Toward a new understanding of relationship in social work: purposeful, profeminist mentoring of males by male social workers.

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CONTENTS

CONTENTS .... **I**

ABSTRACT .... **III**

DECLARATION .... **IV**

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .... **V**

CHAPTER 1 LITERATURE REVIEW **6**

INTRODUCTION 6
THE FUNDAMENTALS OF THE SOCIAL CASEWORK RELATIONSHIP 7
WHY GENDER AND POWER ARE RELEVANT IN CASEWORK 9
THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF BIESTEK AND THE SOCIAL WORK RELATIONSHIP 12
WHY THE SOCIAL WORK RELATIONSHIP MATTERS 13
BUILDING ON THE SOCIAL WORK RELATIONSHIP 14
THE NEED FOR EVIDENCE BASED PRACTICE 19
THE TROUBLED WORLD OF BOYS AND MEN 21
Father absence 21
Male perpetrated violence 27
The poor mental health of boys and men 30
MENTORING MALE CLIENTS IN SOCIAL WORK 32
CONCLUDING REMARKS 37

CHAPTER 2 METHOD **40**

PROFEMINIST METHODOLOGY 40
THE STUDY PARTICIPANTS 42
THE SAMPLING RATIONALE 43
DESIGN OF THE STUDY 44

CHAPTER 3 RESULTS **47**

THE SAMPLE, CONTEXT, AND LIMITATIONS 47
DESCRIPTION OF DATA 48
DATA ANALYSIS 50
Quantitative 50
Qualitative 53

CHAPTER 4 DISCUSSION **64**

GENDER AND POWER 65
THE SOCIAL WORK RELATIONSHIP 67

MENTORING 70
SOCIAL WORK TRAINING 74
HUMAN SERVICE AGENCY EMPLOYMENT PRACTICES 76
SOME FINAL COMMENTS 77

CHAPTER 5 CONCLUSION........ 81

APPENDIX 1 84

FREQUENCY TABLES 84

REFERENCES 88

ABSTRACT

This paper asks the question: Can mentoring be considered a principled approach within relationship-based practice, as a means of assisting males in their day to day engagement with everyday life? The focus is on male social workers utilising their life experience to facilitate improved functioning in their male clients, within the rapidly changing socioeconomic landscape of today's globalised world. Emphasis is also placed on an identified need to work with male clients within a framework that addresses the power imbalance between the genders. The study sought the views of social workers who are members of the Australian Association of Social Workers. The key question of mentoring sat within further questions on gendered practice and sought to elicit responses on the state of gender values in Australian social work today. The methodology of profeminism was applied.

A mixed methods survey of eleven questions (n = 39, [male = 21, female = 18]) showed noticeable support for mentoring of male clients by male social workers (74.3%), with males indicating greater support than females. Overall, throughout the survey, men reported a greater need and interest, than women, for new knowledge and skill to apply when working with male clients. Data from the study cohort indicated caution about males being better placed to work with males, matching male social workers with male clients, or adopting policies of positive discrimination to employ male social workers. Here respondents deferred to the tried and tested base of Biestekian (1957) principles as a guide. The inclusion of compulsory training and development in men's/gender studies, within university social work courses, was rated as high (80.6%). The study contributes towards a new appreciation of the mentoring of male clients by male social workers as a principled component within relationship-based practice.

DECLARATION

I certify that this thesis does not incorporate without acknowledgment any material previously submitted for a degree or diploma in any university; and that to the best of my knowledge and belief it does not contain any material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text.

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Chapter 1 LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

No time was more poignant in the writer's social work practice than a stint spent working with boys and young men in a State run juvenile justice department. Over a period of two years writing assessment reports for the Youth Court, the social fragility of this client group, and the gendered nature of the justice setting, became overwhelmingly apparent. Not only were the bulk of the client group male, but also the notable scale of the absence of fathers in the lives of these boys and young men stood out as an enormous chasm in their lives. From the writer's estimate, ninety five per cent of these male clients had no father, or significant father figure, engaged in any regular way in their lives. So stark was this absence that to locate a father to interview for a court ordered report created surprise for the writer. It was as though these boys had *en masse* lost their fathers to a battlefield of war. But these fathers had not come to their end in any conflict in a foreign land. They were like men of the night who briefly and fleetingly appeared, then disappeared, never fulfilling their tasks as the stable day-to-day parent, mentor, and guardian for their child. To the child they were lost, not contactable, were spoken of in a derogatory fashion by the mothers, and formed little memory in the minds of the male clients.

Such an absence for these male clients begged what seemed like an obvious question for the writer – how was the path of male socialisation managed for the boys and young men with few apparent male role models? How was the near infinite number of tasks associated with the development of emotional and social intelligence imprinted in the minds of this male client group? The answer for any social worker in a justice setting is that the imprinting was hampered, haphazard, limited, or mostly deficient. It resulted in an inability to partake in the normal rewards offered by the society, whether that be education, employment, financial security, material gain and stable marriage and family life. Poor school achievement, social exclusion, mental ill health, and anti-social behaviour were the most common norms for these boys and young men. Charting a course through life was, for these clients, fraught with setback, failure, and loss. The challenge for the social worker was to engage in the broadest way possible to ensure that these clients improved their skill set, and lifted

their hopes, opportunities and aspirations for a fulfilling community life.

The Fundamentals of the Social Casework Relationship

Social work pioneer, Felix Biestek (1957), extricated the early meanings of the casework relationship as they were applied to practice in the first half of the twentieth century, and reconstituted the elements of best practice into a redefinition, noting the casework relationship to be "the dynamic interaction of attitudes and emotions between the caseworker and the client, with the purpose of helping the client achieve a better adjustment between himself and his environment" (p. 12). Biestek's work laid the foundation for contemporary social work practice into the twenty first century. His seven principles of the casework relationship (individualisation; purposeful expression of feelings; controlled emotional involvement; acceptance; non-judgemental attitude; client self-determination; and confidentiality) continue to stand up to the rigours of agency practice across all fields of social work to this day (Dominelli, 2004, p. 65; Parton & Kirk, 2010, p. 35; Pierson, 2011, p. 112). Crucial to the establishment of the casework relationship is the application of all seven principles together as constituting the success of the building of relationship with the client (Biestek, 1957). The absence of any one undermines the relationship, and thus a beneficial outcome for the client is impaired.

Cemented as a core component of the humanistic science of social work, Biestek knowingly or unknowingly brought forth a revolutionary thinking where a principled approach to casework could bring respect and dignity to those challenged by life's circumstances. It was wisdom only to be paralleled at that time by the person-centred approach of humanistic psychologist, Carl Rogers (1951, 1957, 1961). Regardless of class, caste, race, creed, gender, and education, the principled relationship could overcome any privileges that elevate one person over another. Through a non-financial transaction, one could access more than a listening ear, and participate in a process that recognises and raises the dignity of each and every one. It became a democratic right to give voice to one's plight, predicament, and disempowerment, which today underpins the broad and growing rights agenda of social work (Ife, 2012; Reichert, 2011).

What is important about Biestek's summation of the casework relationship is his recognition of the potential and real shortcomings of the caseworker. He gave

considerable attention to this reality on the part of the social worker in his or her dealings with the client. The social worker, he argued, will not have complete knowledge in his intervention with the client. The social worker will have to draw from new knowledge in the social sciences, as there will "always be room for greater improvement" (1957, p. 81). Biases and prejudices can enter the relationship calling for the social worker to develop his own self-awareness as he or she is the tool for change. Biestek also adhered to the ancient Greek aphorism acknowledging the need for the social worker to 'know thy-self'. The social worker is the instrument of change, and effective when he or she adopts the approach of ongoing introspection and reflection, coupled with professional learning. Just as a blunt saw cuts no wood, a social worker who fails to continue on his or her journey of professional development will limit the potential for change in the client.

For the decades from 1957, social work practitioners and theorists (Bogo, 2006; Hennessy, 2011; Hollis & Woods, 1981; Howe, 2013; Howe, 1998: Perlman, 1979; Ruch, Turney, & Ward, 2010) have revisited and built on the template of Biestek, further developing these aspects of the casework relationship, with a refining of the use of self as the instrument for practice continuing to this day. Perhaps the most remarkable developments in the use of self in casework have come from the breaking down of notions of intelligence into the intrinsic components of empathic intelligence (Arnold, 2005), emotional intelligence (Howe, 2008), and social intelligence (Goleman, 2006), all offering new breadth to practice. Working with Indigenous clients to overcome centuries of land dispossession, and forced alienation from their own societal ways has also seen the development of 'cultural competency' practices in the social work relationship with Indigenous clients (Dudgeon, Milroy, & Walker, 2014). Practitioners such as Gurian (2011), and Montgomery (2013), have taken a further step and are now bringing new understandings of neuroscience to the casework relationship. Gurian (2011), in his work with male clients, adapts therapeutic intervention to match the functioning of the male brain, arguing that the incorporation of this new knowledge is essential to the gendered nature of practice. Montgomery (2013) states that understandings of neuroscience are now so advanced that the social worker can influence the plasticity of the client's brain through the effective building of a therapeutic relationship. All of these social and biological advances are useful in the understanding the practitioner has of his or her own use of self in the casework relationship.

Why Gender and Power are Relevant in Casework

Biestek's 'The Casework Relationship' (1957) is not without its critics in social work. Botswana-based writer, Mwansa (2008), in reviewing the twelfth edition of 'The Casework Relationship' (1989), called the book "euro-centric", and emanating from a "Judeo-Christian, capitalist and conservative value system" (p. 821). So distant is Biestek from the realities of African culture, argues Mwansa, that his seven principles "may be unattainable in form and content" (2008, p. 821). Mwansa (p. 822) cites Silavwe (1995), who states that social casework has failed in the Zambian context. Mwansa emphasises that the individualistic approach, which is culturally wrapped in capitalism, is removed from the African context of an extended family and community response to the resolution of social problems. Community or group is emphasised as "using resources such as sangomas (witch doctors), diviners, herbalists, the uncle, tribal leaders, rainmakers, the priest, the political party leader, the educationalist" (Silavwe, 1995, as cited in Mwansa, 2008, p. 76).

Recognising the uniqueness within each individual and responding to that is not, as Mwansa implies, a negation of the collective. Individualism and collectivism can coexist side by side to the enrichment of each and all. Clarke and Hindley (1975, pp. 86-88) highlighted this in their work on non-industrial indigenous societies. As Biestek (1957) reminds us, we all have our personal differences (p. 25), no matter what our culture (p. 26). How practice by Silavwe's (1995, as cited in Mwansa, 2008, p. 76) means is justified, as reflecting evidence based, or client confidentiality in social work, is not declared. That the principles may hold no sway for, as an example, humiliated, denigrated, and traumatised male and female victims of mass rape during war, a common occurrence in African conflicts (see Hilsum, 2014; Knowles & Rimella, 2014; Storr, 2011; True, 2012), and that these people would not find solace in the confidential casework relationship, is puzzling to this writer.

Shahid and Jha (2014), writing from an Indian perspective, venture down a similar cultural path to Mwansa (2008), declaring 'The Casework Relationship' to be ideologically faulty, culturally biased, and ultimately oppressing for the client, rather than liberating. As the locus of power remains with the expertise of the social worker, the client will forever feel that empowerment within the casework relationship is an unreachable ideal. So fraught is the text with fault and irrelevance to the Indian context, they argue, it is time to draft a new set of guiding principles

more in tune with the emancipatory goals of the social work profession (p. 34). Further to this, they contend that Biestek (1957) has moulded the casework relationship into art and not science (Shahid & Jha, 2014, p. 19). If this is the case then the seven principles are obsolete to a profession that must utilise best evidence based intervention drawn from empirical analysis.

So different are these interpretations of Biestek's (1957) text to its broad acceptance in the West that this warrants further attention. Harlow (2013) notes the enormous popularity of Biestek's book, and the fact that it was translated into six languages, one being outside of the West, namely Japanese. She highlights the centrality of "the democratic principles of freedom and self-determination" (p. 139) within the work, and how Biestek gave prominence to relationships as being vital to human existence (p. 140). Her review acknowledges that power outside of the immediate environment was not the focus of his work. While emancipation was the goal of the casework relationship, Biestek referred to the purpose as one "of helping the client make a better adjustment" (1957, p. 3). Notions of transformative power were not alluded to in his work as a component of the casework relationship. That the afflicted, and disenfranchised, could challenge hegemonic structures of power, via the discursive relationship built with the social worker, was a step that radical thinkers in social work would only take two decades later. These radical thinkers argued that the social worker should empower their client to "… resist all authoritarian attempts by the state to undermine their dignity" (Bailey & Brake, 1975, p. 12) or develop "… a Marxist theory of interpersonal relations" (Corrigan & Leonard, 1978, p. xiii). For Biestek, neither Marx, Gramsci, nor Sarkar entered the principled relationship, which occurred within the confines of the human service agency.

Shahid and Jha (2014) provide a falsehood of power as the agency of social work that is wielded across the welfare landscape. Building on this false assumption, they then undertake a Gramscian analysis of Biestek, arguing that as power is central to the client-worker relationship, the Christian ethos of paternalistic power underpinning the seven principles, that this Jesuit author wove into his work, only reinforces a hegemonic power between client and caseworker, thus furthering a system of oppression and inequality contrary to the social work mission. That the application of the seven principles brings no sense of empowerment for the distressed and downtrodden client defies the long lasting credibility and endurance of

Biestek's casework approach. The thesis of Shahid and Jha (2014) - a centrality of power defining and distorting the casework relationship – dismisses democracy as fundamentally power altering. The personal as political is expressed within the seven principles, but largely confined to the relationship, and not expressed in the wider community.

Mwansa (2008) adopts the cultural fallacy that rights exist and are equally accessible to all, across all communities and societies where, to use the most glaring example, women who are violated, demeaned, and ostracised by their own communities can then find justice to right the wrongs afflicted upon them. While Mwansa (2008) does acknowledge the rapid change of culture in Africa, he underestimates the extent that culture is being swept away by the tsunami of economic and cultural globalisation that is leaving many bereft of rights. Africa is perhaps the most culturally dislocated of all continents (Davis, 2006).

Both hits at Biestek (1957) lack any acknowledgement of the gendered nature of inequality and violence, and the broad lack of access to legal and human rights for women who seek justice and resolution of these ills (True, 2012). This is half of the world's population. Mwansa (2008), and Shahid and Jha (2014), fail hermeneutically to wrestle with the text to the required depth, and are unable to position its relationship to the rights agenda of their profession, and place the seven principles within the complex socio-political values of the contemporary globalised world, a world that is at war with women (French, 1992; True, 2012) and its own existence (Bulletin of Atomic Scientists, 2014). Biestek (1957) not only set the foundations for the social work relationship but gave legitimacy to the case for the transformation of societies by the human rights' mission of social work by siting rights at the heart of the casework relationship. His critics have been unable to articulate an alternative set of principles that enhance the wellbeing of their cultural groups and set them within the heart of the practice relationship. Their writing lacks recognition of the key concern that must be incorporated into practice approaches today: the power that males hold over females in all societies. Pease (2000b) has best exposed this in his text, 'Recreating Men', where he highlights the lack of acknowledgement of power and violence in the literature on working with men: "none of the mythopoetic or therapeutic books mention men's violence against women and most of them ignore issues of power altogether" (p. 108). Hearn (1996) had commented on this as both a generality, and an issue within the earlier

development of the field of men's studies literature, noting the absence of the framing of violence by males as central to our understanding of the use (abuse) of power by males. Prominent feminist writer, French (1992, p. 14), expressed her concern, nearly one quarter of a century ago, that social workers were failing to give prominence to the politics underlying violence against women.

