

Integrated interagency domestic violence work: A study of entangled practice

AUTHOR: Sarah Stewart

OVERVIEW: There has been substantial research that supports the need for and documents the challenges of interagency collaboration in the context of responses to domestic and family violence (Breckenridge, Rees, valentine, & Murray, 2015). The focus in much of this existing literature is on the factors deemed critical for success and the barriers to achieving this. Frequently cited enabling factors are a shared vision and common philosophical framework (Laing, Humphreys, & Cavenagh, 2013). Impediments to working together effectively are often framed as a lack of 'institutional empathy' (Banks, Dutch, & Wang, 2008), resulting from practitioners inhabiting different professional 'planets' (Hester, 2011).

This research takes a different approach. Where previous studies have focussed on *factors*, this study examines the range of *actors* that are involved in interagency domestic violence work, paying attention not only to the practitioners doing domestic violence work, but also to the objects and artefacts that matter in their work together. This attention to both the social and the material aspects of practice stems from what are called practice-based (Gherardi, 2012) and sociomaterial (Fenwick, 2012) research approaches. Based on close observations, this study provides a detailed account of how interagency work gets done, including a key role for technology, as well as protocols, procedures and other 'tools' that are entangled in daily work. The notion of 'entanglement' takes the relationship between humans and material things further, drawing on insights from new material feminist thinking (Coole & Frost, 2010).

AIMS: This study aims to unravel the intricacies of how integrated interagency domestic violence work gets done, in order to make sense of the often messy entanglements of practices, values, pressures and priorities that are known to characterise this work. This research rises to the challenges posed by this complexity through its innovative theoretical approach.

OUTCOMES: The key outcome of this research is a new theorisation of integrated interagency domestic violence work. The model proposes that this way of working together comprises two distinctive (but overlapping) modes of working. One, called 'multiple practices', involves multiple practitioners from different agencies working together, with separate foci for action. The other, called 'practice multiple', is a novel contribution to knowledge in the area of interagency work. 'Practice multiple' involves multiple practitioners working together with a singular focus for practice. This is where victim-centredness is most evident.

This model is significant and unique in several ways. First, rather than describing idealised notions of collaboration, it emerges from a bottom-up process, based on detailed observation of practice as it occurs 'on the ground'. Second, it attends to the fluidity and complexity of this work, avoiding static or simplistic descriptions, acknowledging that implementation unfolds in an imperfect world, riddled with tensions and ambivalences. 'Multiple practices' and 'practice multiple' co-exist as part of the fabric of 'wraparound' service provision and this points to important implications for interprofessional learning, collaborative interagency practice and joined-up policy responses to domestic and family violence.

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