Original Research

A Qualitative Meta-Synthesis of Interpersonal Violence Prevention Programs Focused on Males

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Abstract

Exceptionally high levels of interpersonal violence have triggered a call by many experts for the need to determine effective ways to address the onset and effects of exposure to interpersonal violence. The specific aim of this study was to identify and draw on existing promising practices to make a more informed decision on strategies to develop a contextually relevant intervention that focused on the promotion of positive forms of masculinity to create safety and peace. This study used a qualitative meta-synthesis (QMS) technique to integrate and interpret findings from various intervention studies that focused on males and/or gender. An in-depth literature search yielded a total of 827 papers that met the search criteria. After removal of duplicates, abstract review, and review of the full texts, the subsequent sample for this meta-synthesis included 12 intervention programs and 23 studies. This QMS revealed the value of a comprehensive approach, using multiple strategies, employing participatory and interactive

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methods, and promoting social mobilization to address interpersonal violence. The promotion of positive forms of masculinity as an interpersonal violence prevention strategy is a much-needed, relatively untapped approach to generating safety and peace for both males and females.

Keywords
community violence, cultural contexts, violence exposure, violent offenders

Introduction

The reduction of interpersonal violence was identified by the United Nations (UN; 2015), in their 17 sustainable development goals, as a key area for promoting peaceful and inclusive societies. Interpersonal violence refers to violence that occurs between individuals, and includes family and intimate partner violence, as well as violence between acquaintances and strangers (Krug, Dahlberg, Mercy, Zwi, & Lozano, 2002; Mikton et al., 2017). The latter category includes violence that takes place between individuals who are unrelated and includes youth violence, rape or sexual assault, random incidents of violence, and violence in institutional spaces (Sethi, Marais, Seedat, Nurse, & Butchart, 2004).

Although the evidence base on how to prevent violence has been expanding rapidly, many experts have underscored the need to determine effective ways to address the onset and effects of exposure to interpersonal violence (e.g., Seedat, Van Niekerk, Jewkes, Suffla, & Ratele, 2009; Songer et al., 2009). This study uses a qualitative meta-synthesis (QMS) technique to integrate and interpret findings from various qualitative studies, which focus on masculinities, males, and/or gender to make recommendations for developing contextually relevant interventions that focus on the prevention of interpersonal violence.

The victimization and perpetration of interpersonal violence by men have been singled out as a universal public health concern (Ratele, Suffla, Lazarus, & Van Niekerk, 2010; World Health Organization [WHO], 2014). Global evidence reveals that males are more likely to be killed or injured because of violence than females (Krug et al., 2002; Norman, Matzopolous, Groenewald, & Bradshaw, 2007). The World Report on Violence and Health publicized that males accounted for 77% of all homicides across the globe (Krug et al., 2002). This amounts to more than thrice the rate of homicide for females. The highest rates of homicide are found among males aged 15 to 29 years (19.4 per 100,000; Krug et al., 2002). Recent figures indicate that interpersonal violence accounts for 43% of all adolescent male mortalities in lower-middle-income countries (LMICs) in the WHO Americas Region (WHO, 2017). A study in Italy reported

a male-to-female ratio of 11:1 for victims of interpersonal violence (Roccia, Savoini, Ramieri, & Zavattero, 2016). Notwithstanding that women and girls are the predominant victims of specific categories of interpersonal violence such as rape (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2012), these facts and figures demonstrate that young males are more at risk of being victims of interpersonal violence.

Even though demographic data about perpetrators are limited (Rosenberg et al., 2006), research shows that males are the predominant perpetrators of violence (Atkinson et al., 2009). Studies conducted in the Netherlands and Belgium (Vertommen et al., 2016), Norway and England (Brackenridge & Fasting, 2005), and Colombia (Duque, Klevens, & Ramirez, 2003) reported that most perpetrators of interpersonal violence are male. A similar trend has also been reported in South Africa, which has led to the claim that a violent type of masculinity has become widespread (Ward, 2007).

Masculinities, a set of beliefs and expectations about what men should and should not do in relation to the construction of manhood, have been identified as a major area of risk (Lazarus, Tonsing, Ratele, & Van Niekerk, 2011). Risk factors for interpersonal violence relating specifically to males include challenges relating to masculine identity such as power and control needs, loss of traditional masculine role, inability to fulfill male role expectations as well as the link between masculine identity and guns (Krug et al., 2002; Lazarus et al., 2011; Sethi et al., 2004; C. L. Ward, 2007). These risks have been specifically underscored within contexts of historical colonization (Brankovic, 2012; Seedat et al., 2009). For example, Jefthas and Artz (2007) highlight that in social settings in South Africa where men are expected to be socially powerful, physically strong, and financial providers, the high levels of unemployment, poverty, and powerlessness experienced by males under the apartheid and postapartheid regimes have emasculated men, resulting in them reasserting their masculinity through violence. These authors argue that violence represents a means for young males to reclaim and affirm their manhood in such contexts within which masculinity is widely compromised.

