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Newsletter no. 1

"The Other Side of the Story: Perpetrators in Change"

About the project....

"The Other Side of the Story: Perpetrators in Change" (OSSPC) is a project which will be implemented by: The Association for the Prevention and Handling of Violence in the Family (APHVF), Cyprus as Coordinator and its partners, Bournemouth University (BU), United Kingdom, Centro di Ascolto Uomini Maltrattanti Onlus (CAM), Italy, The Union of Women Associations of Heraklion Prefecture (UWAH), Greece, European Knowledge Spot, Greece and The Social and Medical Services Directorate (DASM) Cluj-Napoca, Romania.

The implementation period of the project is 24 months
(01.05.2020-30.04.2022)

More info about the project and its findings are available at: www.osspc.eu



The aim of the OSSPC project is to prevent further domestic violence and change violent behavioral patterns by increasing the capacity of frontline workers that will further teach perpetrators of domestic violence to adopt non-violent behavior in interpersonal relationships and understand the impact of domestic violence on them, their family and community.





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Time for Change: Evidence based research for new practice approaches

This project activity aims to map and comparatively analyse the current work with perpetrators in the participating countries, to estimate the scale of the problem, to provide a needs assessment and to discover potential referral routes, suggesting relevant perpetrator programme for professionals in the form of non-criminal justice intervention.

The activity was coordinated by Bournemouth University. All partners organized the activities in their countries, as it follows:

Summary of field work data collection:

Prior to any fieldwork being carried out, the fieldwork methods and associated documents went through the rigorous Bournemouth University's ethics procedures and the fieldwork protocol for the data collection processes was followed by all the partners. Three types of participants were recruited to the study:

Survivors: Recruited via local services, keyworkers and also social media using OSSPC social media feeds, where appropriate.

- ✓ A questionnaire was devised to seek out survivors' perspectives on their own experiences of interacting with support services, and their views on and experiences of the support offered to the abuser.

Perpetrators: Recruited via support service organisations. As this is an understandably secretive and potentially high-risk population and for the safety of unidentified potential victims and the researchers, participants will be accessed via gatekeepers, where participants are or were receiving support from services.

- ✓ A semi-structured interview questionnaire was designed to seek out participants views about their knowledge and experiences of support, and how potentially it could be improved.

Professionals/Keyworkers: Recruited through local support service organisations and connections.

- ✓ A semi-structured questionnaire was designed for use with **focus groups of professionals** who either worked with victims/survivors or perpetrators of DVA.

The aim of the focus groups was to engage with stakeholder and key informant professional participants to gauge their opinions on best practice and challenges in addressing DVA in their respective fields. Three short vignettes were also developed to aid discussion of how those impacted by/or who perpetrate DVA are supported.

Data Analysis Process: Descriptive statistical analysis was used for quantitative data. The qualitative data was coded thematically according to the project outcomes, and dominant themes that occurred using a coding framework developed by Bournemouth University.



Focus groups with professionals/keyworkers detailed:

Bournemouth University, one of the partners in our project "The other side of the story: perpetrators in change" (OSSPC) have completed the focus group aspect of the fieldwork project.

Seven online focus groups were held with a total of thirty-three participants. A range of professionals took part from across the UK, including social workers, midwives, local council employees and specialised domestic violence victim and perpetrator support workers. What became clear throughout the groups was that there is a real desire to create positive and funded pathways for abusive partners to access support to change.

They discussed lots of different barriers to support, as well as some good practice examples of where the system is working. *"We are excited to share these findings with our EU partners"*. Dr. Jade Lewell, Bournemouth University.

In the framework of this activity, **European Knowledge Spot** organized two focus groups (September 29th, October 2nd 2020). The discussions were carefully planned, designed to obtain different perceptions on the profile of perpetrators and victims, on the current legal framework and on the crucial role of schools, the police and of families in preventing and combating domestic violence and abuse.