The Historical Context of Biestek and the Social Work Relationship

Biestek (1957), writing before the second wave of feminism that redefined social relations like few other social movements in the past century (Gardiner, 2005, p. 47), did not perceive the scale of the gendered nature of oppression, and the power and privilege that men hold over women. Neither could his work have identified the enormous social and emotional challenges that clients bring to practice as an outcome of the multifarious global social forces that have shaped and broken social relations since the Vietnam and Cold Wars. European colonialism from the days of Columbus brought devastation to indigenous peoples, and Nazism and Stalinism created a diaspora of peoples previously unseen on the planet. Economic globalisation, after the collapse of the Berlin Wall, brought on by neo-liberal market ideology, has created diasporas, economic inequality, and impoverishment on a scale greater than in any preceding time (Davis, 2006). The destruction of the biosphere, through climate change (Hamilton, 2010), is likely to continue to create war, civil unrest, social upheaval, and community disintegration for years to come. For feminists, the state of the world is perceived through the lens of power. True (2012) argues this violent unsettling of humanity has its roots in male hegemony, cutting across the social, economic, and political spheres of life, subjugating women across the globe through discrimination and restricted access to basic human rights. MacKinnon (1987) believes masculinity has always defined humanity, and the masculine is inhumane. Ecofeminists view masculine behaviour, expressed through war and environmental degradation, as so destructive that it imperils the very life support systems humanity depends on for its fundamental survival (Seager, 1999).

How would Biestek have penned his treatise on restoring human dignity and respect today? Biestek wrote at a time when the knowledge base of social work was largely rooted in a view of client personal adjustment to their immediate circumstances. That notions of oppression, gender, violence, and patriarchy are not

mentioned in his treatise is a reflection of the historical time of the social work profession. The critiques of Biestek, and the contemporary context of international social work, raise questions about the state of relationship-based practice today. Are the seven principles alone adequate as the foundation for relationship-based practice today? Can the social work profession utilise the understanding of self in working with the client to achieve personal and societal change in previously undetermined ways?

Why the Social Work Relationship Matters

Seabury, Seabury, and Garvin (2010) note that the establishment of a positive relationship, with the client, has been defined as a "central practice principle in social work" (p. 125) since the early writings in the profession. They argue that this historical interest, that has helped to grow the social work profession, continues to reinforce the work and meaning of the practitioner in his or her interaction within the world of the client. Whether it is general practice, counselling, or therapy, the place and efficacy of the social work relationship in many of its contexts has consistently been revealed by researchers to be central to the helping process. The establishment of an environment of safety and trust within the relationship, with the worker empathising, validating, and reassuring during the course of the meeting, provides opportunity for the client to reveal his innermost vulnerability, and is the key to successful therapeutic work.

Glicken (2005a), in pursuing the need for building evidence based practice in social work to improve client outcomes, cites numerous studies that support the importance of a good relationship as a predicator of success in therapeutic outcomes (see chapter 7, pp. 109-122). Likewise, Kadushin and Kadushin (2013) bring together the evidence for "the empirical confirmation of relationship's significance" (pp. 83-84), presenting conclusively the fact that the quality of the relationship established between client and trained helping professional is the overriding determinative factor toward the achievement of transformative change in the client. Bachelor and Horvath (1999), in their study of the intrinsic components that determine what works in the therapeutic relationship, have deduced that not only is the relationship itself highly significant to outcomes, but the quality of the relationship will determine the extent of success, no matter what form of intervention

or presenting problem. So fundamental is the basis of the relationship that they conclude that "the therapy relationship itself can represent a therapeutic intervention" (p. 162). So well proven is this understanding that it is now set as a solid truism and wisdom in the professions that provide therapeutic services to a broad range of clients.

For social work the empirical validation of the relationship as central to practice reinforces the historical basis of the profession that has long recognised the worker and client nexus as "the medium and core method of affecting outcomes" (Hennessey, 2011, p. 133). It is from this foundation that social work brings in practical theoretical approaches, such as solution-focused, task-centered, strengths-based, empowerment-based, and feminist led models, among many others (see Turner, 2011, for his evolution of practice models in social work since 1974, and subsequent editions), to further enhance the building of confidence, esteem, and resilience in the full, and diverse range of client groups across all life stages. A particular approach is chosen to complement the culture, needs, preferences, and goals of the client. For Furlong (2013) the client/worker relationship is the practice setting that must lead to the most important work for the client, the capacity of the client to engage, and sustain, him or herself in enduring relationships in the broader community. To not 'settle' the relationship in the clinical environment will have consequences for the client, in potentially, all other relationships (p. 3).

Building on the Social Work Relationship

In one aspect, Biestek (1957) was somewhat contradictory in detailing how the social worker could progress with the use of self as a tool for engagement with the client. Early in his text he states, "a caseworker's own life experiences are helpful but inadequate for effectively understanding the various people who come to social agencies" (p. 28). But, he adds, there is a commonality between client and caseworker (Biestek, 1957, p. 97). It is part of the casework relationship that man will identify with man, woman with woman, and man and woman with each other. This identification is our fundamental nature. We seek to understand each other in our encounters, and this commonality is the starting point for discussion toward bridging, sharing, problem solving, and all other tasks that bind human to human in community. The binding nature of our humanity is central to Biestek's (1957) text,

threading its way through his exploration of the casework relationship and underpinning his motivation behind the mission of social work. So great is our commonality that the social worker, does not stand aloof from the circumstances of the client but, feels a sense of solidarity in that he or she attends to the same life challenges as the client. It is this fundamental circumstance that leads Biestek (1957), in his outline of the components of the role of the caseworker, to place identification with the client as the first priority in relationship building with the client (p. 105).

Biestek (1957, pp. 80-81) reminds the reader that the social worker in his personal encounters in life has yielded to compromise, sought discussion with others to resolve difficulties, and has been moved by the vast array of feelings that arise from facing the trials and tribulations of self and others. In understanding one's own exposure to life, the social worker is well placed to understand the foibles, difficulties, and challenges that trouble his clients. The personal experiences of the social worker are borne out of the full societal commotion that rocks all. It is from this commotion that the social worker draws from his accumulated personal knowledge, which is professionally framed, and contributes toward the resolution of the client's ills. Hennessey (2011, p. 7) believes "even the most difficult experiences in a worker's life can be used positively in their relationship based practice". The client will actively seek and probe the social worker for answers to the resolution of his ills (Biestek, 1957, p. 104) that he perceives to be the result of similar experiences held by the social worker.

Kadushin and Kadushin (2013) recognise that the personal expression of the social worker is instrumental in the interaction with the client. So important is this factor that these authors conclude the primary determinative influence affecting the encounter between worker and client to be that of their behaviour - behaviour being a composite of the expression of values, feelings, and attitudes. To professionally manage this behaviour, Kadushin and Kadushin (2013) break the worker interaction into three key components, self-disclosure (pp. 203-208), sharing information (pp. 208-210), and modelling (pp. 204, 206, 319-320).

Despite the assertion by some writers (Bogo, 2006; Hill and Knox, 2002), that there is a lack of empirical studies that provide useful data on self-disclosure, the subject is of great interest to those working in the helping professions. Bachelor and Horvath (1999), in their summary of the research into the usefulness of self-

disclosure, conclude that the use of self-disclosure will benefit some and have little value for others. Overwhelmingly, scholars, studies, practitioner views, and theoretical orientations lean strongly toward the use of self-disclosure as advantageous for the client, when framed professionally and used in proper context. Self-disclosure is embedded in some approaches to practice. Client-centred Rogerian (Bogo, 2006; Henretty and Levitt, 2010) and humanistic Biestekian approaches use self-disclosure to set values of authenticity; genuineness; positive regard; openness; strength; vulnerability; sharing of feelings; trust; similarity; credibility; and empathy; among others. Cognitive and behavioural therapists self-disclose for purposes of modelling (Reamer, 2012, p. 112). The benefits of self-disclosure are far ranging, and can turn what could be a cold clinical meeting based on a formulaic step by step process into something organic, warm, meaningful, and collaborative. Self-disclosure receives considerable discussion in the literature on working with the client in the therapeutic setting. Jourard (1971) alerted the therapist, some decades ago, that self-disclosure is a process that both client and therapist need to participate in. Reamer (2012) reports that, in his discussions with helping professionals, he often raises the issue of self-disclosure to determine its popularity, and use, in therapeutic settings. The "overwhelming majority" of respondents to his question state that they have self-disclosed to clients (p. 107). Pope, Tabachnick, and Keith-Spiegel (1995) found, in their study, that sixty-nine per cent of psychologists believed that self-disclosure was ethical. As few as two per cent reported the view that self-disclosure was unethical. Henretty and Levitt (2010) report that "over ninety per cent of therapists self-disclose to clients" (p. 64), and clients like self-disclosing interviewers better than non-disclosing interviewers. In feminist and multicultural approaches to therapy, self-disclosure is common. For feminist practitioners, self-disclosure promotes a value base more consistent with the emancipatory goals of the women's movement (Reamer, 2012; Bogo, 2006; Henretty & Levitt, 2010). In multicultural practice, self-disclosure can be used to rectify any power difference and psychological inferiority between client and worker (Henretty & Levitt, 2010).

The reasons for self-disclosure are numerous. Ward (2010, p. 47) states the non-disclosing worker can be perceived as "remote and uninterested" resulting in greater difficulty in building rapport with the client. Reamer (2012) states self-disclosure can be used to build the bond between worker and client. For example, if the client is

experiencing illness, the worker may reveal his struggle with a difficult illness. Further reasons for self-disclosure are to model openness; be helpful; be more empathic; encourage interpersonal exploration; build the therapeutic alliance; and deepen the therapeutic relationship. Knox and Hill (2003) state clients rate self-disclosure as very helpful, and report that it stimulates their engagement in the interview. So central to the process is self-disclosure that it is part of the enhancement and alliance building with the client. To not self-disclose is to the detriment of the worker client relationship (Hanson, 2005). Henretty and Levitt (2010) report a number of benefits of self-disclosure from their qualitative review. Self-disclosure had a positive benefit on clients; clients had better rapport with a therapist who self-disclosed; therapists who self-disclosed were seen as warmer by clients; and self-disclosure by the therapist encouraged self-disclosure by the client. Self-disclosure can involve modelling new ways of managing (Hill & Knox, 2002), or provide new understanding, or insight, into problems which are then internalised as new learning by the client for use in social situations outside of therapy (Knox, Hess, Peterson, & Hill, 1997). Norcross and Lambert (2013), in summarising the key evidence based elements of the client/worker relationship, state congruence and genuineness are significant and can be achieved by the worker self-disclosing in a variety of ways that are appropriate to the characteristics of the client, whether that be race, culture, class, gender, or age, etc. So important is the task, they argue, that "an effective therapist models congruence" (p. 174).

Self-disclosure by the social worker encourages self-disclosure by the client. For the client to feel able to disclose is vital to successful therapy, as it is this exploration to the heart of the problem by the client that triggers the catharsis and healing that is a vital part of the therapeutic relationship. The ability to share a part of oneself is the sign of a competent worker (Kadushin & Kadushin, 2013, p. 349). But, as Reamer (2012, p. 8) reminds the worker, self-disclosure must always be used cautiously, judiciously, and professionally, to ensure that the identified benefits move the client forward in his or her development. Henretty and Levitt (2010), and Bogo (2006), reiterate this, by encouraging the worker to reflect on the reason and purpose for self-disclosure, to ensure that any self-disclosure contributes constructively to client outcomes. Important to note here is the outcome from the qualitative review of self-disclosure by Henretty and Levitt (2010) that showed therapists self-disclosed more to clients who demonstrated a higher degree of psychological capacity and less to

clients with diagnosed personality disorders. In summary, there are two dimensions to the use of self-disclosure in practice. The first is the broader concept of what Ward (2010) describes as “the use of self in relationship with others” (p. 57). How do practitioners integrate the diverse components that make up our practice world view, comprised of emotional, psychological, political, religious, or spiritual values, and utilise these in our face to face encounters with our clients. Here the personal and professional meld to form the person in whom the client will place trust. The second consideration is the how, what, when, and with whom we may self-disclose, keeping in mind the professional and ethical frame we apply when self-disclosing.

Sharing information is a normal everyday part of social work practice. So complex is the world, and the systems it embodies, that it is beyond the time and capacity of many to know and understand the intricacies and workings of science, government, and bureaucracy, and to chart a course through the maze of power that cloaks each of these institutions. It is the responsibility of the social worker to unravel, normalise, and seek access to these systems and the knowledge held within each, so that the client may empower him or herself with the relevant information for informed decision making. Here the social worker takes on the role of educator, and provides through clarity, interpretation, and skilled imparting, the required information tailored to meet the specific needs of each client. Implicit within this role is the social worker’s ability to integrate any personal understanding of the processes involved in accessing and utilising this new information.

Modelling should not be underestimated, according to Seabury et al. (2010), as clients can take what they observe from the actions and behaviours of the therapist and incorporate them into their own schema. Bachelor and Horvath (1999, p. 158) describe the therapeutic relationship as “a corrective experience” where the client can, through relating with a trained and skilled worker, come to understand new behaviours, and manage emotions more effectively, which can be trialled within this same relationship. After time these new skills become part of the client’s repertoire, and are taken and enacted in his or her wider world. Modelling by the worker must bring the client into pro-social ways and means of being in all interpersonal contact (Kadushin & Kadushin, 2013, p. 319). Demeaning attitudes can be challenged in the client, and new ways of seeing the world, that reinforce the rights and justice agenda of social work, can be introduced as the alternative view.

A key question for the use of self in the casework relationship is that raised by

Hollis and Woods (1981, p. 287) regarding the importance of giving consideration to matching client and worker gender, to make the client feel at ease during his or her meetings with the worker. Any differences that the worker observes between him or her and the client must be incorporated into the overall approach taken in therapy, because these differences will have an influence on the relationship, in potentially all its phases. If these differences are notable, as in the case of gender, then the agency should ensure that the gender is matched in service provision (Seabury, Seabury, & Garvin, 2010, p.139). Hollis and Woods (1981, p. 309) assert that such matching can add momentum to the change process in the client. Hill (1975) notes that when gender matching is applied clients seemed freer in expression with the therapist. Gehart and Lyle (2001), in their examination of the literature on the matter of gender matching, conclude with a general but definitive statement that clients report such notable differences between male and female therapists that, while the research is not conclusive, it necessitates further work. Pringle (1995) is more conclusive. In the context of anti-oppressive practice he argues that "men can work separately" (p. 218) to achieve the required outcomes with male clients. Harrison, Wodarski, and Thyer (1992), and Thyer, Meyers, Wodarski, and Harrison (2010), (as cited in Wodarski and Feit, 2009), in their summary of the practice literature, conclude that matching between client and worker should be closely approximated to maximise client outcomes. It is from here that the rationale of the male social worker, deepening his use of self in working with the male client, builds from an understanding of their common socialisation as boys and men.