The promotion of positive forms of masculinity as an interpersonal violence prevention initiative has been advocated by several scholars (e.g., Barker & Ricardo, 2005; Jewkes, Sikweyiya, Morrell, & Dunkle, 2011; Kiselica & Englar-Carlson, 2010). Positive forms of masculinity denote male ways of caring, perseverance, loyalty, healthy self-reliance, dedication, positive fatherhood, and the worker–provider tradition of men (Kiselica, Englar-Carlson, Horne, & Fisher, 2008; Taliep, 2016). Positive forms of masculinity can, therefore, be viewed as constructive and peaceful ways of being, relating, and existing that are characterized by nonviolence, gender equity, care, emotional responsiveness, and resilience. Promoting constructive, nonviolent, and

egalitarian ideas of masculinity remains a relatively untapped resource that represents a nascent protective factor and a key focus for interpersonal violence prevention (Kiselica & Englar-Carlson, 2010). By drawing attention to positive forms of masculinity, males can shift their focus to aspects of themselves that are nurturing and caring, and thereby contribute to community safety and peace.

The aim of this study was to conduct a meta-synthesis of qualitative studies, which focus on the prevention of interpersonal violence by promoting positive forms of masculinity to create safety and peace. Reviewing existing programs is necessary to determine the most effective responses to violence, identify gaps, identify the most suitable strategies, and implement and evaluate well-designed preventive interventions (Fields & McNamara, 2003; Krug et al., 2002). The objective is to identify and draw on existing promising practices to make recommendations for selecting strategies that could be employed to develop contextually relevant interventions that focus on the promotion of positive forms of masculinity to create safety and peace. The next section of the article provides an outline of the methodology, followed by the findings and the discussion, and concludes with final thoughts, limitations, and recommendations.

Method

This systematic documentation comprises a QMS of existing interpersonal violence programs that focus on the promotion of positive forms of masculinity. The methods outlined below provide an overview of QMS, the scope of the review and selection criteria, the procedure followed to select studies, and the demographic characteristics of studies reviewed in the meta-synthesis.

QMS

Current literature refers to QMS as both a research method and as the product of qualitative synthesis studies or findings (Sandelowski & Barroso, 2007). There is a range of different methods and procedures for synthesizing qualitative data (Barnett-Page & Thomas, 2009; Sandelowski & Barroso, 2007). This study used an ecological triangulation or ecological sentence synthesis approach as proposed by Banning (2003) who clarifies that an ecological triangulation approach focuses on studying a phenomenon from multiple vantage points. This approach builds on the concept of triangulation (combining multiple methods, theories, observers, or data sources) within an ecological perspective. The logic of this method is to build an evidence base that entails the synthesis of theory, method, and findings to ascertain which interventions

work to bring about which kind of outcomes with which populations in which settings or under which conditions, to optimize decision making. This meta-synthesis pays attention to intervention programs, theory, method, persons, environments/settings, outcomes, and the mutually interdependent relationships among these variables.

According to the Centre for Reviews and Dissemination (2008), there are no standardized techniques for synthesizing qualitative studies, and underlying theoretical assumptions will vary. Notwithstanding the contingent nature of evidence derived from meta-synthesis and the current absence of agreement around some of the method's aspects, it is an invaluable technique for analyzing existing qualitative findings to gain a deeper understanding of promising practices in interpersonal violence prevention (Walsh & Downe, 2005). According to the Campbell Collaboration (Saini & Shlonsky, 2008), qualitative studies in the relevant field of interest can support the development of an intervention that is more robust by aiding researchers in defining an intervention more precisely.

Erwin, Brotherson, and Summers (2011) provide six steps for a rigorous synthesis of existing qualitative studies, which were pursued in this review. These include (a) formulating a clear research problem and question, (b) conducting a comprehensive search of the literature, (c) conducting a careful assessment of research studies for potential inclusion, (d) selecting and conducting a meta-synthesis method to integrate and evaluate qualitative research findings, (e) presenting the synthesis of findings across studies, and (f) reflecting on the process.

Scope of Review and Selection Criteria

The inclusion criteria for selecting studies for this QMS analysis were studies that (a) applied a "gender lens" (i.e., studies that deliberately focused on gender and violence within the larger social context), with a particular focus on the promotion of positive forms of masculinity; (b) addressed interpersonal violence, including sexual violence, gender-based violence, youth violence, and acquaintance or stranger violence involving males; (c) used qualitative methodologies to assess the effectiveness of the interventions; and (d) were published in journals, theses, dissertations, or reports published in English between 2000 and 2016. The exclusion criteria were (a) studies that had a specific focus on child abuse, elder abuse, or institutional violence and (b) quantitative analyses of intervention studies. The analysis of relevant sources brought to light an array of responses to the different forms of interpersonal violence that vary in terms of the type of violence, the setting, and the target group.

It could be argued that only programs proven to be effective through rigorous program evaluation should be documented; however, Sethi and colleagues (2004) highlight some compelling reasons for why unevaluated programs should also be considered. Evaluating the effectiveness of programs is a resource-intensive procedure that may not always be possible in low- and middle-income country settings. In instances where interventions have not been evaluated, effectiveness may still be inferred, as these programs are based on initiatives that have evidence of effectiveness in a variety of settings.

