

Introduction

By Luis Aravena Azócar

The Domestic Abuse Intervention Project and the Duluth Curriculum

In March of 1981, Duluth, Minnesota, became the first city in the U.S. to put in place an integrated community response project as a way of protecting battered women from continued acts of abuse. The Domestic Abuse Intervention Project (DAIP) coordinated a set of police, court, social and health service responses to domestic violence. The results were immediate and visible. Arrests of batterers increased dramatically, conviction rates soared, and the number of women seeking protection orders tripled. Offenders who used violence in their relationships were court ordered to attend a group-based rehabilitation program.

Three years later, the DAIP designed the curriculum *Power and Control: The Tactics of Men Who Batter* as an alternative to approaches based on anger management, counseling, psychotherapy or couples counseling. The curriculum focuses not only on eliminating the physical and sexual violence but also on reducing and ending a myriad of other abusive behaviors that constitute battering.

In the Duluth classes, men are asked to examine their violent behavior in the context of their own beliefs about men, women, relationships, and family. They are also asked to look at the culture in which they have been socialized, the culture that supports these beliefs. Understanding the use of violence as an intentional behavior – and not as the result of poor anger control, drug or alcohol abuse, low self-esteem, or other factor – helps them to choose non-violent behaviors and construct a different kind of relationship, one based on egalitarianism and respect.

Since it was first developed, the men's curriculum has been used in hundreds of communities throughout the U.S. and abroad. DAIP has been urged for years to produce a version for Spanish-speaking men. Finally, in 1998, Praxis International and DAIP began working in partnership to produce this adaptation of the Duluth men's curriculum.

Some personal reflections

I would like to explain why I am involved in the writing of the Spanish version of this manual. In 1986, after nearly fourteen years of relationship, the woman who was my partner fell in love with another man and our relationship was over. Involved already in a personal process of change and growth, apart from a deep sadness, confusion, and anguish, I felt a deep sense of having recovered my freedom. I felt like a dictator thrown out by the people that he was oppressing. My ex-partner was confronting a society that doesn't support women's emancipation and was challenging me – a man who didn't abuse her physically but was so unpredictable that she never felt relaxed. Her energy and determination was powerful enough to liberate herself from my control, and to liberate me from controlling her.

Years after, Eduardo Galeano said that he had many friends in Chile that in the streets were fighting against the dictator Augusto Pinochet, but in their homes they were dictators themselves. I knew that he was right, because I saw it for myself and for many of my friends and acquaintances. Many of us were able to dedicate ourselves to the ideals of equality, social justice,

democracy, and freedom, but we were not able to apply the same values at home with our partners and kids. We were able to talk about these principles, but we were not acting consistently with what we were saying. Our private lives were separated from our public lives. There was a gap between what we were saying and what we were doing. A change of behaviors was (and is) necessary, as well as a reshaping of many of our beliefs regarding women and relationships, and women and society, which are the basis for our actions.

In 1987 I left my country and went to live in Toronto, Canada, where I became connected with the Latino American Women's Collective, a group of Latinas dedicated to empowering themselves through mutual support and activities for emigrant women. The Collective provided information about resources for newcomers and about how to get help in situations of domestic violence and others. At that time, although I was convince of equality of all human beings, saw myself as a pro-feminist man, and had many other good intentions in my heart, I didn't hesitate to ask the compañeras the typical question, "Where are the shelters for men who are abused by their wives?" Moreover, I remember that in a social meeting, I said that there were "women who liked to be hit by their men." My friends at the Collective must have had some hope for me, because instead of excluding me from helping with their activities, they continued to teach me about the women's movement and the fight for women's equality.

I went to therapy for years trying to understand my behaviors, my anger, why I reacted in the way that I did in serious and stable relationships with women and in other situations. The therapy helped me a lot in many aspects of my life, especially in processing difficult experiences (the separation of my parents, my own separation from my wife and daughters, the years of military government rule, settling in a new country, and experiencing racism and discrimination). However, it didn't help too much to stop my controlling behaviors and the expectation that the woman in a loving relationship with me needed to take care of me, especially of my emotional needs.