The Need for Evidence Based Practice

For a social worker, 'what works' is always at the forefront of the mind, as each worker journeys with the client, seeking along the way the best practice approach that will hopefully see a resolution of the ills trespassing on the happiness of the client. Solid evidence, as now supported in the understanding of relationship in practice, gives confidence to the social work researcher to explore other facets of the relationship in practice. Kadushin and Kadushin (2013, p. 342), in their decades' long study (since 1972) of the requisite skills necessary for relationship building in social work, acknowledge the increasing move toward evidence based practice (EBP) as the stimulus for applying relevant knowledge in the field.

Glicken (2005a, 2005b), and McLaughlin (2012), remind the social worker that all professional endeavours must be focused constantly on finding new evidence based ways of alleviating the hardship and suffering of the client group. Social problems are collectively examined, gaps in practice identified, statistics gathered, and research undertaken in the hope of finding new solutions to social ills. Everitt, Hardiker, Littlewood, and Mullender (1992) posit the view that a key principle to research mindedness must be the forming of real partnerships with the clients assisted by social work. It is from here, argues Glicken (2005a, p. xv), that not only will new EBP evolve, but this process must involve the client as not only an active participant in the gathering of data, but ultimately include his or her involvement in the evaluation of its applicability and robustness for inclusion as a set approach in social work practice. Kadushin and Kadushin (2013) remind the social worker that the client carries significant knowledge as "they are living the problem" (p. 341). This fact is recognised by Hollis and Woods (1981) who perceive both worker and client as "experts in their own right" (p. 299). Sowerby (2010) has grasped the baton and provides an example, via Personalisation, of how the social work relationship can be utilised to deeply empower clients so that they engage in what is a birth right of learning and living full citizenship.

Glicken (2005b), a strong social work advocate for improving the health and wellbeing of men, reminds the profession that "… very little has been written about men, their current problems, or what the helping professions can do to develop more effective solutions to male problems" (p. xi). Glicken (2005b, p. 329), in summarising his case for building a practice base for working with men, calls on social workers to undertake research and try new ideas in practice to help a gender that is in many cases in social limbo in a gender dislocated world. It is with this in mind, and with one foot firmly planted in Biestek's (1957) seven principles of the casework relationship, that solutions are sought to the problems identified in the scene setting front page of this thesis, along with other problems presented by boys and men to human service agencies, and the communities in which they reside. This is achieved by drawing on further understandings of how the relationship can be utilised in social work practice.

The Troubled World of Boys and Men

Father absence

Anthropologists record father absence as highly significant in traditional societies. Infanticide was strongly related to a lack of a father. Survival for the infant was poor if the father was not present to provide food sustenance for the mother, and protection from the violence of other men (Diamond, 2012, p. 178). For a child, the death of its father diminished the chances of the child surviving to adulthood (Diamond, 2012, p. 186). In Gurian's (2011) view, little has changed in the modern contemporary world, where boys far more regularly lose fathers to divorce than death, resulting in a deeply felt and often enduring pain for these male children.

Stimpson (1987), in her foreword to what is perhaps one of the more important early texts within Men's Studies, places fathering as a "value" to be pursued by this new emerging social discipline (p. xiii). And pursued it has been, by not only those within men's studies but, by a number of schools of thought across the social sciences. While the social impact of historical changes on the family has placed fathering under scrutiny, a growing area of interest has been within the field of father absence. Whether viewed from a Christian religious perspective (Catholic Communications, 2012; Sowers, 2010; Browning & Browning, 1999; McGee, 1993), international development studies (Hendra, FitzGerald, & Seymour, 2013), social action (Social Action, 2014), traditional psychoanalytical studies (Trowell & Etchegoyen, 2002), feminist (Seager, 2009), men's studies (Brotherson & White, 2007), social policy (Centre for Social Justice, 2013, 2014; Lamb, 2014), social work (Glicken, 2005b), or the perspective of psychology (Biddulph, 1995, 2010, 2014; Erickson, 1998), the concern about father absence is now treated as one of increasing "social alarm" (Doucet, 2007, p. 192).

According to Biddulph, (2010, p. 277), the crisis of father absence is a very recent societal concern, with pivotal studies from the United States of America (Blankenhorn, 1996) and the United Kingdom, (Burgess, 1998) highlighting the extent and impact of the problem. Note that these studies concern two industrially advanced Western societies. What would studies from war damaged and impoverished nations in the 'developing world' reveal about the scale of father absence and its impact on the development of boys and young men? It is estimated that there are 100-150 million street children in the world

(www.amnesty.org/en/children). Popular best-selling author of the 'The New Manhood', Steve Biddulph (2010) is forceful in expressing his view of the current predicament of fathering and its absence by stating, "… compared with thousands of years of human history that had gone before, boys and young men in the modern world were horrendously under fathered" (p. 7). On the 20th anniversary of the publication of this text, Biddulph (2014) further expressed his deeply held concern about the contemporary state of manhood by highlighting the "… damage from generations of estrangement between fathers and sons, and the effects of war, recession and industrial living".

With such a broad sweep of history, critics of Biddulph argue that he has laid himself bare for his blanket acquiescence to both essentialism and universalism (Accomando & Anderson, 2001; Gilbert & Gilbert, 1998; Pearce, 2001). Rightly, these authors ask: what male traditions and practices, from the past, are worthy of being upheld that do not exclude or suppress the rights of females? Clarke and Hindley (1975, p. 97), frame this argument well by stating

> "For the most part women throughout the primitive world are second-class citizens. They contribute heavily to the labour of the group and are generally left in charge of the upbringing of the children, yet they take little part in decision-making and are firmly excluded from the religious mysteries".

Tribal societies were not alone in the relegation of women to second class status. Laslett (1983) acknowledges that in pre-industrial England "the family group was the almost unique site of economic production as well as of human reproduction, and patriarchy the key to relations between women and men, children and parents" (p. ix). Within this context, it is important to examine Biddulph's statements for within them lies the crux of what is a disputed historical nexus of the generational deterioration of ties in the community of boys and men.

A common theme found in the work of comparative, cross cultural, anthropology of early societies, (Clarke & Hindley, 1975; Diamond, 2012; Laslett, 1983; Maybury-Lewis, 1992) is the enduring richness that kin networks provided to their members. This connectedness, which forms an all-encompassing social fabric, is highlighted as so distinct from contemporary Western societies that the two worlds are incomparable. Kin networks in early

societies spoke of tradition, ritual, place, order, and structure. All were bound together culturally, with few frames of reference existing outside of this world. For Western society, marked by small family units of nuclear, couple, and single person households, individualism, isolation, and loneliness, these older world orders offer models of how the contemporary world can recapture the essence of what potentially will re-humanise our way of life.

Where in early societies lay the ties of males that can speak to boys and men in the contemporary world of gender equality? Initiation, states Clarke and Hindley (1975), was "the greatest single experience in the lives of many primitives" (p. 107). For the boys, this invested in them an understanding of the cultural norms and ways of men, rites that are no longer found in Western societies (p. 110). In the working world of pre-industrial England the experience of boys and men was that their personal relationships were so enmeshed with others that they could be perceived to be "subsumed . . . within the personalities of their fathers and masters" (Laslett, 1983, p. 51). While the order was patriarchal, it does not diminish the fact that relationships which brought learning, meaning, and security to males cannot be extracted from ancient ways and remoulded for the contemporary world of gender equality. For "to reject, out of hand, the learning of several hundred million men and women over more than three centuries can hardly be called wise" (Clarke & Hindley, 1975, p. 220). For Heinrich (2014) males can move toward a more enlightened construction of maleness without forsaking identities normally construed as male. This does not resort to essentialism or universalism, but speaks of the diversity of ways in which males can live in relationship to other males, and females. It is within this same argument that we can move forward with the oft asserted view that the premise of the need for more male classroom teachers is based within essentialism (Lingard, Martino, & Mills, 2009; Martino, 2008; Robb, 2010) and thus its relevance is unwarranted. The rich history of male teaching, across early societies, can be rewarded with the presence of male teachers' role modelling in today's classrooms, for boys who are living without father figures in their lives. Biddulph's mistake was one of a failure to reach more deeply into anthropological history to reveal the brotherhood of males and how it can be reframed, and then placed, in communities of equal relations between the

genders.

After the Second World War, across Western nations, the role of men in the family was radicalised away from that of a direct participant in childrearing to the breadwinner working outside of the family home. Hood (2001) marks this as a time of remoteness of men from engagement and involvement with children, to one of a clear, and strict, domestic division of labour. This was not solely the policy influence of governments, but was driven by influential thinkers in psychology whose work was popularised across society. Bowlby (1958), well known for his work on mother and infant attachment, reinforced a view of mothers as primary carers. His thinking fed a strict gender role separation, and in the following decade was sharply challenged by the second wave of feminism which sought to liberate women from the singular role of carer and homemaker.

More recently gathered statistics on father absence continue to trend toward alarming. In the United States "almost half of America's male children grow up in single-parent homes headed by mothers where they seldom have male mentors or role models" (Glicken, 2005b, p. xi). In the United Kingdom, "a million children have no meaningful contact with their fathers, and that's a conservative estimate" (The Centre for Social Justice, 2013, p. 3). Under a feminist analysis, the gendered 'domestic division of labour', where over recent history male parents have taken a minor role in domestic work and child rearing (Pilcher & Whelehan, 2004, pp. 30-34), has seen a shift to unprecedented arrangements by men toward disassociation from parenting. Fathers, *en masse*, have removed themselves from the working role of parent leaving the burden of responsibility resting fully on the shoulders of mothers. While the fathers may have forsaken their children, the children have not dismissed their fathers. In an Australian study (Tucci, Mitchell, & Goddard, 2006) children identified the father as the second most important adult in their lives, after the mother. For that matter, an overwhelming percentage of a sample of the adult population of the United Kingdom believes fathers are important to the stability of the child (Centre for Social Justice, 2013, p. 56). Garbarino, (1992, as cited in Garbarino, 2014, p. 14), in a highly significant longitudinal study over a fifty year period in the 20th century (1924-1977), demonstrated that children value fathers who invest time in the day-to-day activities of their children.

While the influence of the father on the development of his son is far reaching (Cabrera & Tamis-Lemonda, 2013), the literature on the place of the father in

relation to the impact on child development is extremely polarised. At one end of the debate stands Tolson (1977) whose quote requires little elaboration: “A boy’s identification with his father is the foundation for all his subsequent experience” (p. 25). At the other end lies the view that gender is not important for the development of stable male sex role socialisation (Lamb, 2010; Silverstein & Rashbaum, 1994). Boys and young men can be raised well in single female headed families, or in families headed by female couples. Here gender is not the over-riding factor, but other parenting qualities that come to the fore are seen as far more crucial. Where the parenting of males falls down is within families where couples are in conflict, and separation and divorce are the resulting outcome. The conflict can be enduring, extensive, and violent during the breakdown, causing significant disturbance to the family unit and distress for the child. This conflict can continue after separation, as the parents pursue their unresolved differences. After separation many children move to single, largely female headed families, and the stressors change. Mothers have to parent with fewer financial and material resources, less overall adult help, and under circumstances that restrict their broader engagement in community life. When single mothers are in the paid workforce they have to juggle the ‘double shift’ of earning a living outside of the home, while still attending to the necessities of childcare and housework. Across the world eighty-five per cent of single parent households are headed by women, and all experience a greater degree of poverty in comparison to those single parent households headed by men (Seager, 2009). It is these factors, argues Lamb (2010; 2014), that highlight the effect of father absence.

Pertinent to mention, when discussing fathers, is the fact that research has shown that fathers are just as competent as mothers in rearing their children in the most sensitive and demanding years of parenthood – the newborn months (see Lamb, 2014, p. 35, for his own cited research). The logical extension of this research outcome is that if men can parent competently during this stage of a child’s life they can do it during any stage. Parenting is not an innate quality in a human. It is learnt on the job, with extra input from those trained in parenting, such as paediatricians, nurses, psychologists, and social workers, and also with assistance from other parents, and grandparents.

Does the absence of a father from the life of his child impact negatively on the child? Trowell (2002), in her introduction to a collection of essays on the role of the father, believes the rise in the emotional and psychological instability in children,

and even more serious mental health problems seen in psychiatric clinics, may be attributed to the absence of the father from involvement in parenting. The Centre for Social Justice Report (CSJ) (2013), into fractured families in the United Kingdom, reads like a sorry tale of family implosion on a societal scale, resulting from family breakdown caused largely by the inability of couples to parent together, with a subsequent loss of a father in the life of his children. The repercussions for the male child are devastating. And this is only further exacerbated by the lack of alternative role models in male teachers in schools, who can act as buffers against the crushing defeat of disengagement from constructive participation in community. The CSJ (2013) report lists the social and psychological consequences of father absence as: lower self-esteem and confidence; greater depressive, disruptive behavioural and psychiatric disorders; more likely to experience poorer health; lower school achievement; higher probability of drug abuse; prone to violent and delinquent behaviour; sexually active at a younger age; greater difficulty in the transition to adulthood; two to three times more likely to end up in prison; and more prone to involvement in gang culture (pp. 57-60). It stands as a tragic litany of problems that carry enormous budgetary, health, welfare, and justice burdens for society. So stark is the absence of men from the lives of their children in the United Kingdom that "… by the end of childhood a youngster is considerably more likely to have a television in their bedroom than a father at home" (Margo, 2010, as cited in The Centre for Social Justice, 2013, p. 35). The CJS data highlighted above is not unique to the United Kingdom, but representational of what scholars and practitioners now know about father absence across this field of study (Brotherson & White, 2007, pp. 12-13).

Data from some Western nations present a picture of large scale father absence, which, when combined with social and economic upheaval, and the dire poverty observed in the developing world, can lead the social scientist toward a description of this growing phenomenon as a pandemic of global proportions. Fathers do hold an important place in the rearing of their male children, despite the fact that mothers can undertake the task of raising boys in the absence of fathers. The self-exclusion of fathers from family life can be extremely detrimental to the wellbeing and development of the male child, an impact that carries on well into the adult years. When parenting is viewed as work, the burden of responsibility is highly skewed toward the mothers, who carry an enormous, often debilitating weight, due to this

labour disparity. The implications are far reaching, and while father absence does focus on a deficit model of fathering, it must be the point of intervention for social work into the debate, as here lies much of the bread and butter work of this profession, across many areas of practice today.

Male perpetrated violence

Has not the history of the world been determined by the violence of men? Are eras, epochs, and empires not set by the wars of men? Is not most of societal trauma marked by the violent behaviour of men? Men are responsible for the vast percentage of violence inflicted on women and girls worldwide. This is an irrefutable fact that receives sparse if any contradiction of any substance in the social science literature (Pringle, 2007, pp. 612-616). While women and children have been opposing male violence for millennia, only since the second wave of feminism have women written and organised worldwide against the assault on their right to peace and safety on the street, in the home, and in the workplace. Seminal writers in the vanguard of the women's movement, such as Millett (1977) and Brownmiller (1975), named the global onslaught of violence against women as the work of patriarchy, the organised dominance by men over women in all spheres of life. Patriarchy, through violence, entrenched its hold on women, rendering them by fear subservient to the will of men. The women's movement, spurred by a resolve to end the systematic gendered violence against their sisters, sought and continues to seek resolution to this problem, spearheading research and campaigns by the United Nations and its affiliates (2006; 2008; 2013; 2013a; 2013b; 2014) to have this brutality, in all its forms, placed on the international agenda. Men in the social sciences have followed, seeking ways within and across all cultures and societies, to change the behaviour of men away from the harm and suffering inflicted on women and girls. Anti-violence activist men and women also argue that to end the pandemic of violence, a reinvented male must emerge who acts and models respect toward women, accepting them as equals in a new world that abhors violence.