Procedure

An in-depth literature search was conducted by the first author and a research librarian using SpringerLink, PsycINFO, SA ePublications, MedLine, PubMed, Google Scholar, Scopus, ScienceDirect, Social Science Citation Index, Applied Social Sciences Index & Abstracts as well as two specific journals: *Journal of Men, Masculinities and Spirituality* and the *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*. To access gray literature, a search through UnisaETD via the Unisa Institutional Repository, ProQuest Dissertations & Theses, and Nexus Database was also conducted. Articles were also acquired by examining the reference list of relevant papers.

The following search terms, including variations and combinations of these terms, were used to identify potential studies: violence, interpersonal violence, assault, youth, males, boys, men, masculinity/ies, gender, positive masculinity, generative masculinity, fatherhood, mentoring, values, peace, safety, health, violence prevention, intervention, program, and process and outcomes evaluation. Titles and abstracts were reviewed for relevance to the study selection criteria, and articles were retrieved when they appeared relevant. Papers were then reviewed for meeting eligibility criteria. Reference lists of identified articles were then hand-searched to identify additional articles as well as to gain more comprehensive information on particular studies. Further articles were then retrieved and judged for inclusion.

Sample

A total of 827 papers met the search criteria, 634 titles were yielded after removal of duplicates, 365 abstracts were reviewed for inclusion, and of these, 47 full texts were retrieved for complete evaluation review and 18 further publications were yielded from their reference lists. After review of the full texts, the subsequent sample for this meta-synthesis included 12 intervention programs and 23 studies. With qualitative methodology, small samples are

typically used while ensuring variety to gain a deeper insight about the studied phenomenon (Stake, 2005). Lincoln and Guba (1985) aver that it is quite common to select a sample size of 12 or less for qualitative studies and, "if properly selected, will exhaust most available information" (p. 235).

Analysis

QMS requires that cumulative, multifaceted evidence be synthesized, including the theoretical framework, the methods used, participants, context, and study findings. The latter refers to "findings that provide insights into what interventions work to produce what outcomes with what persons in what settings or environments" (Banning, 2003, p. 1). The findings from studies served as the raw data for the synthesis. To integrate and evaluate findings from the different studies, we analyzed key concepts, phrases, themes, or interpretations from the findings reported in the selected studies (Erwin et al., 2011). This comprised a thorough reading and rereading of the selected articles to, first, attain an overall sense of the data and, second, to uncover key concepts. Next, we looked across the different articles for common and recurring concepts and relationships, and made preliminary assumptions about the relationships and concepts. Finally, we synthesized the findings and expressed the synthesis in written words.

Findings

The aim of this study was to conduct a QMS to integrate and interpret findings from various intervention studies that focused on males and/or gender to guide the development of contextually relevant interventions that focus on the promotion of positive forms of masculinity to create safety and peace. To build an evidence base of effectiveness, the first step was to construct a table (see Table 1) of the demographic and methodological characteristics of the studies included in the QMS.

Seven key thematic categories relating to what works in interventions aimed at promoting positive forms of masculinity emerged in this meta-synthesis: a positive approach, using participatory and/or interactive methods, obtaining community and stakeholder support for successful implementation, combining multiple intervention strategies, cultural relevance, an intentional focus on masculinity and/or men, and creating awareness and shifting views and behavior. Each theme (see Table 2) is made up of a series of phrases that augment and clarify the themes, with the "*n*" referring to the number of studies reflecting a particular theme, and the numbers (see second row in Table 2) pertaining to the study identified in Table 1.

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of Studies Reviewed in the Meta-Synthesis.

Study	Program	References	Country	Participants	Setting	Theory	Data Collection
1	Soul City	Singhal, Usdin, Scheepers, Goldstein, and Japhet (2002); Usdin, Scheepers, Goldstein, and Japhet (2005)	South Africa	n = 29 n = 32 (men and women; 16-65 years)	Urban and rural communities	Social Change and Ecological Approach	Focus Group Discussions (FGDs); Interviews
2	One Man Can	Colvin and Peacock (2009); Dworkin, Colvin, Hatcher, and Peacock (2012); Dworkin, Hatcher, Colvin, and Peacock (2013)	South Africa	n = 60 (men of all ages)	Urban and rural communities	Spectrum of Change	Interviews; FGDs
3	Responsible Fatherhood Demonstration Program	Anderson and Kohler (n.d.); Anderson, Kohler, and Letiecq (2002)	Maryland, USA	n = 20 (men; 17-48 years)	Low-income community	Experiential Learning	FGDs
4	Healthy Men in Healthy Families	Aronson, Whitehead, and Baber (2003)	Baltimore, USA	n = 12 (men; 19-44 years)	Low-income urban community	Social Ecology Model	In-depth life histories
5	MenCare	Olivier, Slaven, Sodo, and Vusizi (2016); MenCare (2016)	South Africa	n = 54 (53 males; 1 female); n = 35 (gender not specified)	Low-income urban community	Ecological Model	FGDs; telephone interviews
6	Men as Partners	Engender Health (2014); Peacock and Levack (2004)	South Africa Tanzania	n = 139 (men; 18-74 years) n = 12 (men and women)	Low-income community	Ecological Model and Community Mobilization	Interviews
7	Couples Health CoOp	Wechsberg et al. (2015)	South Africa	n = 12 (six couples; 18-35 years)	Low-income community	Feminist and Empowerment Theories	FGDs and expert review
8	Mentors in Violence Prevention	Cissner (2009); K. Ward (2000, 2001); Williams and Neville (2016)	USA Scotland	n = 24 (males and females; 20-34 and 6-18 years); n = 33 (15-18 years); and n = 58 (11-14 years)	School and college	Social Change	Observations, pre–post interviews; key informant interviews; FGDs