Because the crisis of my separation, I knew that I needed to change if I wanted to have some happiness in my life and to maintain a relationship. When I went to Canada, the compañeras told me that there were groups for men in different parts of North America. I decided that I wanted to start one. It wasn't clear for me at that time what a "men's group" meant, but I started to do research. At that time, in 1988, I didn't get very far with my project, but I started to participate in conferences about women's issues and activities with the Latino American community regarding abuse against women. In 1991, I became one of a handful of men members of the Latino American Coalition to Stop Violence against Women and Children.

It was Ricardo Greenshaw, a priest and participant in the Coalition, who recommended the book Men's Work: How To Stop the Violence That Tears Our Lives Apart by Paul Kivel (1992). This book had a very strong influence on me. The author talks about his own process of change. He develops the concept that men abuse because they grow up in societies that teach them violence as a way to resolve problems. Their abusive actions are justified as expressions of masculinity. The conclusion is that we are socialized to act violently. To me, this was a big discovery. If my abusive behaviors towards others were learned – if my allowing myself to express my anger in threatening ways was a product of my socialization – then the reasons were not psychological.

The root of my attitudes was not in a weak bonding with my mother the absence of my father when I was a little boy, the military takeover in my country, nor in any psychological response to events in my life.

In 1994, finally, I started to facilitate men's groups and I got training from Emerge in Boston, Paul Kivel in Toronto, and the Domestic Abuse Intervention Project (DAIP) in Duluth. I came to Duluth in May, 1995, when DAIP offered in the same week trainings on the curriculums *In Our Best Interest*, for facilitators of women's groups, and *Power and Control: Tactics of Men Who Batter*, for facilitators of men's groups. I was familiar with the Duluth curriculum, because some of the exercises, the control log, the Power and Control Wheel, and the Equality Wheel, were being used at the program *Man to Man*, in Branton, Ontario, where I was doing a placement for my bachelor degree in social work.

The training started with *In Our Best Interest*. Michelle LeBeau and Jill Abernathey, two survivors of domestic abuse, were giving the training. I could not believe what I was hearing. These women were talking about oppression by men over women, by rich countries over poor countries, about patriarchy, about women's liberation, about equality. The training room was full of agitated people. Some were very angry at the strong statements of the trainers. Some probably wanted to hear about dysfunctional women who stay with their batterers, or about this "different" group of people who abuse or who are abused. Instead they were hearing about an approach that centers the problem of domestic violence in a society that allows it to happen. It happens because of culture and an economic, legal, political and institutional system that sanctions inequality not only between men and women, but also between other groups, such as rich and poor, white people and people of color, and heterosexual and homosexual.

Some participants in the training didn't like what they were hearing, but the trainers were brave. They were not silenced by the disagreement and anger. I was crying because until then, it wasn't so clear for me the societal frame in which domestic violence happens. I felt deeply touched by the force and commitment of the trainers. This experience consolidated my decision to work in the re-education of men who use violence (of course, including myself) that abuse or have abused their partners.

Developing curriculum materials for Spanish-speaking men

Since that training, I have used the Duluth curriculum and facilitated many groups for both English- and Spanish-speaking men who batter. Like a number of other Spanish-speaking facilitators (and English-speaking facilitators using interpreters), I have translated the lessons and vignettes into Spanish (sometimes during class) and found this effective in helping guide group discussion without losing focus on men's abusive behaviors. However, it is clear to me that a Spanish-language version of the vignettes is needed, as it is impossible to translate the English vignettes word for word during a men's group.

In 1998, I was asked by Praxis and DAIP to adapt the Duluth curriculum for Spanish-speaking men. The assignment was to translate the curriculum, create new video vignettes and exercises, and to adapt it to make it culturally relevant. This was a challenge because, of course, there is not just one Latino culture.

According to the 2000 U.S.¹ census there were more than 35 million people of Latino or Hispanic origin in the United States – or 12.5% of the total U.S. population of 281 million people. This is a number greater than the combined populations of El Salvador, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Honduras, and Costa Rica. Another surprising fact is that the population of Latinos and Latinas in the U.S. is greater than the total population of Canada.² The census also shows that this is not a homogeneous group. Of all Latinos or Hispanics in the U.S., 7.3% are Mexican Americans, 7.3%, 1.2% are Puerto Ricans, and 0.4% are Cuban Americans. The remaining 3.6 % includes people with other Latin American origins. This official data doesn't include the unknown number of undocumented Hispanics that live and work illegally in the United States.