The presence of violence in society is felt across all classes and institutions, from the family, to the community, and the military, and is embedded deeply within the values of these cultures. Violence against women and girls stands as "one of the most pervasive human rights violations, impacting one in three women in their lifetime" and, therefore, there is nothing "more critical" than ending this global

assault on the wellbeing of females (Hendra et al., 2013, p. 6). True (2012, p. 3) marks the eradication of violence against women as an imperative of our current era.

Violence takes many forms: domestic, sexual, street based, mass rape as a war crime, or rape in military institutions. Each inflicts no less suffering on the victim than the other, causing trauma that can endure for life. In some cases, the rape of a woman or girl leads to her humiliation in the community, ostracism, and economic hardship, which only exacerbates and prolongs the original trauma of the rape (Knowles & Rimella, 2014; Hilsum, 2014). Beevor (2003), in his historical documentation of the fall of Berlin during the last days of Hitler's demise, recounts one doctor in a Berlin hospital who believed that out of one hundred thousand female victims of rape in the city, by invading Red Army troops, ten thousand committed suicide as a result of the trauma. The death rate, by suicide, of female victims of rape was thought to be higher in neighbouring regions. Beevor (2003) writes that sexual violence against German women during the Second World War, reached two million victims, with many suffering multiple rapes. In Rwanda, an estimated half a million women and girls were raped during the 1994 genocide (Hilsum, 2014). So common is rape in Somalia that it is referred to as "normal" (Human Rights Watch, 2013). World-wide one in ten girls experience sexual violence (United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund, 2014) with the rate in some countries as high as fifty to seventy percent. In many countries, one in five girls reported sexual violence occurring between the ages of ten to fourteen. The most devastating of all violence, war, must also be included, for women suffer the consequences of the aggression of men against men, where civilians are targeted without remorse. (See True, 2012, pp. 8-9, for more detail on what constitutes violence against women).

Violence against women and girls is not confined to certain types of societies that might be defined or characterised by certain cultural and social attributes. As unselective as it is, violence can be found in both highly industrialised, developing, and largely traditional nations. Some nations offer legal protection to their citizenry. In other societies, women and girls have no institutional or legal protection or redress against violence, which exacerbates their vulnerability. Often the military or police are perpetrators, or complicit in their disregard for the safety and protection of the victim, and take little action to bring the perpetrator to justice. A recent study (European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, 2014) revealed high levels of physical and sexual violence where one in three women reported suffering abuse at

the hands of men since the age of fifteen. The statistical level of this violation against women was referred to as “an extensive human rights abuse” (p. 1). This report stands out as of great concern to women, as many of these European countries are known for their high standards of living achieved through exemplary systems of health, education, and welfare support. In the Southern Hemisphere, concerns about violence against women in Australia, another country with one of the highest standards of living in the world, has according to anti-violence campaigners, reached “epidemic proportions”, to the point of becoming a “national emergency” (Malone & Phillips, 2014, p. 1), and a “national human rights disaster” (Phillips, 2014, p. 1). The burden of this violence in Australia does not just rest with the victim but is carried by the whole community, with one million children impacted, forty per cent of police time devoted to intervention into violence against women, and the national budget burdened to the amount of $13.6 billion (Malone & Phillips, 2014, p. 1). Across Australia fifty per cent of those seeking accommodation from the Salvation Army, a nation-wide welfare provider, are homeless due to domestic violence (Australian Broadcasting Corporation, 2013). The Assistant Commissioner of New South Wales police, and spokesman on domestic violence, is quite clear about the origins of the problem. The problem, he states, is created by men and it is men who need to take control to stop the violence (Malone & Phillips, 2014, p. 3). Australia’s near neighbours fare no better. Diamond (2012) presents sexual violence against women in Papua New Guinea as so engrained in men’s culture that the vulnerability of women is a daily concern. A recent United Nations (2013b) multi-country study looked at the prevalence of violence, in particular sexual violence against women, across six Asian and Pacific countries. The report revealed that rape was more widespread than previously believed with its prevalence being pervasive (p. 2). While a woman’s home should ideally be a place of safety, across the world it is the location of most of the violence inflicted against women (Seager, 2009).

Important to the study of the perpetration of violence against women are the lesser known and documented impacts of the abuse. A World Health Organisation (WHO) (2013) report reveals the health effects to be of a scale no less than the pandemic of violence itself, with women suffering physical, mental, sexual and reproductive health problems as a result of sexual abuse. Thirty eight per cent of women who were murdered were killed by intimate partners (WHO, 2013, p. 1). While not part of the WHO report, it is important to mention murder after mass rape

during war, a not uncommon occurrence. Brownmiller (1975) first gave prominence to this issue in her documentation of the atrocities by United States servicemen during the Vietnam War; Stiglmayer (1994) during the Balkans war in the last years of the twentieth century; and Knowles and Rimella (2014) in the twenty first century in the Democratic Republic of Congo. The crime of rape is not just targeted by men to women and girls but men and boys also suffer from this violence during times of war (Storr, 2011; United Nations, 2014). Pertinent to practice in the human service agency is the challenge that male violence brings to the social worker, who must utilise every skill, to shift men away from this behaviour toward responsible engagement in community life.

The poor mental health of boys and men

As highlighted earlier by Biddulph (1995; 2010; 2014), documented by Laslett (1983), and politicised by Marx and Engels (1848), the transformation of societies by the inexorable pull of industrialisation has upended tradition and moulded populations to economic subjugation, disrupting the close proximity of boys to their adult male kin. This turmoil has left many boys and men sailing uncharted and alone in a world of unsettled security and meaning (Meszaros, 1975). This upheaval has shaken boys and men to the core, leading to mental instability that now ranks as high in illness as the physical ailments. White (2006), in his inaugural address on his conferment to the first Chair in Men's Health at Leeds Metropolitan University, stated that "there are serious concerns about the state of men and their health" (p. 5) across the globe. More men, than women, are dying in each age group until the age of seventy five (White, 2006, p. 1). Beyond seventy five years of age, women die in greater numbers simply because they outnumber men in this age category. What stands out is the fact that men die in greater numbers from nearly all causes of disease and lifestyle deaths.

Three areas of health concern, which reach into the field of social work, are depression, substance abuse, and suicide. While women experience higher rates of depression than men, what is notable for men and depression is the complexity of this illness where substance abuse, anger, violence, and suicidal ideation are all intertwined (Cochran, 2007, p. 133), and thus all must be explored by the social worker during intervention. Suicide rates for men are higher than women across "all ages and races" (Cochran, 2007, p. 133). Suicide, occurring at a rate up to four times

higher in men than women (Flood, 2007, p. 591), is commonly associated with a mix of substance abuse, marital and family problems, financial stress, and crime.

One of the most consistent findings in the study of substance abuse world-wide is the gendered nature of the problem. Males grapple with this problem more than females in most nations (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2004). Underdeveloped in the studies of male substance abuse are gendered frameworks of inquiry that would allow the social scientist to understand more clearly the relationship between social and cultural constructs and this global problem (Anderson, 2007). What is apparent is that some boys and men are not managing within the context of the requirements that lead to a fulfilling community life.

Biddulph (1995), who is wholly unfavourable to the current state of maleness in the Western world, is driven to rewrite the blueprint for male socialisation by the poor statistics on male health. He expands on the issues outlined above, pointing to statistics drawn from across the social sciences. Ninety per cent of incarcerated prisoners are male; ninety per cent of convictions for violence are of men, with seventy per cent of the victims being male; four in five divorces are instigated by women; ninety per cent of behavioural problems and eighty per cent of learning difficulties in schools rest with boys and young men.

Glicken (2005b), and Gurian (2011), working in the fields of social work and counselling, express considerable concern about the state of wellbeing of boys and men in their home country, the United States of America (USA). What stands out when reading their descriptive list of statistics on male wellbeing is the lag in the development of males in that highly educated and industrialised nation. The picture for boys and young men in the areas of K-12 education; behavioural disorders; learning disabilities; intentional injury; homicide; incarceration; and mental health, show males to be well behind females in many areas. All of these authors then pull together the most concerning of statistics, in a finale to what they describe as the woeful state of mental wellbeing amongst boys and young men – the rates of successful suicide that are far greater than those of girls and young women. Gurian (2011), while highlighting to his readership the statistics as well regarded fact, as they have been vetted to a high standard by other professionals, ends his work with a warning that there exists a “dangerous failure rate among males in nearly all social categories” (p. 26). Slater (2003) reports that in the USA more African-American men are in prison, than in college or vocational training. Within this same racial

group, homicide is the leading cause of death for 10-24 year olds (National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, 2012). Glicken (2005b, p. 5) alerts his readership to the fact that the data now gathered (in the USA) on the wellbeing of boys and men highlights “serious” concerns for males “throughout the life span”.

Inhibition and restriction in male gender construction are linked to many aspects of men’s poor health, resulting in failure in marriage, limited social support, and inability to manage work stress, among others (Robbins, 2004; Courtenay, 2011). Boys and men must continue to develop the language and expression of emotion, and build upon skills necessary in social relationships (Pringle, Hearn, Pease, & Ruspini, 2011. pp 4-5; Pease, 2012). What is apparent when examining the health of boys and men is the relationship between male socialisation, in its restrictive stoic form, and the negative consequences for the male role in marriage, family, community, and broader society (Pease, 2009). In effect, men are their own worst enemies, cutting short their lives due to constructions of masculinity that are out of place in a modern world of changing gender roles, greater gender equality, and scientific and technological advancement in the workplace.

The deleterious situation for men has been highlighted across the literature, as indicated above, as in need of attention and rectification. A changing world has not served men well in many ways, and all roads seem to point toward a need for men to undertake changes in how they view their role and place in the world (Pease, 2001a, p. 15). This task is difficult for many, as few role models seem to exist that can stand as a guide for men, in the societal and global project of male reconstruction.

Mentoring Male Clients in Social Work

Pulitzer Prize winning author Jared Diamond (2012), reflecting on his years of work with indigenous cultures, and the rich field of recorded anthropological data (see renowned cultural anthropologist George Murdock, 2009, p. 3, who coded 1264 world cultures), believes modelling for children, by exposure to many adults, is an important wisdom that traditional societies can offer to the industrialised world. Pleban and Diez (2007) state that youth down through history have looked to other adults for guidance and direction. Gurian (2011), drawing from anthropological research, states that males have always required mentoring by elders for their socialisation “across all cultures” (p. 45). Thus mentoring for males can be

understood as a foundational cultural practice in societies of numerous forms worldwide, whether tribal, village, clan, band, religious, settler, or nation. This is the world that Biddulph (2010) harks back to in the West when boys worked alongside many fathers and uncles in the local village or town cottage industry, attended church with them on a Sunday, and as young men entered into apprenticeship with or set up the now forgotten 'Father and Sons' business (Laslett, 1983). The alienation of boys (and men) from men's culture has only been exacerbated by the formation of new societies, such as Australia, Canada, Israel, and the USA, through immigration from across the globe. Extended family networks were broken up as people fled poverty, religious persecution, and war, adding to the plethora of diasporas across the world (Cohen, 2008). Over very recent decades, most national economies have been pulled into the radical economic transformation created by globalisation, resulting in a massive reorganisation of economic life and an ongoing pressure on the labour force to relocate across the breadth of a nation, and globe, in pursuit of work (Korten, 1995). The departure from the world of yesteryear has left boys and men relationship poor.

Anthropology and history tell us that males have, throughout the world, been ensconced in a society of other males for their socialisation (Clarke & Hindley, 1975; Laslett, 1983; Maybury-Lewis, 1992). Much of their learning about work, food production, survival, defence, and comfort comes from other males. While this male to male learning may have lost impetus or strength in the West, remnants remain of its importance in sporting clubs, hotels, and workplaces, where boys and men gather. Men in the helping professions, writing about male socialisation, acknowledge the depth, durability, and importance of male to male learning. Brooks (1998, p. 104) has summarised well the socialisation of males, which then indicates the challenge for men in social work: "men learn to be men in front of other men", therefore male clients "can unlearn some of the more unproductive lessons about manhood and relearn and reinforce some of the more positive lessons". Pringle (1995, p. 214) has emphasised the distinct "commonalities between men" that can be utilised in working with males to harness change. Pease (2001a, p. 3) has outlined his perception of male culture, framing its distinctiveness and privileges in the context of gender relations: "Men have access to some areas of male behaviour and thought that women do not have". He further expands on the uniqueness of male culture by stating the position and task for a male social worker: "given that men value

masculine authority more highly, they should use it to re-socialise men" (2001a, p. 3; 2001b, p. 20).

Diamond (2012, p. 190) notes that social work experience in the USA has shown that a significant other, whether from inside an extended family or a non-related person from outside the family, spending minimal hours with babies and children in families where deficits in parenting are present, brings notable benefits to the young person which then bolsters psychological well-being and resilience. The impact of this support can endure for the long-term. Werner and Smith (1982; 1992), over a thirty year period, undertook research into the resilience of a group of children some of whom were at risk, and found that upon reaching adulthood, and then a further fourteen years after, the at risk group had on the whole found stability. Of significance, in ameliorating environmental risk factors in the home, was the presence of a significant other role model or mentor. The other was noted to be consistent, and caring, and need not have a daily presence. This person could be a teacher, therapist, relative, minister, or family friend. Pleban and Diez (2007), writing about the perilous lack of role models for youth, highlight the value of other significant adults, whether "coach, pastor, friend's parent, a teacher, or a youth leader" (p. 308) filling the gap created by father absence. Such mentoring they argue is the path away from risk, vulnerability and the ensuing difficulties that can result from thoughtless behaviour. The protective factor of the significant other for these age groups strongly infers that such relationship support highlights the value of mentoring for adolescents and adults.

Howe (1998) reminds the social worker that it is through relationship with the other that a person understands, develops, explores, and constructively achieves in the wider world. Learning, modelling, and listening to the experience of others facilitates personal growth. This has been the foundation of social learning theory (Bandura, 1977) where the behaviour, conduct, attitudes, and values of one can provide the model for copying and subsequent integration of new ways of being by another. The transmission of learning in a multitude of ways through personal interaction forms the most compelling means of the building of self, whether in recovery, a period of personal adjustment, or in the development of new skills, for a more empowering way of living. This learning can extend to role playing a particular behaviour and then having the client copy or mimic.

The quality of connectedness between a parent and his or her child/ren has been

found to be the most compelling factor for child psychological wellbeing across numerous cultures in the world (Barber, 1999). Resnick (1999) has reinforced the centrality of research findings that draw this connection between the quality of parenting and the degree of connectedness between parents and their children. The deeper the connection the more capable and resilient is the child. This connectedness has enormous repercussions for how the child is then able to relate to others, in the broader community, and make effective decisions in daily life. Blum (1999) states that this connectedness stands independent of class, ethnicity, geographic location, and family structure. Resnick (1999) notes that this connectedness, which builds personal strength or resilience, can also come from adults other than the parents. Again the role of the significant other is foreshadowed as ever so important.

