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Dachverband interinstitutioneller
Kooperationsbündnisse zur
Gewaltprävention & Opferschutz

Quality standards in abuser intervention programmes: the German perspective

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Bundesarbeitsgemeinschaft Täterarbeit Häusliche Gewalt

German association for
working with perpetrators
of Domestic Violence



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History of perpetrator programmes in Germany



mid 80s to mid 90s:

- first initiatives, deriving from self-help groups or profeminist men`s groups
- first intervention projects in Berlin and Kiel
- first 7 institutions transferring ideas from Duluth Model (willingness to cooperate)



mid 90s to 2005:

- intervention projects were launched all over Germany
- gold rush concerning perpetrator programmes (from 7 to 60)
- evaluation of 9 intervention projects (including 8 perpetrator programmes) on behalf of BMFSFJ



...continued

- from 2003 on annual meetings of these 8 perpetrator programmes
- 2005 first meeting of all those perpetrator programmes working in intervention projects (working group: identify key points for the development of standards)



2005 to 2010:

- 2006 meeting: agreement on the development of standards and founding an umbrella organisation
- 2007 meeting: founding of BAG TäHG and adoption of standards (revised by women's aid organisations)
- 2008 first conference together with women's aid organisations



recent development:

- implementation of standards
- development of best-practice
- organisation of training on working with perpetrators



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Standards for working with perpetrators of Domestic Violence



main objective:

- protecting victims from further violence!



basic assumptions:

- DV understood as violence from men against their (ex-)partners
- violent behaviour is purposive and usually aims to reestablish control and power over the (ex-)partner
- DV is integrated in historical and social circumstances



continued:

- violence includes every form of purposive harm against the mental and physical integrity of another person
- perpetrators are 100% responsible for their behaviour (learned and purposive, p. not insane, not the victim's fault)



framework:

- work with perpetrators is part of an inter-agency cooperation
- therefore cooperation with women`s aid organisations, police, the judiciary, child-protection service



target group:

- perpetrators of DV who voluntarily participate – as well as
- perpetrators who have an obligation to participate



preconditions:

- perpetrator shows (minimal) insight in the wrongness of his behaviour
- perpetrator is willing to change aggressive behaviour and to stop violence
- perpetrator accepts, that the perpetrator programme contacts and informs his (ex-) partner



continued:

- perpetrator accepts, that the perpetrator programme informs the institution which made an obligation
- perpetrator is willing and able to regularly attend to the group sessions
- perpetrator shows his acceptance with the mentioned points by signing a contract



otherwise:

- perpetrator is excluded from the perpetrator programme and (ex-)partner as well as the institution which has obliged him will be informed



procedure:

- initial interview
- group sessions (at least 6 months)
- contact with (ex-)partner
- follow-up



key contents:

- forms of violence
- detailed description of his violent behaviour
- consequences for partner, children, himself
- emergency-plan
- non-violent options in conflict situations
- communication patterns



continued:

- gender role expectations
- parental responsibility



organisational framework:

- groups with 5 to 10 participants
- two facilitators (preferably mixed gender)
- trained staff
- supervision
- documentation and evaluation



plans for the future:

- accreditation of perpetrator programmes
- risk-assessment
- scientific evaluation (recidivism?)



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Muchas gracias
por su atención