designed to broaden men's understanding of the culture that women and girls have to navigate while trying to stay safe. Fathers and daughters participate in a series of activities and outings that, although fun and informative, have the potential to provide sufficient motivation for men to become change agents in the work of ending violence against women. The aim of this program is to not only deepen fathers' understanding of and interactions with their daughters but also to spark a shift in how those men interact with other females in their lives, including

those they encounter outside their family. This is microcommunity influence that has the potential to reach far beyond the men's primary community.

Other work that MSV does at the microcommunity level includes trainings and presentations to churches, workplaces, those who work with the legal and criminal justice systems, colleges and universities, community groups, and others. These trainings involve taking principles out of the BIP and into environments that quite often are unrelated to standard batterers' intervention. These trainings almost always provide a catalyst and an opportunity for men in the community to become involved in the work of ending men's violence against women. Presentations to Morehouse College students, for example, have resulted in young, African American men seeking volunteer opportunities with MSV and other groups.

The Macrocommunity

Microcommunity institutions both support and are supported by the macrocommunity—governments, mass media, corporations, and high-level courts such as the U.S. Supreme Court. Institutions at this level of power and influence serve as gatekeepers. Policies created by these institutions maintain racial, gender, class, and other inequalities by defining and controlling what is considered normative. Furthermore, the structures of these entities—how they are organized, their missions, their mechanisms—are based on principles of race, gender, sexual orientation, and class inequalities that have been in place for millennia. Patriarchy not only drives the ships of commerce, media, and government, it determines who sails and their destinations.

Because laws and policies also have been created by governments, business, and other organizations to counteract the effects of sexism, racism, classism and, to some extent, heterosexism, especially in the last half of the 20th century, it might be easy for people to dismiss the argument that these barriers still exist. At least it would be easy for people not affected by sexism, racism, classism, or heterosexism to dismiss them for any number of reasons. But the gains of the past generation by women and other marginalized groups have not erased hundreds—indeed, thousands—of years of oppression and its effects. In 2004, women still earned only 77 cents for every dollar earned by men. Latinos, as a whole, earned 70 cents for every dollar earned by Whites, and African Americans, as a whole, earned 62 cents for every dollar earned by Whites (DeNavas-Walt, Proctor, & Lee, 2005). Although women make up 51% of the U.S. population, in 2007 only 16 U.S. senators (16%) and 71 U.S. representatives (16.3%) were women (Center for the American Woman and Politics, 2007). People of color are also underrepresented. For example, African Americans make up about 12% of the U.S. population but only 1% of the U.S. Senate and about 9% of the U.S. House of Representatives (U.S. Senate, 2007; U.S. House of Representatives, 2007.)

One way that MSV seeks to influence change at the macrocommunity level is through the work of the CRP. Its members regularly speak in favor of pending state

legislation that promotes safety for women and against bills that do not. Recently, men in the CRP helped organize and implement a successful campaign to support federal legislation reauthorizing the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA). CRP members formed the core of a Georgia group called Men Supporting VAWA, which worked to heighten awareness and organize meetings with Georgia's U.S. senators and representatives to lobby for passage of the reauthorization bill. The bill passed and was signed into law in early 2006. So it is that CRP, an initiative originally designed to affect change at the microcommunity level, expanded its role by actively advocating at the macrocommunity level, that of national government.

Another way that MSV works at this level is by providing interventions, trainings, and presentations to both microcommunity and macrocommunity institutions. MSV's work within the microcommunity provides a foundation for and strengthens its work with macrocommunity groups such as corporations, national church organizations, the U.S. military, government entities such as the Department of Defense, and health organizations such as the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. These interactions create opportunities for small shifts in the entrenched culture of patriarchy that open the door for greater change at all levels. MSV also has conducted trainings on coordinated community response, organized by the U.S. Department of Justice's Office for Violence Against Women. Prosecutors, defense attorneys, and judges involved in those trainings have reported that MSV's trainings encouraged them to make changes in how they do their work in their own microcommunities.

Trainings can also help make social change possible for macrocommunity religious institutions. In the early 1990s, MSV conducted a training with national church denominational leaders working to end domestic violence in their congregations. Afterwards, individual denominations began to request additional training. One of those trainings was with high-ranking clergy in an international church organization, including seven women. During the training, several of those women disclosed that when they were young they had all been sexually abused by a high-ranking church leader and theologian in their organization. MSV's training then became that of working with those denominational leaders, principally the men, on how they could, in collaboration with the women, hold that man accountable.

The first step was teaching the principles of what it means for men to take responsibility without jeopardizing women's safety so that they could be prepared to confront a powerful man in their church. Next, beginning at the training and continuing over a number of months, the men and women developed an action plan that led to a confrontation with this church leader and theologian and his eventual resignation from his position. Ultimately, he was disciplined by his church.

This macrocommunity intervention was possible because of foundation-laying work at the individual, primary community, and microcommunity levels, where principles and practices have been examined, reexamined, and refined over many years of development.

The Global Community

Every act of violence against a woman is undergirded by thousands of years of male privilege. The institutions we are familiar with at the macrolevel and microlevel were established on a global foundation of male superiority that informs the histories, social mores, and mythologies of cultures around the world. Patriarchy's long history is a large part of what gives it its power and authority.

The tradition of patriarchy is deeply rooted in the human story. Institutions were built on this historical model, which has been adapted to fit the needs of governments, media, businesses and corporations, and legal and court systems.

Although matriarchal and matrilineal societies may have existed in the ancient and prehistoric past, the patriarchal model is the direct antecedent of today's global society. Surviving matriarchal and matrilineal societies are often marginalized.