Numerous definitions of mentoring exist, and each best describes the setting and demographic cohort receiving mentoring support, with commonality found across many definitions, namely degree of emotional involvement, age difference, length and functions of the mentorship (Allen & Eby, 2007, p. 10). In their comprehensive study of mentoring, these authors extracted five key components from these definitions that help bring coherence to this small but significant field of study. First, no two mentoring relationships are the same. The life circumstances of mentee and mentor will see each bring their own unique personalities to the relationship borne from their own life paths. Second, all involve the acquiring of new knowledge. Third, each mentorship consists of both psychosocial and instrumental learning. Fourth, the primary focus is on the development of the mentee. Fifth, the relationship is dynamic with the impact, intensity, and growth, changing over time. This relationship, equal in disclosure to the social work relationship, bears a depth that is only surpassed by friendship, familial, and marital relationships.

The dictionary of social work (Pierson & Thomas, 2010) carries a broad definition of mentoring, and one that is fitting for a profession focused on transformative change with clients living in diverse environments and dealing with challenging life circumstances. The term “bridging social capital” (Pierson & Thomas, 2010, pp. 336-337), that is, transferring skills to another that are not present in the client’s immediate network or environment, is used to describe the overriding task within the relationship. More definitively the role involves an individual who holds more experience transmitting skill, knowledge, and emotional support, in a crafted way to enhance the capabilities of the mentee. Inherent in the role of the

mentor are what Black and Zullo (2008) describe as the key aspects of "knowledge, responsibility, accountability, maturity and ethical behaviour" (p. 298). Notable in the description of the qualities of male mentoring by Pleban and Diez (2007) is just how closely matching these skills and attributes are to social work values (pp. 316-317). This is reinforced by the summation of studies found in Allen and Eby (2007, p. 399) that authenticate the critical values identified by mentees that are congruent with social work values.

Gurian (2011) brings a very different approach to mentoring. Unlike the social scientists who dabble with definitions that frame mentoring today, Gurian calls upon centuries of well-established male mentoring and revives what has become either lost or forgotten in the contemporary world – the rich tradition of time proven intra- and intergenerational learning. It was this all life encompassing mentoring that anchored boys in responsible engagement within community life, teaching them issues of boundaries, respect, and morality. Boys, argues Gurian (2011), have a strong bio-social need for mentoring. This is not just boys who have been deprived of father or father substitute mentors, but all boys. For many this is fulfilled by fathers, and supplemented by sports coaches and classroom teachers, among others. For some the "therapist and social worker" can and "need to be" a mentor (Gurian, 2011, p. 45). When the helping professionals act as mentors it can be seen as a natural and logical extension of the mentor roles from time past, whether it be hunter, healer, shaman, priest, peacemaker, craftsman, or storyteller. For is the therapist and social worker not a part of one or many of these? Males come to male therapists and social workers because they understand that these men know something about maleness. If therapists and social workers do not respond to this then the relationship will falter or fail (Gurian, 2011). So distant have we become from this tradition that Gurian believes "our psychology-based professions … have developed ways that are not optimally effective for working with males in need" (2011, p. 7).

Contemporary mentoring, as organised support from a significant other, has a mixed history within the recent social science literature, with limitations in application and minimal empirical validation in the most commonly practiced field of youth work. The scope of mentoring to date has been limited to three main demographics, namely working with youth, building the capacity and skill of junior staff in the workplace, and supporting students in the university setting. Notable in the youth work setting is the lack of professional university trained men and women

acting in the position of mentor. In the other two fields generally no training occurs for the mentors. It is assumed that their professional expertise will provide the know-how for the support of the mentee.

Youth mentoring can be understood as occurring in informal and formal relationships. Blinn-Pike (2007) concludes, after analysing the outcomes of informal mentoring studies, that outcomes are mixed, with indications that informal mentoring arrangements with youth who present with more challenging behavioural and personality problems show the least gain. The broad outcome in formal mentoring remains the same. Most notable, within all studies, is the lack of university trained professionals with the necessary skill set to support youth from difficult life circumstances presenting with an array of personal and social problems. This absence of trained mentors is identified by Blinn-Pike (2007) as a major gap in contemporary youth mentoring.

While the common practice of mentoring in familial, kinship, and immediate social networks has a history as long as that of human existence, the application into new contemporary settings is limited. What is apparent is that the contemporary world presents far greater challenges for the mentor, and thus the skill set required to work with human service clients places far greater demands on the mentor, and calls for a high level of expertise. This level of expertise is already present in settings for employees and tertiary students where new forms of mentoring are being successfully applied. Pleban and Diez (2007), writing on the intergenerational value of male mentoring, believe the potential for mentoring relationships is still to be realised within the contemporary setting. This potential spans all of life's major milestones, and achievements, confronting boys and men today. Bearman, Blake-Beard, Hunt, and Crosby (2007) comment that "ongoing mentoring research should aim to discover in what kinds of systems mentoring must be embedded for it to be most useful" (p. 384). Further to this, the challenge of new research in mentoring is "conceptualising and operationalizing mentoring and distinguishing it from other relationships", while ". . . obtaining information from outside observers may provide a more objective perception of the relationship" (Butts, Durley, & Eby, 2007, p. 95).

Concluding Remarks

It is apparent from the literature review that boys and men need to contemplate and

engage in transformative change, in ways that broaden their capacity to participate in human relationships, which defy contemporary and historical norms of socialisation. Pringle, Hearn, Pease, and Ruspini (2011) argue that this change must be broad reaching so that men can "be in the world" in new ways (p. 5). It requires that past mentoring traditions be reconsidered, and collectively society mould new blueprints, for an understanding of how boys and men are educated, trained, live, and work in relation to notions of personhood in all its diversity (Hendra et al., 2013, p. 4; Pringle, 1995, p. 1). Critical to this need for men to change is the question: can men reject entrenched ways of being, relinquish power, and incorporate into themselves new types of masculine identity? Pease (2001a) believes boys and men can make the required adjustments that reflect responsible attitudes and actions toward other men, women, and children. But, he argues, the path toward masculine transformation must incorporate one key factor. To understand and help men adjust to changing life circumstances requires reflection on the position and relationship between the genders. It is indisputable that men hold power over women as understood by the violence they inflict on women and girls. The gendered nature of child rearing, or the 'gendered division of labour', and how it rests the weight of responsibility on women for parenting, is also a factor that bears heavily on power between men and women. To not reveal this power is to leave women subject to the oppression of men.

Hartman (2014, p. 215) reminds the social work profession that the professional is political and the power inherent in this dynamic will always have a presence in the relationship between worker and client. If power is so central to gender in social work, how should male practitioners and researchers proceed to interrogate the lives of men? The goal for social work is to find solutions to working with, and researching, men in a way that breaks down hegemonic masculinity while in the same step builds a new masculinity that teaches and engages boys and men in prosocial, skilled, engagement in community life. Pini and Pease (2013) argue that the inherent power differences that lie between the genders must be a focus when researching men or masculinities. This is important, states Pease (2009, p. 162), as this has been a major oversight in past theoretical and practical approaches to working with boys and men. Women, in researching their lives, frame their work within a feminist methodology. It is through this methodology that they bring forth the diversity of experiences of women untainted by any science that men have

created as a dominant, or perceived correct history or world view. Pease (2000a, p. 136) presents feminism, the ideological emancipatory framework developed by women for women, as providing major insights into how social work can proceed to articulate change for boys and men within a gendered framework, that clearly describes power in all its manifestations. Pease (2001b) argues that a profeminist approach to working with males allows the social worker to challenge the power differential found in the context of client practice. Profeminism also responds to the ethical and moral foundations of social work practice by recognising and giving legitimacy to the gendered nature and forms of inequality across the globe. It would belie the fundamental nature of the mission of social work – the creation of equality and provision of social justice - to ignore the differences in power between the genders.

Chapter 2 METHOD

Profeminist Methodology

In this study, where the views of male and female social work practitioners on gender issues in practice and training are surveyed, notions forming the intrinsic elements of relationship that lie between men and women are considered to be framed by power. Issues of violence and father absence, as identified in the literature review, are weighted by men executing power over women, and therefore bear importance in the interrogation of this research. Even though many males wield little power due to multiple encumbrances, such as race, disability, and disengagement from community, their power is still represented in their relationships with other males and females. Thus their position does not exclude them from being a focus in this study, as Pease (2001a, p. 1) argues that for all males their "internalised domination" needs to be challenged. This critical theory of gendered power must have some connection to the methodology of the study. Within this research study, profeminism was placed in the study title, influencing respondents' views of gender in social work practice, thus allowing the researcher to then interpret their responses in light of this gendered methodology.

For male social work practitioners and researchers, profeminism is perhaps a new term but not a new perspective. Profeminist ideology has underpinned men's studies since its inception (Brod, 1987, p. 45). A profeminist approach allows men to link with the broader project of gender emancipation, in a way that maintains and builds trust with women, while realigning the most fundamental and important power differences in society. To tackle male problems outside of this framework is unlikely to hold the support of women, and any gender alliance for change would be weakened, if not broken. Here methodology is crucial. For any social scientist, methodology must make clear the link between the chosen research method and the epistemology and ontology underlying the study (Hearn, 2013, p. 26). Profeminism as a methodology helps the researcher interrogate the lives of men within a framework that keeps notions of power and oppression at the forefront of gender relations (Pease, 2013, p. 48). The researcher can then engage and interpret his work with males, with one foot firmly planted in ideological reason, knowing that the other foot is guiding his practice toward the goal of gender equality.

Male social workers play a significant role in helping boys and men adjust to changing life circumstances in many agency contexts. As they are at the forefront of this work, they have a responsibility to explore, demonstrate, and enact new forms of masculinity that their clients may not have considered, or understood. Their capacity to teach, mentor, guide, and counsel males is not to be underestimated. They hold a powerful position in the lives of their clients, as they represent the frontline of "resistance to dominant forms of masculinity" (Pease, 2000a, p. 154). The profession of social work remains in good standing in the community. Social workers are seen as holding knowledge that can contribute toward better outcomes for individuals, couples, families, and the wider community. The general public expects reasoned and proper guidance from the profession. For male social workers, their position with boys and men in the community is influential. Males will look to male social workers for authoritative knowledge on issues of manliness or masculinity in all of its varied social constructions. This still seems to carry cultural truth and meaning across many cultures. Pease (2001a), Pringle (1995), and Gurian (2011), all reflect this in their work. Thus male social workers can strongly influence a new male agenda with their clients. Gender is the car with the male social worker at the wheel. The direction of the journey can be influenced by the driver, with the client passenger exploring new vistas on the way. A profeminist methodology is the map that will help interpret the journey. If the driver chooses the right vistas, they will remain in the memory of the client passenger for future years.

The relevance of profeminist methodology for this study sits not just with the weighting given to gender, but the process, as substantial questions are asked by a male researcher of males and females, about males and how best to transform the complicated, distant, and often disturbed lives of males. It is in many ways a male project that must give attention to all subjective understandings of males. To ask male and female social workers to ponder how change can occur deep in the hearts and minds of males in a way that will end millennia of violence and domination, among other aspects of masculinity, and the culture built around it, is a study gendered through and through. The process of understanding does not just rest with gaining insights into the life of the male client but asks the male social worker to pause and reflect on his gendered attitude, and approach, to working with males. Any inconsistency between the values of the male social worker and the unequal gendered power relations that he is attempting to change will result in collusion and

the ongoing entrenchment of the oppression of women, and behaviours that reinforce this position, such as violence and father absence. To assist men to change within a profeminist framework challenges and asks male social workers to also internalise the notions present in a feminist worldview. Ultimately, the study brings gender to the very forefront of the profession and looks at the socialisation of males in social work by asking the question: Should we give greater consideration to inculcating an awareness of male socialisation in the training of the male social worker?

In summary, how can a profeminist methodology be described in relation to gendered research in social work? Notwithstanding the diversity in men's lives, where power differences are very notable between men, the essence of patriarchal power, which is held by all men, is its capacity to determine the lives of women (Millett, 1977). Men in social work are required, as part of their commitment to equality, to both refrain from reinforcing male power advantage, and empower those who have been disenfranchised away from a share in society's material and social freedoms (Pringle, 1995). Profeminism, as a framework for male social workers, acknowledges the definition of power applied by women to their predicament, and interrogates the social circumstance that creates this problem (Pease, 2009; 2001a). As a methodology, profeminism takes as its standpoint, a total re-envisioning of social relations, where men and women become equal partners in creating new constructs, so that women can determine their futures in ways previously excluded from their reach (Pease, 2013). In this study, profeminist methodology scans, and impacts the total landscape, by asking the social worker to reflect on his or her personal values, while framing intervention in terms that are insightful of men's relationships with women. The respondents' replies to the survey are then read in this same light. The outcome is an opening to new models and dimensions to practice, which engage and empower men and boys in new ways of relationship to others (Pringle et al., 2011, pp. 4-5).

The Study Participants

This research study sought the views of the professional membership of the Australian Association of Social Workers (AASW) (AASW, 2014a) on a number of questions relating to mentoring of males by male social workers, agency policy on employing male social workers to work with male clients, and university training of

social workers in men's/gender studies. The study was approved by the national research committee of the AASW. The e-survey was conducted via a notice in the AASW fortnightly National e-Bulletin sent to the full membership. At the time of the e-survey, the membership of the AASW had reached its highest ever with over eight thousand in number (AASW, 2014a). This membership comprised both undergraduate and postgraduate workers, and non-qualified student members. The breakdown of the membership is 6915 female members, and 1423 male members. From these, 725 were undergraduate student members, and 51 already eligible students, (qualified social workers undertaking postgraduate study such as PhD or research masters).

It should be made clear that many social workers are not members of the professional association as there is currently no compulsion for qualified practitioners to take out membership of the Association. It is unknown as to the number of practising social workers eligible for membership, but who are not currently holding membership. The researcher, throughout the research process, has been a member of the AASW. Teddlie and Tashakkori (2009, p. 289) believe it is advantageous if the researcher is affiliated in some way to the group being researched as "having a solid understanding of the cultures of the participants and the research context is a valuable asset in the process of making inferences" of the study data. The researcher held no office, influence, or profile in the AASW. The e-survey was hosted by a third party, the Australian Consortium for Social and Political Research Incorporated. No financial or material reward was offered to entice members to participate. While the major focus of the study was on the mentoring of males by male social workers, the research advertisement in the AASW National e-Bulletin was titled 'Gender in Social Work Practice'. The aim was to have the membership focus more broadly on the subject of gender as a framework for reflecting on theoretical and practice issues relating to how gender was perceived and enacted in the profession.

The Sampling Rationale

The reason for surveying professionally trained and in-training social workers was to tap into the broad range of views held by this cohort, who were trained (or in training) across many universities (the vast majority in Australia), and who held

diverse cultural views, while working across the full range of agencies dealing with the broad spectrum of problems confronted by both front line workers, managers, policy makers, administrators, and educators. By including student social workers it was hoped that the spectrum of views would be as broad as possible. Stretching the research to include to those who had recently entered social work study, fresh from high school training, where the third and fourth waves of feminism would be alive, could bring forth notions of gender fresh from the world of social endeavour. There also lies a diversity of practice approaches across the AASW membership: from those who trained in a more generalist, practically oriented way; those who have embedded themselves in an evidence-based style of practice; and those who draw more from the rich base of theory available to the profession. No data was sought on the original university training of members on 'gender issues' or type of agency setting in which he or she was employed. These influences would hopefully seep into the answers provided to the set of existing questions.