In twenty-one countries of the world, Spanish is the official language; nineteen of these countries are in North, Central, and South America. On this basis, is it possible to call all people from Latin American countries Latin American or Hispanic? The answer could be yes if language were the only criterion. But even at that we don't all speak Spanish the same way. We have different accents and different idioms and many “Hispanics” in the U.S. and many people of indigenous origin in Latin American countries do not speak Spanish well – or Spanish is their second language.

People of Latin American origin do have many things in common. We also have many differences. Some of the things we share include the following:

According to Statistics Canada the total estimated population for the year 2000 is 30,750,100. The publication date for this figure in the organization's website is January 17, 2001.

History

... Latin American countries were colonized by the Spanish (over many diverse native tribes, races, cultures and territories).

... These countries gained independence during the 19th century.

Culture

... The majority of Latin America is Christian-specifically, Catholic – the religion of the Spanish colonizers.

... Capitalism is the predominant, but not the only, economic system although Cuba has a socialist economic system.

... Patriarchy is a strong influence, and men have more economical, political, social, religious, military, and legal power than women do.

... For most of these countries except Cuba, the U.S. is the main political, cultural, and ideological influence and is the main (but not the only) commercial partner.

¹ Population Estimates Program, Population Division. U.S. Census Bureau, Washington, D.C. 20233. Census 2000. Summary File 1.

² According to Statistics Canada, the total estimated population of Canada in 2000 was 30,750,100. This figure was published on the website <http://www.statcan.ca/> on January 17, 2001.

Population

... There are native minorities in most of the countries, but in some (for example, in Guatemala, Peru, Ecuador, and Bolivia) the native people are the majority.

... In most Latin American countries, a minority of the population is of African descent.

... In most of these countries, the population is also composed of native people; Spanish whites and whites from other European countries; blacks; and "mestizos," people of mixed race (natives and blacks, Spanish and natives). Also, in some countries there are small communities of people of Asian descent, especially from Japan, Korea, and China.

There are also elements that are distinctive about each country:

... Although Spanish is the main language of the more than 300 million people who live in Latin American countries, there are several million natives who speak their own languages: Maya, Quechua, Guaraní, Aymara, and others. They may not speak Spanish or may speak it as a second language.

... Each of the nineteen Latin American countries have their own culture, history, food, music, dances, literature, customs, geography, a distinctive way of speaking the language, and many other individual characteristics. The same is true for groups of Hispanics who live in the U.S. We also shouldn't forget that thousands of ancestors of the people who today we call Mexican Americans were living in Texas, California, and others states that were part of Mexico before the border passed over them from north to south.

... Each country has its own independent government and laws.

... Each country has different levels of technical, educational, and economic development and income per capita.

Given the diversity of Latin American cultures, the task of creating one culturally relevant curriculum might have been impossible. However, the original design of the Duluth curriculum has made the adaptation fairly easy because the curriculum does not rely on specific material that the participants must learn and repeat. Instead, it presents a process of exploring the culture and beliefs of the men in the group, no matter what the culture and beliefs are.

One of the tools for this process of exploration is a series of video vignettes. To create Spanish vignettes I met with Latinas (formerly battered women and advocates) to generate stories, and used stories from my experience facilitating groups with Spanish-speaking batterers. The stories in the vignettes are the experiences of Latina battered women. Then I worked with Liliana Espondaburu, a Latina advocate and actor, to co-direct the videos, which feature Latina and Latino actors from various cultural backgrounds and countries – Mexico, Puerto Rico, Columbia, El Salvador, Paraguay, Argentina, Peru, Venezuela, Cuba, and the U.S.

Finally, I adapted and translated the other fundamental tools of the Duluth curriculum (control log, action plan, exercises, forms, and handouts). The translated materials and video vignettes with Latinos and Latinas speaking Spanish greatly improve our intervention since men see their

lives reflected in the class materials. Most important, though, is the method of engaging in dialogue through which the participants themselves find answers.

