

The Role of Theory in Promoting Social Work Values and its Potential Effect on Outcomes in Work with Domestically Violent Men

Maurice Mahon, John Devaney and Anne Lazenbatt*

Summary: This paper is concerned with the ethical conflicts that arise for social work professionals working with men who use violence to control women and children with whom they have or have had intimate relationships. It suggests that professionals who are knowledgeable about theoretical frameworks concerning men's 'readiness to change' including 'resistance' and 'motivation' will be more effective at managing ethical dilemmas and practising social work in accordance with evidence-based practice. The paper examines how an adherence to only one theoretical understanding of domestic violence produces poor outcomes in the treatment of domestically violent men and can inadvertently increase the risk of further violence for the victims of domestic violence.

Keywords: Domestic violence, Duluth, ethics, conflict, theory, values, readiness to change, outcomes.