Design of the Study

A mixed methods approach was chosen to capture a broad range of views from the study cohort. The writer believed that only by approaching the subject material from this perspective could comprehensive views be sourced on a diverse subject such as gender. A broad view of the literature in men's/gender studies tells us that gender is neither fixed in time, place, or person, and is understood not just through training and practice experience, but is engaged as a participatory life exchange that manipulates and moulds views on gender positions. In particular, with male gender constructs in states of high transition today (Pease, 2001b, p. 15), a mixed research approach seems important to capture the debates on what constitutes masculinist values. Questions were kept to a minimum, but scope provided for respondents to take as much time in the comments section as they wished. The fact that all questions did not focus on mentoring was deliberate. By including questions on agency hiring policy, and university training, the researcher hoped that the broadest possible picture would be obtained on gender as a key theory and practice in social work. Attitudes and values not captured by the closed ended questions could be expressed in the comments section, with respondents able to articulate any range of views. The parameters of the study were as wide as the notions of gender itself. Quantitative

and qualitative responses would enrich the data, to provide a course of understanding across an individual's field of thought. Ultimately, the study hoped to explore the pathways linking male mentoring and gender in the social work profession. The study utilises an e-survey design to determine the views of a group of social workers on a variety of issues relating to male mentoring and gender in social work practice and training. The survey was advertised under the heading of 'Gender in Social Work Practice' with the following introduction: 'A global pandemic of male violence against women and girls, increasing concern about large scale father absence, and high rates of male incarceration, substance abuse and suicide, present formidable if not seemingly insurmountable challenges for social work across the world. This postgraduate social work research seeks a response from social workers on male social workers mentoring male clients. Further wide ranging questions on gender in practice and training are asked.'

The questions are listed below. For questions 5 to 10, a section inviting further comment was provided. Question 11 was a question that sought no specific answer: instead it asked for any further comments on the study. It provided an opportunity for very broad critical appraisal on the theoretical underpinning of the study, and the inherent values and position of gender in practice, whether seen from the perspective of the social work respondent, or his or her perception of the needs of the client.

1. What is your gender? Please circle. Male. Female.
2. What is your age bracket? Please circle. 20-30, 31-40, 41-50, 51-60, 61-plus.
3. Are you currently studying to be a practising social worker?
4. What year did you graduate as a qualified social worker?
5. Should increased attention be given to mentoring by male social workers for male clients, as a new dimension in the social work relationship?
6. Do male social workers need to modify aspects of their professional self (attitudes, behaviours, and values) to become more skilled at mentoring male clients?
7. Are male social workers better able than female social workers to achieve effective change in male clients in ameliorating violence, father absence, and improvements in maladaptive coping and mental health?
8. Should priority be given to matching male clients with male social workers?
9. Should human service agencies adopt policies of positive discrimination and employ male social workers to mentor to male clients the positive attributes of pro-social, skilled engagement in community life?

10. Should university schools of social work compulsorily incorporate men's/gender studies in the curriculum, to educate male social workers on the socialisation of men, the oppression of women, and the pathways toward gender equality?
11. Please feel free to add any other comments about this research? These will be considered for inclusion in the research and any article publication.

A thematic analysis was undertaken on the comments provided by respondents to determine the influence of gender ideology, and the relevance, and weighting, given to mentoring and its standing within relationship-based practice. The data is extracted both as a whole and then as having ownership to either a male or female respondent. This seems important in a study such as this, as the epistemological leaning of this work is not generalised, but steers toward the re-visioning of the male world view, for client and social worker alike. Themes are chosen not only for the representative or indicative presence of a particular view, but included to highlight a minimal expression, or near absence, of certain theoretical or practice values. This too seems crucial, as Braun and Clarke (2006, p. 89) remind the researcher that revealing the "tensions and inconsistencies" within the thematic data contributes towards the overall picture. To mine the most meaningful content from the data corpus, the researcher has undertaken a broad sweep across the survey to bring forth extracts that best illuminate the ideas within. In this study manual coding was the approach taken.

Chapter 3 RESULTS

The Sample, Context, and Limitations

It is always uncertain what any survey will reveal, even one that sources opinions from a professional association, where the researcher is a member holding knowledge of the culture of the association. As with all professional associations, the world views of the membership, and the values they encompass, vary. This is the case in social work where political and ideological differences run deep. Sewpaul (2014) acknowledged the ideological division in her address to the 2014 Joint World Conference on Social Work, Education and Social Development, where her comment on the "shadow side" of social work drew applause from the sixteen hundred persons in the auditorium. Mullaly (2007, p. ix), in his definitive text on structural social work, is highly critical of conservative social work educators who peddle an agenda inconsistent with what he perceives to be the emancipatory goals of social work, which further highlights the conflicting views within the profession.

The test for this study was how would the diversity of views of the membership, when mixed with gender, show up in the survey. Is gender still a vexatious, divisive, and heated topic as it was during the second wave of feminism? Will men and women present very different ideological positions on the matter, or has there been a smoothing of the debate over recent decades? Are women frustrated over the fact that violence against their sex is still highly problematical across the world? Are men still unsteady in their role as a result of the feminist challenge? Will the presence of a backlash against feminism, as highlighted by Faludi (2006), become apparent among the males in this study? If so, will this indicate a spurious acceptance of profeminism as the chosen methodology for this research? Surprisingly, this study showed few extreme differences in opinion among the respondents, whether student or graduate, male or female, young or old, experienced or new. Slightly more men than women responded to the survey, which was somewhat of a surprise considering the large majority of the AASW membership is female.

Thirty nine members responded to the survey over a five week period. During this timeframe the survey was advertised on three occasions in the AASW National fortnightly e-Bulletin (10 September, 2014b; 24 September, 2014c; 8 October,

2014d). To place the response rate into context, 19% of the eligible 8,338 person membership of the AASW, or 1331 members, voted in the October 2014 election for a new president of the AASW to serve a three year term (AASW, 2014e). This election received publicity in National e-Bulletins in the lead up to the ballot and a 'special reminder to vote e-Bulletin' was sent to the membership on 1 October 2014, eight days before the closing of the poll. Voting papers were posted to the membership. This is an organisation where full membership costs six hundred and seventy dollars per annum. In terms of the number of respondents to this study, the outcome is consistent with results obtained from the publication *Associations Matter: 2013 State of the Sector Study for Professional Associations*, where "a majority of individuals most value the services that benefit them individually". "They do not join to participate, but for the services they receive" (Survey Matters, 2013). Why service is not seen as engagement in the development of new knowledge, as this study sets out to achieve, is unclear. Immediately following the advertising of this study in the AASW e-Bulletins, the AASW changed its policy on research within the Association and offered continuing professional development points to any member participating in AASW advertised research (AASW, 2014f). Social workers engaging in research, to develop new practices, are an important direction for the profession. Paterson (2013) has highlighted the problem of social workers continuing with their professional development, post university graduation. The relative lack of interest by social workers in building the knowledge base of their profession is a question for another study.

Description of Data

Briefly, of the thirty nine respondents, twenty one were male (53.9%) and eighteen female (46.1%). These near equal numbers were ideal for a study that took as its central focus a comparative look at gender views in practice. Just over half of these were in the age groups of fifty one to sixty and sixty one plus, placing them in the era when the second wave of feminism was at its height. It was assumed by the researcher that this historical period may influence the views on gender of a number of practitioners in this age group. Would this show in the data? Few respondents were in the twenty to thirty age group, perhaps indicating a leaning toward social work as a profession for more mature aged persons. The number of practising social

workers who responded that were graduates was 32 (82.1%). The average year of graduation was 1995. This depth of experience across the cohort would hopefully enrich the data. Some respondents missed answering certain questions. No word was given as to why they overlooked certain questions, or failed to add comments as part of their answer. Pallant (2013) reminds the researcher that this is commonplace in the data gathering process, and often there is no rational answer as to why respondents provide the inevitable ‘missing data’. Despite this, the gaps were small and did not impact on the overall richness of the responses.

The lead question in the study sought views on support for mentoring of males by male social workers. A large majority, twenty six out of thirty five, expressed support for mentoring, with significant detail provided in the comments section to further substantiate their views. Following directly from this question, respondents were then asked that if mentoring was to be achieved, would modifications to practice, in the realm of self as change agent, be required. Again a noticeable majority of twenty, out of thirty two, believed a readjustment by the male social worker was required. Delving deeper into gender based practice, the next question, perhaps bold and contentious in idea, but with foundation (Clapton, 2013, p. 31; Pease, 2001a, p. 3; Pease, 2001b, p. 20; Pringle, 1995, p. 214), asked respondents to consider whether male professionals rather than female were better placed to ameliorate violence, father absence, and help with maladjustment and mental health issues in the male client group. A majority of seventeen out of twenty nine were supportive. The next question was strongly tied to the previous, in probing for an answer as to whether priority should be given to matching male clients with male social work practitioners. Respondents were equally mixed in their views with sixteen supportive and fourteen unsupportive of the question. Following in a logical progression, question nine entered into new territory, by asking if human service agencies should adopt policies of positive discrimination to employ males to work with males. Here it was implied that such an arrangement should only proceed with males whom it was considered could benefit from the presence and skill of a male professional. This was the only occasion where a majority, and a very small one at that, expressed disagreement. Fifteen thought the idea had merit and expressed support, while sixteen stated no to positive discrimination in employment practices. The final question, before the survey asked respondents for general comments, looked at the training of social workers. The question asked if all students in social

work should attend compulsory training in men's/gender studies as part of the university curriculum. An overwhelming majority expressed agreement with this question, with twenty five in the affirmative and six in the negative.

Data Analysis

Quantitative

To create a picture from the data gathered in this survey, a number of statistical analyses were undertaken to test the relationship between key independent variables. The results are detailed under the questions below. In all tests, $p < .05$ was chosen as the measure of significance. For many of the tests the small sample size proved Chi-square as unresponsive, and Fisher's exact test was the chosen measurement. Percentage results reflecting research importance are highlighted, and reverted to as the key measurement where sample sizes in the tests have proven too small.

1. What is the relationship between gender and support for mentoring (Q1, Q5)?

A Fisher's exact test indicated attention for mentoring of males by male social workers across gender as statistically insignificant ($n = 35$, $p = 0.129$). Percentage wise, in interpretation, there remained some significance with males recording 65.4% in favour of giving greater attention to mentoring by male social workers, compared to 34.6% of females. Overall, 74.3% supported the idea of increased attention to mentoring of males by male social workers as an area of practical use in relationship-based practice. (See Table A.)

2. What is the relationship between age and support for mentoring (Q2, Q5)?

A Fisher's exact test showed the mentoring of males by male social workers across age groups as statistically insignificant ($n = 35$, $p = .090$). Percentage wise, it is notable to mention that 100% ($n = 4$) of the respondents in the 20-30 age group supported this form of mentoring. This was repeated by 100% of respondents in the 41-50 age group ($n = 4$). In the 61 plus age group, a healthy 85.7% of respondents ($n = 7$) supported the question, with 75% doing so in the 51-60 age group ($n = 12$). In the 31-40 age group only three ($n = 8$) supported mentoring, or 37.5%. Despite this result, the support for mentoring received a very favourable result across most age groups. (See Table B.)

3. What is the relationship between gender and modifying professional self to become a better mentor (Q1, Q6)?

A Fisher's exact test indicated the relationship between gender and the need for male social workers to modify aspects of their professional self as statistically significant

(n = 32, p = .030). Here 75% of male respondents were in support, with 25% of females in support. This indicates that a significant majority of males supported the modification of self to become a better mentor, whilst a majority of females did not see this as necessary. (See Table A.)

4. What is the relationship between gender and whether male social workers are better at working with males than female social workers (Q1, Q7)?

A Fisher's exact test indicated that the relationship between gender, and the capacity for male social workers, compared to female social workers, to assist male clients, to be statistically insignificant where (n = 29, p = .438). Percentage wise male respondents recorded greater support for male social workers achieving effective change with male clients (70.6%) compared to female respondents (29.4%). This indicates that a healthy number of male respondents believed males were in a better position to work with male clients, whilst the support from females was low. (See Table A.)

5. What is the relationship between gender and a priority of matching male clients with male social workers (Q1, Q8)?

A Chi-squared test for independence (with Yates Continuity Correction) indicated no significant association between gender and the priority of matching male clients with male social workers, $x^2(1, n = 30) = .009, p = 1.0, phi = -.009$. Percentage wise there remained a slightly greater number of males who supported giving priority to matching male clients with male social workers (56.3%), compared to females at (43.8%). This indicates that male respondents are giving noticeably more weight to the priority of matching male clients with male social workers than female respondents (See Table A.)

6. What is the relationship between gender and adopting policies of positive discrimination in agency settings (Q1, Q9)?

A Chi-squared test for independence (with Yates Continuity Correction) indicated no significant association between gender and human service agencies adopting policies of positive discrimination, $x^2(1, n = 31) = .029, p = 1.0, phi = -.029$. A slightly greater number of males supported positive discrimination (53.3%) compared to females (46.7%). This indicates that a slightly greater number of male respondents are supportive of adopting policies of positive discrimination for male social workers than female respondents. (See Table A.)

7. What is the relationship between gender and compulsory teaching of men's/gender studies at university (Q1, Q10)?

A Fisher's exact test indicated the relationship between gender and the compulsory teaching of men's/gender studies to be statistically insignificant where (n = 31, p = 1.000). Here, slightly more males (56.0%) supported this idea compared to females (44.0%). Within this result there is still an indication that male social workers are

showing noticeably more interest in the compulsory teaching of men's/gender studies at university than female respondents. (See Table A.)

8. What is the relationship between age and support for compulsory teaching of men's/gender studies at university (Q2, Q10)?

A Chi-squared test for independence indicated no significant association between age and university schools of social work compulsorily incorporating men's/gender studies into the curriculum, $x^2(4, n = 31) = .424$, $p = .234$, phi = .424. What stood out as notable here is that the least support for this idea came from the 61 plus age group, where respondents were equally divided with 50% in support. The other age categories leant strongly toward this idea with the 100% of the 20-30 age group in support; 83.3% of the 31-40 age group; 100% of the 41-50 age group; and 81.8% of the 51-60 age group. Within this result there is still a strong indication that a majority of age groups highly value the compulsory teaching of men's/gender studies at university (See Table B.)

Table A: Number and percentage in support according to gender

Survey question	M No/Total. (%)	F No/Total. (%)	No/Total. (%)
Q5	17/20 (85.0)	9/15 (60.0)	26/35 (74.3)
Q6	15/19 (78.9)	5/13 (38.5)	20/32 (62.5)
Q7	12/18 (66.7)	5/11 (45.4)	17/29 (58.6)
Q8	9/17 (52.9)	7/13 (53.8)	16/30 (53.3)
Q9	8/17 (47.0)	7/14 (50.0)	15/31 (48.4)
Q10	14/17 (82.4)	11/14 (78.6)	25/31 (80.6)

Table B: Number and percentage in support according to age

Survey question	20-30 No/Total. (%)	31-40 No/Total. (%)	41-50 No/Total. (%)	51-60 No/Total. (%)	61+ No/Total. (%)	No/Total. (%)
Q5	4/4 (15.4)	3/8 (11.5)	4/4 (15.4)	9/12 (34.6)	6/7 (23.1)	26/35 (74.3)
Q10	4/4 (16.0)	5/6 (20.0)	4/4 (16.0)	9/11 (36.0)	3/6 (12.0)	25/31 (80.6)

Qualitative

Eleven themes were extracted from the comments provided in questions five to eleven. The letter Q followed by a number indicates the question it derived from, and the letters M and F, with a number, show which male or female respondent expressed this view. In numerous cases, examples taken for themes were not confined to certain questions, but found across the full survey, reflecting both an inter-relationship between the questions, and an understanding of the gendered nature of this research, and its focus on exploring new paths for practice.