The Freire method

The Duluth curriculum is based largely on the work of the late Brazilian educator and author Paulo Freire, who developed a theory and practice for the education of illiterate people in Brazil and Chile. His work is based on the idea that everyone, no matter how oppressed, is able to learn to look critically at the world.

The Duluth activists picked up on a central idea of Freire's teachings in working with men who batter – the notion that it's important to distinguish between what is nature and what is culture.

All things that are *not* created by men and women are what we call nature. (Some would say all things made by a creator are what we call nature.) All things made through human activity are *not* natural; they are cultural and therefore can be changed. An important function of the education groups, then, is to make the distinction between what is natural and what is cultural, and then challenge men to change those things made through human activity so that we can become more human.

Freire's method of critical dialogue means the material for the group actually comes from the men themselves. The facilitators pose problems (ask questions); they don't teach "the truth" or give lectures. Participants explore their world, talk about it, define it, describe it, and name their own reality, beliefs, and culture. They analyze their experiences in the world, in their culture, and reflect on all of the forces operating in their lives. They then make decisions about how to act in the world with a critical consciousness. It is this feature of the curriculum that ensures facilitators will not impose a dominant culture paradigm on the men; similarly, facilitators who are from economically and socially marginalized communities will not experience an imposition of culture.

For example, one theme of the Duluth curriculum deals with partnership and the issue of socialization of men and women – specifically, the roles of wife, mother, father, husband, daughters, and sons. La familia (family) has special cultural characteristics for Latin people. La familia is a strong network of support, in which each of the members has a specific and well-defined role. In the group, the facilitator asks the men to list the characteristics and roles that our culture expects from each member of the family. Group members examine their own beliefs about these roles and how they learned them, how these roles affect relationships between men and women, and how society promotes them. The men answer from their own familial and societal experiences

This does not mean that the facilitator is neutral in their position on violence. Freire says there is no neutral place to stand in relation to the struggle of the oppressed and the oppressors. In these classes the men can simultaneously be oppressed in our society and oppressors in their families. They are in this particular classroom to understand the connections between the two experiences and to change the latter. This method of engaging in dialogue through which the participants

themselves find answers is discussed more fully in a conversation with Ellen Pence that appears in Section III of this handbook.

The process of critical thinking can lead to personal transformation, but changes in the attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors of individual group participants are alone not enough to create safety for women who are being battered. The batterers groups must only be one part of the efforts a community must make to confront domestic violence. The planned coordination of all these efforts is what we call a coordinated community response.

Using the curriculum within the context of a coordinated community response

This Spanish adaptation of the Duluth curriculum will provide facilitators with useful tools for facilitating men's group discussions. The tools will keep the discussions focused on men's violence, help men understand the beliefs beneath their actions, and assist them to learn alternative behaviors, all in an open environment that supports them in their personal struggles, yet is challenging and non-colluding.

However, these materials are not intended for use in isolation from other community actions. There are some important considerations for those planning to use these materials. I suggest you think about the following questions.

... Is men's violence against women a private, family issue or a public and community problem? Does violence against women affect the community? Who in your community is responsible for confronting and stopping this violence?

... Which agencies in your community intervene with families experiencing domestic violence? What is the best way to intervene in these situations? Are the actions of the varying agencies that respond to violence against women in your community enough to stop the abuse (law enforcement, courts, human services, women's groups, etc.)?

... As a men's group facilitator, do you have adequate information about men's behaviors at home? Do you have information about the safety of their partners? Does your agency offer information, support and advocacy to their partners?

... What possible changes can be made to improve what your community is doing at this moment to respond to violence against women? What changes could increase safety for women in your community?

Advocates and practitioners in Duluth asked similar questions when they first organized to stop men's violence against women. Eventually they created a men's group curriculum, but the curriculum was never intended to be used in a vacuum. As with the original Duluth curriculum, these materials for conducting groups for Spanish-speaking men who batter are meant to be used in the context of an "intervention project" or a coordinated community response (CCR) to domestic violence. A full description of the components of the CCR can be found in *Coordinated Community Response to Domestic Assault Cases: A Guide for Policy Development* (Duluth

Domestic Abuse Intervention Project, 1985)³ but I want to highlight three important components here.