"We would like to offer special thanks to the psychiatrists, psychologists, social workers, and lawyers who took part in the discussions and assisted in generating a large variety of opinions on domestic violence and abuse acts". **European Knowledge Spot**

FOCUS GROUPS ORGANIZED IN UNITED KINGDOM



FOCUS GROUPS ORGANIZED IN GREECE





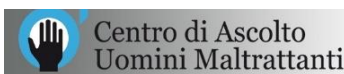
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The “**Union of Women Associations of Heraklion Prefecture (UWAH)**” conducted one focus group as part of the research into Gender Based Violence (GBV) and perpetrators analysis. *The aim of this focus group was to extensively discuss and better understand how to develop perpetrator programmes to support and potentially change the behaviors.* At the focus group participated 17 representatives from key and well experienced frontline organizations that deal with GBV assisting victims and/or perpetrators thereof. All participants/ stakeholders had long experience on the field, wide theoretical background and comprehensive view. The focus group analyzed specific case studies including the topic of GBV (physical, psychological and sexual violence as well as stalking) and other related aspects, such as substances addiction. The discussion focused also on the interventions that should be implemented. In addition, participants also discussed the guidelines and interventions regarding perpetrator

programmes in order to support and help them change their violent behaviors; understanding at the same time the effects of GBV on themselves, their families and community in general. All participants shared experiences, very openly and at a collaborative spirit. They expressed conflicting opinions, but always with respect to each other, while they highlighted the common interests for the victim and the perpetrator as well. The main finding of the focus group is that interventions on perpetrators should entail a personalized approach, but tackling at the same time, the strong gender stereotypes, patriarchy, gender issues and toxic masculinities.

Participants also raised the issue of juvenility and the role of the family in such cases. It has been highlighted, there is also a need for changes at the legal framework due to the fact that in practice, it doesn't protect the victims and doesn't make perpetrators responsible/accountable for their acts.



Centro di Ascolto
Uomini Maltrattanti



FOCUS GROUPS ORGANIZED IN ITALY

The 5 Focus Groups organized by **Centro Ascolto Uomini Maltrattanti (CAM)** in Italy involved a total of 42 professionals (Social Workers, Psychologists, Psychiatrists, Nurses, Lawyers).

The main objectives were to be able to explore training needs with respect to situations of gender-based violence, attitudes towards perpetrator programs and what challenges/obstacles they face as a service whenever they meet the perpetrators or victims. In order to achieve these objectives, cases of violence in emotional relationships were presented and commented on.

Although work with victims is necessary and of fundamental importance, the Services recognized that the work carried out with the perpetrators is fundamental and integral in the fight against and combating violence.

In order to motivate authors of domestic violence to be able to start paths out of violence according to the services, it is necessary to recognize the pain they feel in hurting their families and their sense of helplessness in not being able to stop using violence.

Although they consider it essential not to justify violence, they consider it necessary not to confront men with ways of making judgments about what is right and wrong but, to connect to the sense of pain they feel and to accompany them in sending perpetrators to the Centers as hope for them, to be able to embark on the path of escaping from violence and reoffending.





DASM Cluj-Napoca organized 3 online focus-groups (4, 5, 6 November 2020) which aimed to assess the need for programs for specialists to work with perpetrators in order to prevent further domestic violence, to understand the circumstances in which these programs operate and to share methods of working with perpetrators.

During the discussions, the following needs were highlighted:

- ✓ to develop/increase the number of prevention programs (early education programs in schools; media involvement in changing the mentality on the phenomenon of domestic violence, decreasing tolerance regarding domestic violence, focusing on informing the community on solutions and services);
- ✓ to approach the issue of DV from a dual perspective, both from the victim and from the perpetrator.

Two focus groups were organised in Nicosia, Cyprus by **The Association for the Prevention and Handling of Violence in the Family – APHVF**, the coordinator of the project, on 1/12/20 and 3/12/20.

Participants in the focus group were front line professionals working with victims and/or perpetrators of domestic violence. More specifically professionals were issued from the Cyprus Police, the Cyprus National Addictions Authority, the Womens' House, the KENTHEA

FOCUS GROUPS ORGANIZED IN ROMANIA



- ✓ to increase the responsibility of main actors in recognizing/identifying and reporting situations of abuse/DV, strengthening collaboration protocols between public/private institutions and the operationalization of existing services.

FOCUS GROUPS ORGANIZED IN CYPRUS

Drug Rehabilitation Centre and the Association for the Prevention and Handling of Violence in the Family.

The discussion in focus groups included subjects such as the organizational responses and referral pathways, the barriers in accessing the services, the successes and gaps in responding to domestic violence.

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