Themes:

1. The representation of male hegemony as found in the key words: patriarchy; male privilege; misogyny; power; inequality; domination, and violence.

The interest in choosing these key words was to see if, and how, notions of male hegemony were recognised and named, and how centrally they were placed as part of a gendered research study. Would male or female social workers give credence to the structures that underpin gender relations throughout the world? If not, the gender emancipation project would be on very unstable ground. If any notion of gender inequality was present it would be fertile ground for making inroads into male transformation, through the male to male social work relationship. The methodology of this study must also bear some relationship to these themes found in the qualitative data. These identified themes must then be examined for relevance, consistency, and strength to the question, in this case mentoring. The reason for this is that male hegemony and the construction of gender underlie the motivation for the research, and the interest in adopting a profeminist methodology.

A number of respondents gave weight to male hegemony across many of the questions that asked for comments. For example, M respondent (10) (Q5) stated, "as men we are indoctrinated into a culture of privilege which maintains the power imbalance between men and women in current social structures". "Male social workers place in this and their responsibility to contribute to its undoing in order to create a more equal society is an important part of supporting male social workers to do their bit". In Q6, this same respondent (10) acknowledged that he, "needed to change aspects of my personal and professional life before I could be of any benefit to male clients, because I was unknowingly supporting male privilege". M respondent (39) (Q6) highlighted how important it is for male social workers to understand the socialisation of men into "power", among other aspects of men's

issues such as "violence and aggressive behaviour". Violence was identified by a number of respondents across the study. In Q5 a male respondent (12) focused on the "gendered nature of intimate partner violence". Within the same question a female respondent (34) discussed how male social workers have a particular role in tackling the problem of men and their violent conduct in relationships. Two respondents brought attention to this subject from a different perspective. In Q10, a female respondent (17) believed men's studies was "essential" for "looking also at the ways men have been subjected to violence in terms of the way they have been socialised within this culture – preparing them to be soldiers mentality". In Q11, a male respondent (22) made the point that "not every male is violent or sexist". He argued that not all men, or women, fit a gender mould. In relation to Q6, about male social workers modifying aspects of their professional self, one male respondent (31) highlighted that the personal is the professional, and if male social workers are to make any adjustments to their professional practice, within the context of gender, then there should be no discrepancy whereby "sexist and misogynist" values are found in their personal lives. In Q10, M (5) in response to compulsory education for male social workers in men's/gender studies stated, "being aware of the power you have because of your gender and knowing that society is built by men, for men and discriminates against women and children is a valuable lesson". In this same question, a female (16) respondent stated, "gender studies should be included but covering both men and women, and alerting students to the difficulties women face from the patriarchy". Another male (36) stated, in Q9, that all social workers, male and female, needed to be trained to the level where they understood issues of, "power at play". Another female respondent (17) (Q10), who touched upon male hegemony, highlighted the fact that, "men suffer equally under patriarchal domination *in* social and political structures". In Q11, where respondents were free to add any comments about the overall thrust of the research survey, M respondent (10) gave considerable attention to the fact that mentoring can work if the male social worker is aware of his own privilege ("we are already privileged as men") and that mentoring of males is not done in a way that excludes women from engaging equally in the cultural life of the human service agency. In the same question, M (31) stated, "overcoming misogyny and sexism is a complicated and complex field to explore".

<u>2. Prefer to talk about gender as a general term rather than a specific gender.</u>

Gender, as a descriptive term, brings forth a diversity of views, as its meaning is

fluid, and its application, for all actors in society, is contested. It was expected that this study would be no different, with a range of views on gender being influenced by the respondents' age, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, political values, religion, and site of work. In response to Q5, a male (12) stated, "gender is not important in service delivery, but have seen same gender mentoring working when probably wouldn't with different gender mentoring". Another male respondent (8) to this question of male social workers mentoring males stated, "I would have liked to put maybe, as I think it is perhaps more important to talk about how gender impacts on practice". A female respondent (3) to Q7, in reply to whether male social workers are more effective in working with male clients, stated, "I would suggest that it has more to do with skill, ability to engage respectfully, and work in partnership, rather than the gender of the worker". A male respondent (5) to this same question concurred that, "female social workers are equally skilled" in working with men on the issues mentioned in the question. Another male (14) replied to Q7 that, "gender has a significant role here, but it would be important not to generalise to the point where merit is overlooked". Another male (33) was very clear in response to the same question. "I believe it all comes down to training, confidence, and experience. Any good social worker can do this work as long as they have the specific skill set to manage". A male (11) stated, in regards to matching male clients with male social workers, that a "client by client analysis needs to be taken". In Q8 a female respondent (18) stated, "all social workers regardless of gender need to be equipped to assist men". A male (31) concurred stating, "I think the skills and approach of the service provider is what matters most to men, not their gender". Another male (38) stated in response to this same question that matching of client to worker should occur "irrespective of gender". In Q9, regarding adopting positive discrimination in human service organisations, a male (33) stated that cases should be allocated "irrespective of gender".

3. Relationship.

It seems logical to explore the theme of relationship immediately after gender, as the common implied underlying factor found across the second qualitative theme was the shared skill of establishing a relationship with the client. This skill is a fundamental base skill in social work practice (Biestek, 1957; Hennessy, 2011). If social workers are to help the client successfully 'reconstruct' a world view, then an understanding of whether gender plays a role in this process must be explored in light of the central

question of the thesis.

In Q6 a female respondent (15) gave great depth to the question about whether male social workers need to modify aspects of their professional self to increase their level of skill. “They (male social workers) need to become aware of their own reactions and sense of self and how to manage this within the counselling relationship . . . Any training in gender studies needs to be complemented with a serious commitment to understanding human relationships and the dynamics of the therapeutic relationship”. Another female respondent (23) answered this same question by stating, “the professional relationship does not always lend itself to mentoring”. In Q8 a male respondent (21) stated that the “counselling relationship” would influence whether a male social worker is matched with a male client. In Q7, regarding whether male social workers are better placed to achieve change in male clients, a male respondent (10) made two very pertinent points. He argued that it remains crucial what male social workers say in their “conversations with men” about women, and that outside of this “they model respectful relationships” with female colleagues. Overall, two comments gave perspective to an alternative view of male social workers working with males. One female respondent (15), in a general comment in Q11, stated, “it would be worrying if the study could be reductive, rather than taking into account the complexity of human relations”. A male respondent (14), in Q7, stated, “it would be important not to generalise to the point where merit is overlooked”.

4. Depends on what the client wants (client self-determination).

Mentoring, and the special provision for male social workers, was incorporated into several of the questions, and was implicated in several others. This could be seen as overriding the concept of self-determination in social work. Was this taken up by the respondents?

In regards to Q5, about increasing the focus on male social workers mentoring male clients, a male respondent (9) stated, “it depends on what the client wants”. In Q7, regarding male social workers being in a better position to bring about change in male clients, a male respondent (8) put it differently. He asked, “do males have the capacity to ask for a male social worker?” Within this same question another male (30) stated, “it would depend on the client”. In Q8, regarding matching male social workers with male clients, the male respondent (2) wrote, “perhaps give the client the choice”. A female respondent (15) said “matching should occur after careful

assessment which takes in life experiences and recognises the client's wishes and preferences". A female respondent (18) stated in Q8 that "they should be provided the option". This theme was pronounced in Q8. The theme in Q8 continues with the following comments. A female respondent (29) stated, "it would be good for any client to have the option to choose the gender of any health professional they work with". She added, "each case is different and should be assessed individually". One male respondent (31) went straight to the point stating, "why not give men the choice?" This was reiterated in Q9 by a female respondent (26) who stated, "the client should be able to make the choice". In Q11 a male respondent (15) summed up this theme by stating, as a general comment on the survey, "I would think an important consideration is what the male clients themselves want from human service agencies". This response implies an emphatic yes. Client self-determination cannot be put aside. Its place has been sacrosanct in social work, and the respondents reflected its importance in this study.

5. Filling a gap for males.

In seeking to understand the place of mentoring in social work practice today, it seemed worthwhile, in this analysis, to ask the questions: Are the respondents identifying, or observing, a lack of male mentors within their client group? Is there a gap in service provision, or family structure, that shows up as insufficient, problematic, or notable, for its absence of maleness for boys and men? In an attempt to grasp the meaning of this theme, notions of maleness have been pulled from the respondents' comments to draw a picture of how the male gender is perceived in a 'deficit' way. There was considerable depth to the responses to these questions, with several threads of thought found across the survey.

A male respondent (12) in Q5 placed the issue within social work training by stating, "I am concerned about the lack of social work training in the gendered nature of intimate partner violence". A female (27) answering within the same question stated, "intervention options are limited due to the lack of male workers". A male (33) reiterated the same point in Q5 by stating, "my experience shows that there are limited numbers of male social workers in my field". He added, "across the board something needs to change for workers to feel more prepared with how to do work with men". In Q5, the male respondent (5) was very clear. He stated, "I have noticed an increase in requests for male role models/mentors and a lack of formal/informal male mentors available". A female (17) in Q5 voiced a general

concern, “not enough is being done from empathic and therapeutic standpoint for the cultural and personal malaise of men”. A male (22), in Q5, took the subject out into the broader community and stated, “the lack of male role models in all areas of society is apparent”. A male respondent (38) in Q6 thought the issue lay with the agency. He stated that the employing organisation should be “more flexible, creating ‘men friendly’ environments in practice”. This was reiterated by another male (31) in Q8 who stated that “the employment of male social workers led to an increase in presentations by men to our service”. Within the same question another male (22) laid his comment directly with the agency by stating, “my biggest concern is the lack of positive appreciation of male social workers”. This was stated in a similar way by another male (38) in Q9 who voiced his concern that “male specific issues can be side-lined or misunderstood by female dominated welfare industry management”. Again this was repeated by another male (14) in Q11 who stated, “it is difficult as a male social worker working within a female dominated profession”.

6. Mentoring is not a social work role.

A fundamental theme is the converse of the survey question. Is mentoring a social work role? Is it a misreading of social work practice to consider mentoring as having a place in relationship-based practice? Historically, it hasn’t held much professional social work space to date. Would this be pronounced in the survey?

One male respondent (14), expressing his opinion in relation to Q5, regarding whether increased attention should be given to mentoring by male social workers, stated, “whilst I think that male to male mentoring could be an important and valuable means to improving society, I don’t really see it as a male social workers job per se”. One female respondent (23) stated, in Q6, that “the professional relationship does not always lend itself to mentoring”. A male (19) in the same question was quite blunt in his comment, placing it within the heart of practice, “anyone can offer mentorship, but after four years at university I think social workers can offer a bit more of a professional service”. These were the only comments that were unsupportive of mentoring.

7. Importance of male social workers.

How important are males in working with male clients? Are they seen differently than females? Can they fill a certain role more purposefully than a female? The notion that male social workers may have something different to offer to male clients is posed as both a potential and contentious subject in this study. Would this raise

the ire of female workers who saw opportunism by men in the profession? Would male social workers reflect collusion in their responses to this theme?

One male (19), in Q7, was emphatic that male social workers could achieve more effective change with male clients, in the areas identified in the study question, when compared with female social workers. His comment read, “yes, yes, yes of course”. Within the same question another male (33) was more circumspect. He stated, “I wouldn’t say that males are better but rather males bring a different perspective”. In Q8, where the respondent was asked to comment on priority being given to matching male social workers with male clients he (33) responded, “if possible but not at the exclusion of female workers”. A female respondent (23) within the same question stated, “if it makes a difference to the client”. A male (2) in Q7 thought, “there is probably a gender advantage in this context”. Another female respondent (34) in Q8 stated it “depends on the situation and client’s needs and wish”. In Q9, a male social work respondent (11) thought a case existed for applying policies of positive discrimination and employing male social workers. He cited the case of only females working in women’s refuges. This was reiterated by a female respondent (1) who stated, “in some cases yes”. She then qualified this statement by stating, “to achieve this, more must be done to recruit and train male practitioners”. A male respondent (38) reaffirmed this position by stating, “on some occasions with some clients”. Within the same question another male (2) stated, “if research can clearly show gender benefits then perhaps movement in that direction is valid”. In Q7 a male respondent (5) stated, “sometimes a male client may just want to speak to or have a male to look up to”.

8. Qualities that are not gender specific (compassion; empathy; dignity; unconditional positive regard; and respect).

During the first readings of the comments provided by respondents, the above words stood out for their importance as foundational values in the profession. What place did they have in this study, where they were not used by the researcher specifically as the language to describe any theoretical or practice approaches? Why did respondents put forward these values?

In Q5 a male respondent (30) was very descriptive of how such values were perceived to lie within this study. He stated, in regards to the value of male social workers mentoring male clients, “if SW’s have the personal attributes of compassion, empathy and a modicum of intelligence they will model positive traits to both males

and females". This same respondent (30), in reply to Q6 about whether male social workers were adequately equipped to work with male clients, believed male social workers already came with the necessary kit to support male clients. He cited "unconditional positive regard" as a key principle. In Q6, a male respondent (19) stated, in regards to male social workers modifying aspects of their professional self, that we should be teaching men to treat others with "dignity and respect". In Q6, in regards to male social workers modifying aspects of their professional self, a female respondent (17) concurred with the above male, by stating, "if male workers are connecting with social work values and ethics they would not need to modify their attitudes, i.e. respect for the dignity of all life, compassion etc". Respect was a word that appeared noticeably within a number of responses. Whether it was to "serve clients . . . respectfully", Q6, F (34), "to engage respectfully", Q7, F (3), 'model respectful relationships", Q7, M (10), or to "treat others with dignity and respect" Q7, M (19), respect, for these respondents, carried a sense of where the most critical engagement with the client stood. In Q7, the F respondent (17) rooted her view in a prime value by stating, "males and females would be equally effective if they came from a standpoint of compassion". Perhaps the female respondent (7), in Q6, summed up these collective views by stating, it "depends on your view of what the professional self is".

9. Support for mentoring.

Support for mentoring lay central to the study, and this exploration should be read in conjunction with other themes, as a nuanced understanding was sought on the views of this proposed relationship-based practice. How would mentoring be envisaged within social work? Would the study delineate, describe, or define mentoring in set, or diverse, ways? Would culture, agency, or theory, indicate how mentoring could move forward in social work practice? This theme takes mentoring as a component for exploration in practice within the context of a gendered world view, and asks the respondents to bring forth their understanding of its place and function in the corpus of professional practice.