1. Community intervention

Community intervention is a central component of the Duluth CCR model. It means that various agencies coordinate their work and adopt written guidelines, policies, and procedures governing the responses of practitioners in law enforcement, court, and human service agencies to cases of domestic assault. In Duluth these agencies include the police, prosecution, county court, probation department, shelter, social work agencies and the DAIP, which assumed the role of a monitoring agency.

Community intervention is based on the notion that violence against women is a community problem. In confronting an individual man's violence, the community needs to take the responsibility away from the woman he is battering, since she is the person most vulnerable to his ongoing abuse, and so is often the least able to stop it.

Practitioners in the domestic violence field often refer to the Duluth men's group curriculum as "the Duluth Model," but I want to explain that the Duluth Model is not a batterer's curriculum or a men's program. Yes, the DAIP currently offers eight men's groups that meet once a week. Yes, each man must attend thirty-one sessions to complete the program. Yes, DAIP created and uses the curriculum *Power and Control: Tactics of Men Who Batter*, but the Duluth Model, as created by the DAIP, is something much more encompassing than this.

Mostly, the Duluth Model is a collective effort of many women's advocates, facilitators of men's groups, administrative workers, and social activists working in collaboration with the police force, prosecutors, courts, correctional services, jail, and other social service providers in Duluth to improve women's safety. This effort started with a proposal that each agency attempt to reduce repeat domestic assaults cases by developing written policies or protocols and engaging in interagency networking.

Engaging different agencies to work in a coordinated manner to improve the community response to woman abuse was social activism-and social activism is a dimension of our work that we need to realize if we want to make a difference. To help men to stop their violence and learn nonviolent alternatives, we must do more than facilitate discussions where they can analyze the beliefs that support their violence. We must also get out the message that the community no longer accepts violence against women and that the abuser will be legally accountable if his violent behaviors continue.

I suggest that group facilitators ask themselves some additional questions:

³ A detailed description of the components of a CCR can be found in *Coordinated Community Response to Domestic Assault Cases: A Guide for Policy Development*, Duluth Domestic Abuse Intervention Project, 1985. (218) 722-2781.

... What are the problems that women in your community are living with that make their lives unsafe?

... Do you think that you can work on improving the community response to violence against women in your area?

... Who can you work with to make things better for women?

... Can you and your agency do social activism in your community?

Asking and answering these and similar questions on an ongoing basis and remaining open to change have been central aspects of the Duluth Model since its beginning. The DAIP has considered and made changes in the way of doing things, in policies, in procedures, and in the curriculum material and structure (e.g., the number of weeks men are required to attend). This is consistent with the notion that communities are alive and changing, and there are always new challenges and new measures that can be taken to improve women's safety.

2. Accountability to women

A second important component of the Duluth Model closely connected to the idea of community intervention is accountability to women. While a men's group curriculum is designed to help men, it's important to note that the primary goal of working with men who batter should be increasing women's safety through accountability to women. The DAIP considers women to be the primary focus of the community intervention project, and men the primary focus of the men's program. This important distinction keeps the community, the DAIP, and men's group facilitators accountable to women, and keeps the primary focus on women's safety. To ensure this attention to safety and accountability to women, DAIP has worked, since its inception, in some specific ways.

Recognizing that a program focusing on intervention with batterers can have problems being accountable, organizers of the DAIP ensured that the planning and implementation of its program would be heavily influenced by shelter advocates, shelter residents, women in shelter educational groups, and formerly battered women working on confronting violence against women. The shelter participates in the training and selection of DAIP staff and men's group facilitators. The DAIP has committed itself not to compete with the shelter for funding and to meet with the shelter before advocating for any major shifts in policies, procedures, or legislation that impacts the way institutions respond to battered women and their abusers. Research and data collection procedures are divided between the shelter and the DAIP, and planned and interpreted cooperatively. These efforts are all a part of a system of accountability measures the program has taken over the years to ensure that the project maintains as its first priority the protection of women and children. Coral McDonnell, who has worked at the DAIP since it began, discusses the program's accountability to battered women:

"Every time we decide to try something new we talk it over with women who have used the system. Will this work or not? If so, how can it best work? We've had hundreds of arguments over the years about what groups should be like. Should we push for jail or not in a particular case? Is 10 days enough or 30 too many? We eventually ask these questions against the criteria, will it make her safe and free to be herself? That gets lost sometimes. We offer groups in lieu of jail but only on the condition of no more violence. To be accountable to women means we must

know what women are experiencing, be clear that the violence is his problem, not hers, and understand that her reactions are always influenced by the violence she has experienced in the past and has been threatened with in the future. For the DAIP, the bottom line is the commitment of all agencies to fulfill their moral and social obligations to abused women. Seventy five percent of our budget goes to keeping the system informed and using its powers of intervention to ensure women's safety. Only 25% is spent on the rehabilitation of individual men." ⁴

DAIP also employs two women's advocates to work with the women who have been abused by the men attending groups. One of them specifically works with partners or former partners of those who are attending the group Mending the Sacred Hoop group for Native American men who have used violence. These advocates contact each woman by phone or mail to inform them about the participation of their partner or former partner in the men's group. They explain to her how the program works, help her understand that a man's participation is not a guarantee of change, and tell her that she will be informed when her partner completes the program (or when he has been terminated or suspended). They also ask each woman to complete a questionnaire on the history of violence by the abuser that is shared, with her permission, with men's group facilitators. She is encouraged to refer to the questionnaire when considering if her partner has changed his behavior. Advocates also offer information about safety planning and resources available in the community and invite each woman to join a women's education group. This close and ongoing contact with battered women is crucial in keeping a community intervention project accountable to them.

3. Educational approach to men's groups

A final important component of the Duluth Model is the philosophical approach of the men's groups. When the Duluth community first made changes in its response to domestic assault cases, a dramatic increase in arrests and prosecution created a new dilemma: What to do with all the men who were arrested and prosecuted? The courts didn't want to sentence most first-time misdemeanor offenders to jail without first offering them a chance at rehabilitation.

DAIP staff then set about to develop a men's group curriculum, but departed from the usual practice of offering groups based in anger management, counseling, psychotherapy, or couples counseling. They were beginning to see that these approaches did not explain the cause of battering in a way consistent with women's true experiences. In thinking through the philosophical basis of the curriculum, they were guided by battered women's activists, who asked questions from the standpoint of battered women:

- ... Why is she the target of his violence?
- ... How does his violence impact the balance of power in their relationship?
- ... What did he think could change by hitting her?
- ... Why does he assume he is entitled to have power in the relationship?
- ... How does the community support his use of violence against her?

⁴ *Education Groups for Men Who Batter: The Duluth Model* by Ellen Pence and Michael Paymar. Pages 169-170. Springer Publishing Company. New York. 1993.

These questions and continued dialogue helped to shape their approach to working with batterers. Then they began experimenting with an educational approach based on a combination of the experiences and ideas of the women's movement, the civil rights movement, Gandhi's nonviolence movement, and especially the teaching methods of Paulo Freire, a Brazilian educator. This approach shifted the explanation from a psychological model for violent behavior to one in which a man's violence was seen as intentional and used to control his partner's behavior – and for which he must be held solely responsible. It was an explanation that challenged both participants and facilitators.

In many ways, using theories that ignore intent and focusing instead on violence as the result of stress or anger or an inability to express feelings would be easier than what this curriculum offers. It would be more palatable not only to the men but also to those of us who teach the classes. But in the end it is less honest because it fails to acknowledge the real experiences of women who live with men who batter.

It is this theoretical framework for understanding battering that distinguishes the Duluth curriculum from many other models of group intervention with batterers. This approach, combined with a strong community message that men's violence will not be tolerated, brings me hope that we can work with men to change their lives.

A final word

I hope that these Spanish-language materials will be an important asset in our work with men who abuse their partners. Our challenge is immense, but I am sure that our collective efforts will help us to get closer to the goal of creating safety for women who have been abused and to prevent many others from being abused – especially our Latina sisters.