(continued)

Table 1. (continued)

Study	Program	References	Country	Participants	Setting	Theory	Data Collection
9	Big Brothers/Big Sisters	Dolan et al. (2011); Spencer (2007)	USA Ireland	$n = 12$ (25-48 years), $n = 12$ (12-16 years) $n = 9$ (18-55 years), $n = 9$ (12-16 years)	Urban community	Social Control	Individual and pair interviews; longitudinal case study
10	Stepping Stones	Gibbs, Jewkes, Sikweyiya and Willan (2015); Jewkes, Wood, and Duvvury (2010)	South Africa	$n = 10$ males $n = 11$ females (men and women; 15-21 years)	Community-based	Behavior Change; Participatory; Experiential Learning; Critical	In-depth interviews
11	USIKO Youth Development Project	Fabrik (2007)	South Africa	$n = 13$ (male mentors; 27-56 years) $n = 21$ (at-risk youth; 16-19 years)	School; Peri-urban community; criminal justice system	Systems Theory	Interviews; FGDs; evaluation workshops
12	Hearts of Men: Fatherhood Mentorship Program	Fine and Van Niekerk (2015)	South Africa	Adult men (25 years and older), school boys, and first-time fathers (14-19 years)	Peri-urban community-based	Experiential Learning; Circle of Courage Model	Limited: Workshop evaluations; personal communication

Table 2. Thematic Analysis Across Qualitative Articles.

Theme	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	n
Positive approach													
Promoting constructive views of masculinity	+	+	+	+	+	+		+	+	+		+	10
Using positive messages	+	+	+	+	+	+		+	+		+		9
Providing safe and supportive spaces for men and/or boys to engage, share, and be heard		+	+	+	+	+		+	+		+	+	9
Reenvisioning roles and responsibilities	+	+	+	+	+	+	+		+	+		+	9
Adopting a gender transformative approach	+	+		+	+	+	+	+			+	+	9
Facilitating gender reflections: Engaging with issues of norms, power, manhood, and/or fatherhood	+	+	+	+	+	+		+		+		+	9
Providing care and support to boys and/or men (emotional support, counseling, support groups)								+	+		+	+	7
Dislodging masculine ideals	+	+	+			+	+			+			6
Promoting human rights	+	+				+	+		+	+			6
Including both men and women in programs	+					+		+	+	+		+	6
Promoting positive values (respect, compassion)	+	+					+	+					5
Caring and positive engagement as fathers	+		+	+	+	+			+				5
Addressing men's fears of emasculation	+	+		+				+					3
Participatory/interactive methods													
Role modeling positive norms, values, attitudes, and behavior	+				+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	10
Using experiential learning methods		+	+		+	+		+	+	+		+	6
Role-playing						+	+		+	+		+	5
Mentoring								+	+		+	+	4
Bystander approach								+					1
Community and stakeholder support for successful implementation													
Fostering partnerships, coalitions, and networks	+	+			+			+	+	+	+	+	8
Engaging local stakeholders	+	+					+						3

(continued)

Table 2. (continued)

Theme	Study												n
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
Combining multiple intervention strategies													
Educational workshops/training	+	+	+	+		+	+	+		+	+	+	10
Skills development (communication, problem solving, conflict management, relationship building, leadership)		+	+	+			+	+		+	+	+	8
Community events, campaigns	+	+			+	+				+	+		6
Advocacy and social mobilization	+	+			+	+							4
Multimedia: TV drama series, radio, booklets, media, billboards	+				+	+				+			4
Counseling					+						+	+	3
Rites of passage/wilderness				+	+								2
Cultural relevance													
Cultural significance taken into account	+	+		+	+	+	+	+		+	+	+	10
Intentional focus on masculinity and/or men													
Contributing to changing discourse and prioritization of interpersonal violence	+	+			+		+	+		+	+		8
Exploring link between negative forms of masculinity and violence	+	+					+	+		+			5
Creating awareness and shifting views and behavior													
Increasing knowledge and creating awareness	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	12
Better interpersonal relationships	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	12
Shifts in hegemonic ideals of manhood		+	+			+						+	4
Better conflict resolution	+	+		+		+		+	+	+	+	+	8

Theme 1: A Positive Approach

Programs reflecting a negative approach that target males as perpetrators were regarded to be unhelpful as they put male participants on the defensive. Male participants "have shown their displeasure at the viewpoint that men are the castigators of abuse and violence" (Study 2; Dworkin, Hatcher, Colvin, & Peacock, 2013, p. 8). This is evident in the following excerpt: "Why do we have to talk about just male violence against women? Why pick on the guys?" (Study 8; K. Ward, 2000, p. 37). A participant emphasized, "How we construct these masculinities is an issue" and called for a positive approach stating, "We need to construct them [i.e., masculinities] in such a way that no-one gets hurt, no one gets oppressed" (Study 6; Peacock & Levack, 2004, p. 176). A positive approach helps to steer clear from placing blame on and alienating boys and men. Fear of emasculation often propels men toward violence while a positive approach to gendered notions of roles, responsibilities, and women's rights helps introduce new insight while allaying men's fears of emasculation. One participant reflected on this, stating, "I had heard about women's rights but did not fully understand what they meant . . . I now know that household chores are not only for women but the man should also help" (Study 2; Dworkin et al., 2013, p. 10).