MSV's work at all of these levels of influence has the potential to influence global change. In recent years, MSV staff members have traveled to Taiwan, Great Britain, Canada, and the Caribbean to meet with other advocates and to exchange information, emphasizing the importance of viewing violence against women as a problem that must be the responsibility of the global community.

On one such trip, MSV was invited by the government of Taiwan to spend 8 days there in April 2004, training 320 judges, law enforcement officers, BIP providers, and advocates on effective interventions with batterers.

In December of that same year, MSV traveled to Great Britain and participated on a training team that provided 2 days of technical assistance to 40 British government officials, advocates, and batterers' intervention providers. An MSV team returned to Great Britain in March 2005 at the request of the government, bringing with them their analysis as represented by the community-accountability model. While there, the team shared expertise about organizing men and exchanged best practices and lessons learned with those working on the issue of violence against women at the community, local, and national levels.

The acts of individual men in maintaining male privilege are rewarded by norm-setting institutions at the primary, microcommunity, macrocommunity, and global community levels. These institutions also punish those who deviate from the "norm," exerting enormous pressure to conform at every level. The interactions of all of these entities and factors ensure that the system is self-sustaining.

The MSV Model in Relation to Other Ecological Models

Ecological models have been influential in sociological and psychological research and the formation of social policy since psychologist Urie Bronfenbrenner began his work on human ecology using a model that showed the ways in which family, culture, and environment shaped how children developed into adulthood. An encyclopedia entry describing Bronfenbrenner's work asserts:

> He calls these the microsystem (such as the family or classroom), the mesosystem (which is two microsystems in interaction), the exosystem (which is a system influencing development, i.e., parental, workplace), and the macrosystem (the larger cultural context). Each system contains roles, norms, and rules that can powerfully shape development. The major statement of this theory, *The Ecology of Human Development* (Harvard University Press, 1979) had widespread influence on the way psychologists and others approached the study of human beings and their environments. (Wikipedia, n.d.)

Variations of Bronfenbrenner's model began to be applied to a number of research subjects, including male violence against women. In their book, *Intervention for Men Who Batter: An Ecological Approach*, Jeffrey L. Edleson and Richard M. Tolman (1992) outlined a multisystems ecological framework that identifies the factors at work in abusive men's environments that contribute to their violence. They also recognized the importance of historical and cultural norms in shaping societal views about women and how those views contribute to male violence. Other variations include those of Etienne G. Krug, Linda L. Dahlberg, J. A. Mercy, A. B. Zwi, and R. Lozano (2002) and Lori L. Heise (1998).

A review of these and several other published models of violence and violence against women shows that they have in common an emphasis on identifying risk factors in order to excavate the causes of violence and, consequently, predict individual behavior so that interventions can be developed.

The MSV community-accountability model identifies patriarchy as the root cause of violence against women. It illustrates how that sociopolitical system instructs individuals at different levels of community to enforce and reinforce messages of male supremacy. The MSV model is not used to predict individual violent behavior by identifying risk factors. It is used to identify the socializing messages and behaviors that create a climate of violence so that responses can be crafted that advocate individual responsibility while looking beyond the individual to encourage cultural change.

The differences between the MSV model and ecological models that focus on risk factors can be illustrated by comparing the MSV model with the often-cited ecological model by Heise (1998), the ecological model of factors associated with partner abuse. Heise presents four spheres of influence represented by concentric circles nested within each other. The innermost circle represents the individual perpetrator, and radiating circles represent relationship, community, and society. Risk factors identified at the level of individual perpetrator include witnessing marital violence, being abused as a child, and being male. At the next level, relationship, risk factors are marital conflict and male decision making. In the community sphere, poverty and isolation of the woman are listed as risk factors. And at the last level, society, rigid gender roles and acceptance of notions of male dominance are included (Heise, Ellsberg, & Gottemoeller, 1999).

In comparison, MSV's ecological model is organized around the different levels of influence at which patriarchy asserts itself and identifies those levels at which patriarchal norms can be disrupted. The MSV community-accountability model names the

function of each level and focuses on the messages conveyed by each community represented. How these communities interconnect and how those patriarchal messages are interpreted, acted upon, and redeployed throughout the system of communities is vital to understanding how individual men are influenced and how, in turn, they influence the communities of which they are a part. So although MSV acknowledges the need for individual responsibility, the organization also recognizes that communities are responsible for addressing the messages and policies that create the climate in which violence against women occurs.

Conclusion

The prevention and intervention strategies supported by the MSV community-accountability model require a dramatic shift in the day-to-day interactions between program leaders, advocates, and the men with whom they work. BIPs historically have treated the problem of men's violence against women as an individual circumstance that is addressed in the isolation of classes and men's groups. The ongoing challenge is to promote a view of prevention and intervention that gives more than lip service to the idea that violence against women is a community problem that demands a community-based response. Furthermore, taking leadership in shaping that response means being willing to try new strategies and resist pressure to conduct business as usual in the world of batterers' intervention.

It is no small task. Communities of all sorts have in the past been willing to deny ownership of the epidemic of violence against women. Part of that denial takes the form of diverting violent men into BIPs without attempting to examine and challenge the social context in which their violence takes place.

MSV seeks to openly challenge the messages men receive about the dominance of women, not only in the classroom but also in the community. MSV invites allies in the community to support multiple models of manhood that do not equate masculinity with power and control over women. That support takes the form of holding all men accountable by challenging men who batter as well as men who do not.

MSV is advocating for no less than a paradigm shift away from a methodology that focuses primarily on batterers and toward one that provides all men with opportunities to work with women to make our communities safer.

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