Chapter 18
Grounded Theory Approach and the Process of Men Taking Responsibility in Domestic Violence Interventions

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ABSTRACT

Research on the effectiveness of domestic violence perpetrator interventions, where perpetrators are challenged to apply non-violent behavior and develop a healthy intimate relationship, is uneven and often inconsistent. Effective and accurate methodological tools and approaches can provide a better understanding of how the program providers offer successful practices to perpetrators of domestic violence. The goal of this chapter is to discuss the potential benefits of the grounded theory approach in a qualitative inquiry that might reduce methodological challenges in the examination of the process of men taking responsibility in interventions. This chapter contributes to the debate about the best way to examine perpetrators' behavioral change processes and identifies the benefits of implementing the grounded theory approach and reflexivity.

INTRODUCTION

Grounded theory approach is a research methodology that is often used in social sciences. The reason for applying grounded theory approach might be to develop a new theory. Theory is vital for reducing complex social problems and recognizing relevant aspects in broader contexts (Gibson & Hartman, 2014). Moreover, grounded theory provides adequate comparisons by focusing on specific properties across social elements (Gibson & Hartman, 2014). Behavioral change process among perpetrators of domestic violence can be better understood by applying theoretical sampling, a constant comparative method and coding exercises found in the grounded theory approach.

The main body of domestic violence perpetrator literature has concentrated on the rate of or factors around completion or drop-outs among perpetrators (Cuevas & Bui, 2016; Kalogo, 2015; Rondeau, Brodeur, Brochu & Lemire, 2001; Rosenbaum, Gearan, & Ondovic, 2001; Rothman & Coutinho, 2007; Waller, 2016). However, some researchers have explored the steps and process of behavioral change rather than solely focusing on the outcome. For instance, different stages of change and various conditions around the readiness to take new action have been investigated (Carbajosa, Catalá-Miñana, Lila, Gracia, & Boira, 2017; Chovanec, 2009; Daniels & Murphy, 1997). A few studies about changing behavior during psychotherapy also examined the stages of change and the effectiveness of some techniques (Mc-Connaughy, Prochaska & Velicer, 1983; Prochaska & DiClemente, 1982). Therefore, a consideration of the different conditions and their stages is critical to the identification of motivational dynamics based on their relationship with program providers, family members and other social networks. This in-depth examination can improve our understanding of how they attempt to take responsibility and develop a healthier and more respectful intimate relationship. Importantly, participants' interactions need to be taken into account by the researchers who attempt to identify the conditions around taking responsibility for violence during interventions.

Researching male perpetrators' behavioral change process is very difficult because several complicated and sensitive conditions are often involved in this process. The difficulty of this examination is likely to be associated with the men's minimizations and denials of their violent behavior, blaming women, insufficient understanding of the consequences of violence on their family members (Dobash et al., 2000; Dutton & Hemphill, 1992; Ehrensaft & Vivian, 1999; Harne & Radford, 2008), restrictions on seeing their children (Alderson et al., 2013; Stanley et al., 2012), potential mental health or physical complications, masculine identity, tolerance of violence, patriarchal beliefs and gendered power relations (McCarry, 2007; Sayem and Nury, 2013).

Some perpetrators experience immigration-related stressors such as lack of housing and employment, poor language skills, dealing with two cultures, adaptation, lack of social support, racism and discrimination (Guru, 2006; Hancock & Siu, 2009; Williams, 1994), as well as stigmatizations about domestic violence in communities. From the available evidence around perpetrators of domestic violence, it is possible to state that a great number of problems can be interconnected with perpetrators' insufficient efforts to achieve non-violent behavior. A discussion of the methodological challenges and the benefits of applying the grounded theory approach in examining the degree that perpetrators take responsibility for their violence can contribute to understanding behavioral change process in interventions. Therefore, this chapter aims to explore how grounded theory approach might help examine the process of behavioral change among perpetrators of domestic violence.

BACKGROUND

Even though the literature on domestic violence perpetrator interventions often discusses the effectiveness of strategies for achieving behavioral change that challenge men to take responsibility, there is inconsistency around describing the aspects and dimensions of this process. This inconsistency might be to do with the obstacles around examining several conditions and characteristics interconnected with the behavioral change process. A number of scholars have used quantitative and mixed methods to investigate this process by focusing on the effectiveness of domestic violence perpetrator program (Cannon et al., 2016; Kelly & Westmarland, 2015; Lilley-Walker et al., 2016; Walker et al., 2010). However,

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