A positive approach enables a "reframing of . . . roles and responsibilities [by] questioning gendered roles" and responsibilities within the frame of men's own experience, including discussions around power relations in economic and sexual relation spheres (Study 2; Dworkin et al., 2013, p. 10). One participant noted that he "began to challenge the myth that portrays men only as hunter-gatherers, fighters and defenders. This myth kills the notion of men as lovers, friends, fathers, uncles . . ." (Study 12; Fine & Van Niekerk, 2015, p. 43). This approach encourages more caring relationships and positive engagement as fathers: "the programme taught me to listen to my kids . . . [and] play with them . . ." (Study 3; Anderson, Kohler, & Letiecq, 2002, p. 151).

Men in the reviewed studies regarded the provision of a supportive and safe space to be heard as an important component of a positive approach: "You come in here and say something that's really bothering you . . . but if you go somewhere else, they might laugh at you" (Study 4; Aronson, Whitehead, & Baber, 2003, p. 5); "The best thing really is being heard. Being able to voice my opinion about how I feel about certain things and knowing someone is listening and understanding" (Study 3; Anderson et al., 2002, p. 150).

Although the mentoring programs reviewed did not have an explicit focus on dislodging negative notions of masculinity or making explicit the

connection between emotional availability and positive forms of masculinity, some qualitative reflections indicate that this is a secondary outcome of mentoring. These relationships provided "opportunities for adult men to serve as positive role models" and "provided safe places for emotional vulnerability and support" (Study 9; Spencer, 2007, p. 194) to mentees. At the same time, for some mentors who normally "do not share feelings" (Study 9; Spencer, 2007, p. 189), it brought to the fore their own uncertainties linked to negative forms of masculinity and the emotional nature of the mentor–mentee relationship. An important point that emerged regarding the emotional availability of mentors to young boys as a positive form of masculinity came from a participant who "questioned whether it was worse for a boy to simply not have an adult male role model or to have one that modelled emotional distance in relationships, which he considered destructive" (Study 9; Spencer, 2007, p. 190).

Theme 2: Using Participatory and/or Interactive Methods

All except two of the studies reported the use of interactive participatory methods, including the use of experiential learning methods; role modeling positive norms, values, attitudes, and behavior; role-playing; and mentoring. The use of experiential learning approaches enabled participants to be directly involved by reflecting on their own experiences.

When asked to identify a positive role model in his life, a participant noted, "I thought of my father, I thought of my uncle, I thought of the men around me, and I was blown away because I could not come up with a man as a positive role model" (Study 6; Peacock & Levack, 2004, p. 178). The same participant reflected that he felt challenged and that it bothered him that he "might be associated with the bad image that men have . . . as the perpetrators of violence" and resolved: "I want to make a difference, I want to play a positive role in other young boys [lives]" (Study 6; Peacock & Levack, 2004, p. 178). Visual methodologies were regarded as particularly powerful. One participant particularly related his own experiences to the visual portrayal:

> . . . we got to hear about it [i.e., interpersonal violence] from other actors . . . [we saw] . . . this man and this woman were being advised, like being told that when you have a problem you should sit down and talk about it. And from then on we decided to do that. (Study 1; Usdin, Scheepers, Goldstein, & Japhet, 2005, p. 2441)

The following quote highlights the value of role modeling positive norms and values, which led to better interpersonal relationships for participants:

"[Study] taught participants 'respect' [hlonipha] and 'discipline' in their relationships" (Study 10; Jewkes, Wood, & Duvvury, 2010, p. 1077). Reflecting on role modeling used in a mentoring program, one participant noted, "He is a really good role model, an important person in my life besides my dad" (Study 9; Spencer, 2007, p. 190). Another study implemented a "safe bystander intervention," which led to heightened awareness regarding participants' responsibility as bystanders (Study 8; Williams & Neville, 2016, p. 24).

Mentoring was often combined with a retreat or a wilderness experience which reportedly is invaluable to team building, as demonstrated in the following quote: "Bringing mentors together (e.g., on a retreat) was a positive experience for team-building to develop the type of skills (i.e., collaborative working relationships) necessary for the successful delivery of [mentoring] sessions" (Study 8; Williams & Neville, 2016, p. 9). Mentoring was noted as being a strategy that contributes to young people's interpersonal relationships and emotional well-being as "many mentored young people were described as happier, calmer or more confident" (Study 9; Dolan et al., 2011, p.9).

Theme 3: Obtaining Community and Stakeholder Support for Successful Implementation

Seven of the included studies documented some form of partnership, networking, or coalition building that contributed to enhanced community cooperation, community and stakeholder support, and intervention implementation. By fostering a partnership with significant role players, one study reported that "the partnership contributed to the changing discourse on, and concomitant prioritisation of domestic violence" and "succeeded in increasing public debate in the media and giving more prominence to domestic violence" (Study 1; Usdin et al., 2005, p. 2438). One study reported that they "collaborated [*sic*] closely with . . . non-governmental organisations and grassroots community-based organisations to strengthen their ability to implement" the intervention program (Study 6; Peacock & Levack, 2004, p. 176). Another study reported mentoring programs were "effective in improving networks of informal support for children through the introduction of a supportive non-familial adult" (Study 9; Dolan et al., 2011, p. 11).

