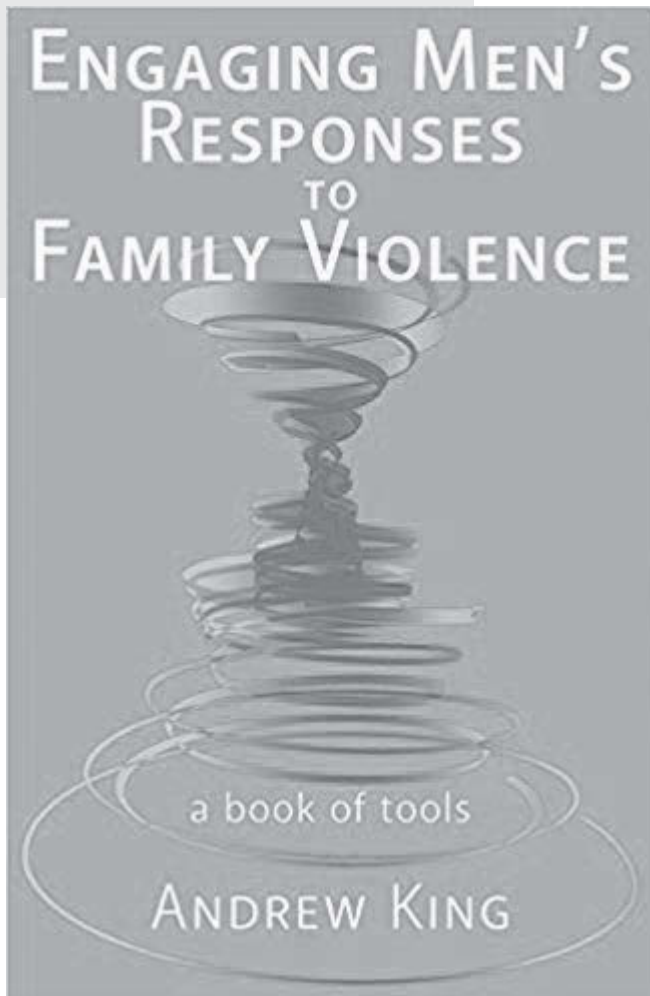


ENGAGING MEN'S RESPONSES TO FAMILY VIOLENCE: A BOOK OF TOOLS

ANDREW KING (2017)
GROUPWORK SOLUTIONS



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Charles Eliot once said books 'are the most accessible and wisest of counsellors, and the most patient of teachers' (www.goodreads.com) and this book is of this kind. It aims to teach the reader, assumed to be a service provider, new approaches to working with men who use violence and practical strategies and tools to achieve change.

The book takes a stance that men who use violence can change and it offers a model of change to overcome further violence that combines three theoretical frameworks: feminist theory, psychological theory and strengths-based theory. The model is based also on the hope of the potential for men to change and the book couples its optimistic model with many practical tools for implementation. At the same time the tools are useful as stand-alone tools for working with such men, regardless of the underlying model. The model and tools are illustrated with case examples that concretise for practitioners what the book is advancing.

The book begins with an overview of family violence placing it within the

feminist theory of patriarchy, and proceeds to the elements of the new model, with a diversion into working with men from diverse backgrounds, followed by discussion of generativity, and concluding with a large section on tools for change.

The best qualities of the book are its emphasis on the need to work with men as a way of combating men's use of violence, an optimism that this is possible, the detailing of many practical ways of doing this and case illustrations drawn from a variety of programs covering men in many different and difficult situations. The book advances an innovative framework and there are few new frameworks documented currently to assist men's behaviour change. Practice innovations are happening, but they are not frequently advertised. The book is written in a warm, but realistic, tone that is easy to read and that acknowledges the damage violent men inflict. Issues of danger to families are touched on, but not to any extent, and this is a weakness in the book. Safety plans are described, but safety plans are insufficient protection. More material on identifying and addressing high-risk

men needed to be included (see National Report on Filicide in Australia, <https://aic.gov.au/publications>). The book's focus is primarily on the men and not on their partners and children. The book is suffused with diagrams and, while they are easy to follow, they seem to complicate the text.

Since there is so little written about working with these men, the book is a valuable addition to the literature, especially for those who are working at the frontline with men to prevent the damage they cause. It is hoped that the author will write more on this topic and that others will join him, especially writing more about programs and practice for change that are set in different settings and provide for different groups of men.