Some partnerships were formalized by setting up a collective structure such as a Community Collaborative Board, which were reported to enhance participation and collaboration. Such structures "helped inform and shape how [interventionists] adapt and implement interventions"; "advised researchers about issues in these communities, and helped build links to referral services" (Study 7; Wechsberg et al., 2015, p. 4). In Study 8, researchers "saw the

value of working with people from outside the university as a strength," which was achieved by collaborating with key stakeholders and establishing partnerships. Collaboration was felt to "foster [*sic*] a sense of community-cooperation and togetherness in problem solving, facilitated a sense of collective empowerment to effect change, . . . [promoted] collective action . . . [and] reinforced social networks" (Study 1; Usdin et al., 2005, p. 2439).

Theme 4: Combining Multiple Intervention Strategies

Even though the use of multiple strategies is a well-known criterion for successful violence prevention work, this theme emerged as a key finding from the analysis. The use of multiple strategies was regarded as advantageous as it created a stronger momentum in uptake of the intervention, as indicated by the following quote: "Because they [the program] were so powerful [by using] media, the radio, television, work books . . . and I found the momentum of [the project] very, very crucial to the process" (Study 1; Usdin et al., 2005, p. 2438).

Studies that made use of workshops discussed a variety of topics, including relationship building, gender roles and expectations, communication, and gender-based and intimate partner violence (e.g., Study 2, Dworkin et al., 2013; Study 7, Wechsberg et al., 2015; Study 8, K. Ward, 2000). Four of the studies made use of advocacy by facilitating collective action through social mobilization (Study 1; Study 2; Study 5; Study 6). For example, one study reported employing the following strategies:

> mobilising men to take action in their own communities, working with media to promote changes in social norms, collaborating closely with non-governmental organisations and grassroots community-based organisations to strengthen their ability to implement [the] programme, and advocating for increased governmental commitment to promoting positive male involvement. (Study 6; Peacock & Levack, 2004, pp. 175-176)

A different study, which used multiple strategies, reported that the use of advocacy campaigns "facilitated collective action . . ." (Study 1; Usdin et al., 2005, p. 2439).

Theme 5: Cultural Relevance

A number of studies ensured local relevance of the intervention programs and engaged with existing harmful cultural practices. Participants highlighted the importance of considering local conventions for intervention purposes stating that it is important to "know the mores or unspoken rules of a given street or

neighbourhood" (Study 3; Anderson & Kohler, n.d., p. 11). In one study, "participants reported that individuals may not consider participating due to the program [*sic*] not being culturally adapted" (Study 5; MenCare, 2016, p. 31). A participant in a different study emphasized that "the Western model of program X [*sic*] must be changed" to fit the local context (Study 11; Fabrik, 2007, p. 62).

Based on participant feedback, one study specifically integrated the worldviews of couples "and the expertise of local stakeholders to . . . enhance intervention fit to the cultural context" and ensuring "that important local traditions are respected" (Study 7; Wechsberg et al., 2015, p. 7). Others used prime-time television and other forms of media to engage and address various cultural issues, and challenge norms and practices that are harmful to both men and women (Study 1; Usdin et al., 2005). It is important to take into account "conventional constructions of masculinity that prescribe men's role and practices within narrow cultural confines" such as both men and women being socialized to believe that "women were supposed to be subservient to men . . ." (Study 2; Dworkin et al., 2013, p. 6). Thus, "questioning gendered roles in the context of men's own" lived "experiences and social norms" was regarded as important "to illustrate positive and negative aspects of gendered norms and roles" (Study 2; Dworkin et al., 2013, p. 6).

Theme 6: Intentional Focus on Masculinity and/or Men

To create awareness among men (and women) of the oppressive nature of negative constructions of masculinity, studies intentionally focused on unpacking issues of power, control, gender, manhood, and fatherhood. A participant in Study 2 highlighted various forms of "power that people, [specifically men] have within the communities, that included sexual power carried by men over women . . . economic power, . . . decision [making]" and noted "at the conclusion of the workshop . . . that it is not our sexual and economic power we carry that makes us men" (Dworkin et al., 2013, p. 10). However, participants also indicated that a lack of understanding rights "is causing a lot of domestic violence . . . [due to] misinterpretation [*sic*]" (Study 2; Dworkin, Colvin, Hatcher, & Peacock, 2012, p. 112). A participant in this same study attested that "men in rural areas view fighting as a measure of manhood and competition" (Study 2; Dworkin et al., 2013, p. 11). In another study, a participant explained that their limited knowledge on violence prevention during recruitment hampered participation in the program, stating, "I didn't know what they meant by violence prevention. I don't think I understood it that well, when it was first explained" (Study 8; Cissner, 2009, p. 28). Participants suggested that to overcome barriers to participation, it is important to "do

more outreach to men out on the street" and "hold groups for guys similar in age and then share information between the age groups" (Study 3; Anderson & Kohler, n.d., pp. 10-11). Others noted that

> there is a lot of emotional support that is needed, through counselling for example. But also in the form of support groups of men that are committed to change, of men who want to do things differently, where they can go and draw their strength. (Study 6; Peacock & Levack, 2004, p. 173)

Theme 7: Creating Awareness and Shifting Views and Behavior

Some participants emphasized that they were unaware, prior to participation, of the links between gender, masculinity, and interpersonal violence. An urban male participant in one study noted,

> We did not know that much about abuse in the community. I mean people are not talking about it. But what [the program] has done is to make us see that abuse is there . . . Now we know what to do when a man is abusing his wife, so that has helped reduce woman abuse. (Study 1; Usdin et al., 2005, p. 2441)

Participation in the program thus "raised knowledge and awareness . . . around issues related to gender equality" (Study 1; Usdin et al., 2005, p. 2442), which led to changes in violent behavior. After having participated in Study 1, and becoming aware of interpersonal violence, a male participant indicated, "I have realised that I am an abuser . . . I have tried to change" (Singhal, Usdin, Scheepers, Goldstein, & Japhet, 2002, p. 17). Another participant noted,

> I used to be one of those guys who were abusive. It was really difficult for me to come to terms with that . . . Later I could talk about it . . . about my experiences openly, then help other people talk about theirs. (Study 6; Peacock & Levack, 2004, p. 185)

This again highlights the importance of providing a safe space for men to talk. Raising awareness of interpersonal violence "changed the mindset of people . . ." and "inspired them to act against . . . abuse" (Study 1; Usdin et al., 2005, pp. 2438-2439). Participants noted that "you're more aware of what's happening around you" and "you try and intervene in some way" and explained that "it's not just going to be you trying to stop it, you're not going to be the only bystander, there's other people . . . a team" (Study 8; Williams & Neville, 2016, p. 17).

Participation in workshop-based activities prompted a shift in beliefs and performances linked to hegemonic masculinity. Regarding fatherhood, a participant stated, "I didn't know nothing about parenting . . . I came here . . . and

talked to the coordinators . . . I felt like I had some hope" (Study 3; Anderson et al., 2002, p. 150). The following quotes from Study 2 indicate a shift in hegemonic ideals of manhood: "I am a person who used to like fighting. Men in rural areas view fighting as a measure of manhood and competition . . . [The program] made me realise that there are other alternatives to fighting" (Dworkin et al., 2013, p. 11) and "I used to think that women must listen to everything their man say . . . now I ask [for] her input" (Dworkin et al., 2013, p. 9). Another participant indicated, "They showed me that violence is not the thing now. I was always getting into conflicts . . ." (Study 4; Aronson et al., 2003, pp. 4-5). One participant indicated that he was better able to deal with conflict because in the past, "he would just get angry and walk away," but after participation in the program, he could now "sit down and discuss the underlying issues" (Study 10; Jewkes et al., 2010, p. 1078).

Young men reported that it was normative for them to resort to violent bullying or fighting to defend their reputation. However, they became aware of the risk involved through participation and critical reflection exercises, and expressed a desire to be more responsible community members. One participant explained that when his friend encourages him to fight, he "will try to convince him that [they] don't need to respond by fighting" (Study 10; Jewkes et al., 2010, p. 1079).

Discussion

This study used a QMS technique, drawing on qualitative studies of existing programs to make recommendations for selecting strategies that could be employed to develop contextually relevant interventions that focus on the promotion of positive forms of masculinity to create safety and peace. The majority of the programs reviewed were South African ($n = 8$) and the remainder ($n = 4$) were U.S.-based programs. All the programs had some qualitative evaluation, but these were limited to the particular study. Two local programs in South Africa were not formally evaluated, but one was assessed as part of a master's thesis and the other had workshop evaluations. The latter two were included based on the suggestion by Sethi and colleagues (2004) that this is appropriate in low-income contexts.

This qualitative review provides a meaningful overview of strategies that have been utilized to promote positive forms of masculinity to foster safety and peace in community settings. However, the review also revealed a limited discussion of the theories underlying the interventions. Most of the studies were framed by the ecological or systems perspective, while some combined a systems perspective with theories on social change or social mobilization, or participatory learning and action and critical reflection (see Table 1).

The use of multiple strategies is a well-known practice for ensuring intervention efficacy, and this principle was confirmed in this study. The use of multiple strategies was believed to create a stronger momentum that was crucial for the uptake of interventions and for community mobilization. The most common approaches for preventing violence (especially among young people aged 10-29 years) focused on skills development, including communication skills, anger management, conflict resolution, and social skills to resolve conflict, and mentoring. Mentoring programs combined the provision of a supportive relationship with a retreat or a "wilderness" component, that uses a rites of passage approach, while having a specific psychoeducational focus such as alcohol and substance misuse education, HIV information, relationship building skills, or employment initiatives. These programs targeted either at-risk youth or first-time fathers. Fatherhood programs combined the exploration and development of values, skills development, reflections on gender stereotypes, and interpersonal relationship building. Social marketing, mass media, and education campaigns used visual methodologies to role-model positive norms, values, attitudes, and behavior and to engender social mobilization.

An important factor that emerged from this QMS is the need for programs to have an intentional engagement with the concepts of masculinities and manhood. Explicitly unpacking the oppressive nature of negative constructions of masculinities enabled an understanding of issues of rights, roles and responsibilities, power, gender, and control, and how such constructions may negatively affect both men and women and unintentionally be role-modeled to young boys. At the same time, programs that include a focus on rights and gender equity should address men's fears of disempowerment and emasculation, to prevent further violence (Dworkin et al., 2013).

The review brought to light various positive forms of masculinity practices that could be promoted to prevent interpersonal violence. The following characteristics or principles of a positive masculinity approach, which have been highlighted by others (Barker & Ricardo, 2005; Esplen, 2006; Lazarus et al., 2011), emerged from the studies synthesized: Steer clear of messages that denigrate men and boys to abusers and perpetrators; use positive messages when engaging with men and boys; provide safe and supportive spaces for men and/or boys to engage, to share feelings, and to be heard; provide care and support (including emotional support) to boys and men; provide opportunities to reflect on and deconstruct current masculine ideals, and myths surrounding manhood, as well as iniquitous gender norms (including issues of power, manhood, and/or fatherhood) and how these are linked to interpersonal violence; encourage men and boys to recognize and comprehend the oppressive outcomes of gender inequality on women and themselves

and at the same time address men's fears of emasculation; enhance men's sense of care, commitment, and constructive engagement as fathers through the promotion of generative fatherhood; empower and encourage men to be agents of positive change and role models exemplifying positive norms and values, especially to young boys; encourage men to work alongside women to change harmful beliefs and norms; use rituals when working with men and boys, such as providing the space for young men to undergo rites of passage as a transition to manhood to navigate their path to identity and formation of positive values such as respect and compassion; build young men's reflective capacities through mindfulness associated with self-regulation to mitigate conflict and promote peace and safety; and use a "bottom-up" approach, such as mobilizing boys and men to plan and coordinate grassroots antiviolence or peace promotion campaigns.

While a shortcoming of many of the reviewed programs was the lack of assessment of a direct reduction in the perpetration of interpersonal violence, the qualitative findings indicate an increase in protective factors which have been linked to the prevention of interpersonal violence. These include better conflict management and communication skills, improved interpersonal relationships, increased knowledge and awareness, positive attitudinal changes toward violence, more egalitarian relationships, improved involvement in child care, more egalitarian division of labor, and more interested in mobilizing to address gender inequality (Anderson & Kohler, n.d.; Aronson et al., 2003; Barker, Ricardo, & Nascimento, 2007; Colvin & Peacock, 2009), all of which mitigate the perpetration of violence. Mentoring programs, in particular, reported a heightened awareness of interpersonal violence, shifts in attitude toward interpersonal violence, and changes in behavior with regard to violence (e.g., Cissner, 2009; K. Ward, 2000, 2001). These findings show the value of a mentoring relationship for young boys, indicating how such relationships can provide a safe space in the context of emotional vulnerability, and promote positive forms of masculinity. These supportive mentoring relationships appear to have helped young boys to manage anger more constructively and provided them with role models that embody less inhibiting, orthodox forms of masculinities (Cissner, 2009; Spencer, 2007; K. Ward, 2000).

Limitations

Although we employed comprehensive search methods, the possibility exists that not all relevant qualitative studies pertaining to the focus of this QMS were identified. As indicated previously, qualitative studies generally select a small sample to render data analysis more manageable and also ensure exhaustion of available information. In this meta-synthesis, the selection of

studies had an intentional South African bias because of our aim to develop a contextually relevant intervention that addresses interpersonal violence.

Second, we recognize that one of the limitations of the QMS methodology is that this approach does not allow for generalization of findings (Agudelo-Suárez et al., 2012), although we believe important findings have emerged. Last, while the identification of themes is always a subjective process, the triangulation of data from and across different studies, where the recurrence of themes is noted, does enhance validity (Estabrooks, Field, & Morse, 1994) and contribute to a more nuanced understanding in developing contextually relevant violence prevention interventions for men.

Conclusion

As an important first step in the development of an intervention that focused on the promotion of nonviolent egalitarian or positive forms of masculinity to create safety and peace, this study embarked on a QMS to methodically document relevant information from existing intervention programs. This QMS presented the value of a comprehensive approach, using multiple strategies, employing participatory and interactive methods, and promoting social mobilization to address interpersonal violence. An intentional focus on the promotion of positive forms of masculinity as an interpersonal violence prevention strategy emerged as a key finding in this study. This is a much-needed, relatively untapped approach to generating safety and peace for both males and females. This article highlights the need for more theoretical and empirical studies that intentionally focus on the promotion of positive forms of masculinity to enhance our knowledge of violence and violence prevention. Various principles of a positive masculinity approach were identified, including approaching men with positive messages, using rituals and promoting positive universal values, promoting constructive views of masculinity that envision new ways of being masculine, providing opportunities and safe spaces for reflection and transforming iniquitous attitudes and behaviors relating to masculinity, and actively highlighting the role men can play, alongside women, to mitigate violence and promote safety and peace through strategies such as mentoring of young boys and girls in their own communities. The study also highlights the salience of community participatory and interactive processes to enhance stakeholder support for the successful implementation of planned interventions.

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