The proposal of male mentoring having a place in male social work practice was described by one female respondent (7), in Q5, "as an important contribution that male social workers can make to young men and the community". Within the same question a male respondent (21) stated "it may help bring other male models into the client's life and thus broaden the client's ideas of masculinity and what it means to

be male". A female respondent (23), in Q5, queried, "it depends what is meant by mentoring", but then added in the same sentence, "it is important to have male social workers and they can certainly be leading male role models when working with men". Within the same question a male respondent (33) stated in descriptive detail, "clients grow attached to good role models and there is capacity for male social workers to do this particularly if a client has not had good experiences of attachment to significant others". Another male respondent (39) clarified his view of mentoring stating, "if this can be done with a framework of positive masculinity". In Q6 a male respondent (33) gave specific focus to his answer by stating, "I think male social workers need to understand the positive impact that they can have on fathers". In Q7 a female respondent (1) gave insight into the advantages of a male worker by stating, "I do think that in some situations it is imperative that male practitioners are modelling appropriate behaviours with regard to anger, respect for women, etc". Within the same question regarding whether male social workers can bring about better outcomes with male clients, in comparison to female social workers, a female respondent (7) replied, "I think it is particularly powerful for male social workers to play this role". A male respondent (10) within the same question gave emphasis to the place of mentoring by stating, "It's just that men need to begin to model the behaviour in personal and professional practice . . . in their conversations with men" to address male privilege. A female respondent (15) saw advantages of a male social worker: "it may be for young men and boys who have grown up without a male figure that this will be helpful". She added that this would not always be the case. A male respondent (19) believed it was important for males to have male "role models" to learn how to treat others "with dignity and respect". In Q8 a female respondent (7) stated, "I think largely having an open supportive even loving male mentor could make a huge difference in the lives of young men". In Q8, a male respondent (5) believed that mentoring had a place "if there is an identified need that the young person is seeking a male role model or mentor".

The final question that sought general comments from respondents revealed a range of views on mentoring. A male respondent (5) identified, "I've found in my practice that there is a need for male mentors for young men and a lack of social workers to fill this need". Another male respondent (19) concurred by stating, "some clients need gender specific workers for best outcomes, especially children with poor male role models". As an end to this theme, one female respondent (23) raised the

issue of “the definition of mentoring” used in this study, “as it is used in varied ways in a multitude of contexts”. Her implication was that mentoring may mean different things to different people. What does it mean specifically in the context of this study?

10. The need to modify professional self.

If the male social worker is to become a suitable mentor for a male client, does he need to develop new knowledge and skill so that he can be more effective in his role as change agent? This question poses a new thought, asking whether the new practice of mentoring can move forward on the existing knowledge and skill base held by the social worker.

Within Q6 lay a range of responses to this theme, with both females and males providing insightful comments. This female respondent (7) gave a detailed answer. “Maybe, I would imagine male social workers might need support to do this as we all have internalised gender roles/expectations that could get in the way of supporting young men to be emotional, vulnerable and reflective, and to engage with the social construction of masculinity in a thoughtful, and hopefully sometimes playful way”. A male respondent (10) spoke of his own experience: “As a male I needed to change aspects of my personal and professional life before I could be of any benefit to male clients”. He added, “we already have too many professions in this field telling other people to change their behaviour while they maintain their own unhelpful behaviours and aren’t willing to look at them”. A female respondent (15) placed her answer within the requirements of the professional relationship. She argued that, “they (male social workers) need to become aware of their own reactions and sense of self and how to manage this within the counselling relationship and develop sensitivity to the client’s transference and their counter transference to the client”. This she stated should be taught within both gender studies and human relationships training. Placing an onus on training was reiterated by one male respondent (19). A male respondent (20) believed an increased awareness of working with males could occur in the workplace by offering opportunities to male staff.

11. Ongoing development is necessary as a practitioner.

Biestek (1957) was clear in his views on casework that ongoing learning was a necessity, if one was to continue to develop as a social work practitioner. History never lies dormant. The landscape of our lives is one of constant movement, transition, and upheaval, and if the social worker is to assist the client effectively he

will need to engage in ongoing learning to position himself as a trusted and knowledgeable agent of change. What relationship was drawn between the newly proposed concept of male mentoring, and the development of new ideas, as emergent knowledge in the field of social work practice?

Considerable support was given to the idea of ongoing learning by the practitioner. In Q5, a female respondent (15) was very clear in stating that it is "always necessary to develop oneself as a practitioner". A male (19) followed with a similar comment, "any information and training is useful". Within the same question, another male (34) confined his comment to working with men by stating, "I agree more attention needs to be given to skilling up social workers in general for working with male clients". He elaborated further by stating, "across the board something needs to change for workers to feel more prepared with how to do work with men". In Q6, a male respondent (4) brought focus to the theme by stating, "if your role is specifically working with male clients then there should be more focus on how this compares when working with other clients". One female respondent (36) approached the theme differently by stating, "they (male social workers) need to reflect on their own experiences, biases, blind spots as all social workers do in order to serve their clients safely and efficiently and respectfully". In Q9, a female respondent (17) took a broad approach and placed the onus on the agency by stating, "I think agencies need to look at their practice and policies in regards to men and train all their staff to work effectively in a non-judgemental and compassionate way with men". In Q6, a male respondent (30) thought very differently within this theme. His view was, "so no, by the time they're SW's they should not have to be taught to be social workers".

Chapter 4 DISCUSSION

This study attempted to present a broad landscape for respondents, asking them to link gender, service gaps, relationship-based practice, and mentoring into potentially a new way of working with males. How the links between these disparate fields would play out in the responses was unknown. This was part of the intrigue of the research, and formed its unique approach in determining new ways of perceiving the relationship in practice. Two key words in the title posed potential challenges for the respondents, relationship and profeminist. Relationship-based practice is somewhat out of vogue, and only now is in resurgence due to the work of writers such as Howe (1998), Parton and Kirk (2013), Ruch, Turney, and Ward (2010), Sudbery (2002), and Trevithick (2014), who are attempting to revitalise the historic genesis of social work lost through twenty five years of neo-liberal redefinition of the place of self in society. Obviously the relationship is still seen as crucial in social work practice, but the promotion of psychotherapeutic technique, within different models, seems to often take precedence over the empirically recognised importance of the relationship, as the key to successful client outcomes.

Profeminist as a word, concept, and gender practice identity could confound, as many male social workers may not be au fait or cognisant of the term, despite the body of writing built up by social work Professor Bob Pease. It has now become part of the terminology of social work, when working with males. Some male social workers may have felt the term profeminist alienating, or non-representative of their style, or understanding, of practice with males. To align working with men in social work as profeminist could be seen as too pre-emptive. Others may argue that it places preconceived ideological blinkers on practice with males. Some may believe that social work practice with men could proceed without deferring to the oppression of females, as the oppression and behaviour of males had its own specific root causes, and thus different paths toward emancipation and responsibility must be pursued. This is a key debate in men's studies literature, and Pini and Pease (2013) hold the view that to venture away from a feminist understanding of oppression when researching men, is to risk colluding with male power, to the detriment of the liberation of women through the failure to rebalance power in society. Profeminist was a key word in the e-survey opening up the ideological bent of the study, as reflected in the framing of a number of the questions. This bent ended with a major

question about the imperative of placing men's/gender studies in the social work curriculum as a compulsory subject. If the study was to draw participants into the gender debate in social work, this question was sure to achieve this. This question was to set the scene for personal reflection in question eleven on the way in which respondents framed their approach to gendered social work practice. How were gender and power perceived in this study and in social work generally?

Gender and Power

In determining how, and whether, respondents saw power as influential in gender relations the researcher looked for key words in the qualitative data, namely, patriarchy; male privilege; misogyny; power; inequality; domination; and violence. No survey question was written in a way that would have directly elicited these words. The word 'power' was not mentioned, or strongly alluded to, in any survey question. It was unknown if power would be expressed in any form in the respondents' comments. In this study the results indicated that gendered power in social work was a force to be both recognised, and reckoned with, as for a number of male and female respondents it held a place of awareness in practice. It sat as a foundation for understanding how work with males would proceed, and set plans for change. These views highlighted an appreciation of feminist ideology as a theoretical underpinning for practice with men. These views concur with Pease (2002) who argues that feminist ideology is the starting point for challenging male hegemonic power, and the abuses that arise from it. Twenty five out of thirty one respondents were supportive of compulsory gender/men's studies in the social work curriculum. Here both the quantitative (Q10), and qualitative (Theme 1), data yielded an understanding, or presumption, of power inequality. A healthy number of respondents indicated that their practice approach, and views, lay within a framework of power, a position identified by Pringle (1995), and Pease (2001b), as important for the breaking down of male hegemony, alleviating violence, and developing alternative masculinities.

In the qualitative data no indication of conflicting views between the genders stood out. Women were not antagonistic toward men. Men were not derogatory of the movement by women in social work for gender equality. Any expressed privilege by the male respondents of class, position, or status was not revealed. The

vast majority of men were not saying, my life as a man reflects all I need to know about masculinity, and therefore further study on gender construction is irrelevant. Any conflicting views between the genders, arising from the writing of feminist theorists such as Millett (1977), were not apparent. As mentioned previously, there is doubt that any work undertaken with males can proceed outside of a profeminist framework and still recognise, and shift, the imbalance of power in favour of those who have been short-changed, namely females (Hearn, 2013; Pini & Pease, 2013). This is an important underlying premise in this study, as Hearn and Kimmel (2006) remind those in the field of analytical gender practice and research of the need to place power centre stage. Their assertion gives this view significant importance: "Feminism has demonstrated many theoretical and practical lessons for men, though men seem to keep ignoring or forgetting most of them. One is that the understanding of gender relations has to involve attention to questions of power" (p. 54).

How was the language of power placed, in regards to the overall question of the study? Only one male respondent tied privilege to mentoring in the context of how power should be understood in mentoring males. His detailed response stated male social workers could proceed with mentoring if they are aware of male privilege, and that mentoring does not exclude women from fulfilling their role in the agency, a concern held by Pease (2011). This respondent concurred with the thrust of profeminist perception within the methodology, and thus set an understanding of mentoring congruent with the key question in this study. A female respondent in theme one acknowledged the social construction of masculinity, and the internalisation of gender roles. Implicit within this is power, in this case, within the context of the need to modify one's professional self (in relation to women). Here a majority (75%) of male respondents in question three, in the quantitative data, concurred with the above view that men must modify their professional self, in its broadest sense. Only one male respondent stated that no further study was required by the social worker upon graduating from university, implying that one was dissolved of all resemblances of patriarchal power in training, and upon excavation in the field, no further layers of socialisation would reveal any leftover vestiges of power over others. Obviously this is in stark contrast to the views of the social work scholars mentioned in this paper, who place ongoing training as part and parcel of practice.

The Social Work Relationship

This study put the social work relationship centre stage, asking respondents to consider the relationship as the location for a new practice approach, namely mentoring. While, as previously mentioned, relationship-based practice has waned over recent times, Orme, Ruckdeschel, and Briar-Lawson (2013, p. 464) remind the profession that contemporary social work practice continues to maintain a focus on the individual, while not losing sight of the big picture. What did this study reveal about the place of relationship-based practice today? What can be ascertained from this study is that social workers remain firmly fixed on the relationship as a core component of practice. This was reflected both in the quantitative and qualitative data. Responses were not reflected back to government, or agency policy, as the determinative driver in practice, but remained focused on the client as foremost the recipient of the service. Biestekian principles also shone through with mentoring linked to these basic practice values.

Most notable for the relationship, as a core component in social work, was the recognition given to this theoretical and practical dynamic, as expressed in the support for mentoring, and the development of and use of self in practice. Question five in the survey, regarding mentoring entering into social work as a new dimension in practice, received considerable support, with twenty six scoring yes while only nine stood against the proposal. Further to this, in question six in the survey, a majority of twenty stated that the male social worker needed to modify aspects of his professional self. Twelve were unsupportive. Here the understanding of self is one where the social worker is the tool for change, and his accumulated knowledge, gathered from university training and life experience, forms his world view, and is acknowledged as requiring ongoing sharpening to meet the complexity of problems presented by the client. This can be no more important than in the case of halting the pandemic of global violence where, as Pringle et al. (2011, p. 8) state regarding the position of service providers, “the values, attitudes and behaviours of staff leading these programs are congruent with the aims of the programs”. To not apply ongoing fine tuning of practice, within the vast array of changing cultural contexts found across the world, would undermine this priority task for men in social work.

The quantitative analysis revealed some important results. Seventy five per cent of male respondents believed there exists some ground to modify aspects of self to

better improve their skill base for working with male clients. This strongly concurs with Pringle's (2001, p. 45) view that men in social work need to adjust their practice to counter oppressive male hegemonic relations. This shift he argues should occur on personal, community, and societal levels. Seventy per cent of male respondents also believed that as men they were in a better position to work with male clients, compared with female practitioners. A greater number of men stated their support for the agency practice of matching male social workers with male clients, compared to female respondents. It is here that this study concurs with the long held views of Hill (1975), Hollis and Woods (1981, pp. 287, 309), and Pringle (1995, p. 218), and the more recent studies of Seabury et al. (2010, p. 139), and Gehart and Lyle (2001), that give consideration to gender matching in service delivery. Further to this, these conclusions add argument to the views on client matching by Wodarski and Feit (2009), who have identified the relevance of closely matching client characteristics with those of the worker.

Despite the above, herein lies the contradiction of this study, as found in the link made between the importance given to the social work relationship, and the respondents' perceptions of gender, as found in the qualitative data. One respondent placed the relationship high in his practice philosophy, viewing it as above the influence of gender, which he thought was "not important in service delivery". This respondent, in the same sentence, observed same gender mentoring working in his agency context, when he believed it would probably not work with the opposite gender. This view was reiterated a number of times in the survey, by male and female respondents, where relationship skills overrode gender as the defining imperative for working with the client. (See Theme 2 in the qualitative analysis). How can these contradictions be interpreted? Can we view these respondents as holding contrary practice views? Perhaps a female respondent best clarified this complexity in her comment about social work training stating, "gender studies need to be complemented with a serious commitment to understanding human relationships and the dynamics of the therapeutic relationship". So close or intertwined are relationship and gender, for a number of respondents, that relationship can be considered the foundation of practice, with gender having some symbiotic attachment. For a few, the fundamental belief that men have a priori, if not biological, interest foremost with other men, for building masculine identity, does not represent their world view.

To help understand this melange of gender and relationship, it is worth looking closely at the qualitative theme of social work values, which constitute relationship-based practice, and how these tie into the study. As mentioned previously, these were not sought directly via any particular question, but emerged in relation to the survey questions. Respondents clearly placed Biestekian values as the key to understanding where this study was located in the field of social work. It showed that if the social worker was to be effective in working with the client he should think no further than his basic training, and take these values as his guide and reference point. One male respondent linked Biestekian values to modelling, arguing that it was these traits that led the social worker to transmit, or mentor, respectful and responsible ways of being to the client. A female respondent reiterated a similar view. This thread continued through the theme where Biestekian values were considered the basis for practice. This is consistent with the studies on the primacy of the relationship in the helping professions, perhaps best summarised by Parton and Kirk's (2013, pp. 34-35) overview of contemporary practice, where Biestekian principles embedded within a well-constructed partnership have been identified by the client as the most valued aspects of the contact he or she has with the human service worker. But notable within the statements made by respondents within the theme of social work values are two significant things. Gender is subsumed under relationship-based values, and any indication of power as a defining characteristic is absent in this context. But, as previously highlighted in the section on gender and power, power is placed within the big picture of social work practice.

In summary, what can be concluded from this interplay between gender, power, and the social work relationship? Biestek (1957), like Rogers (1961), was a theorist in the humanistic tradition. Both were attuned to the climate formed by the relationship of client and worker, where the strengths of the worker were recognised as holding, and forming, the prerequisite knowledge and skill for work. As mentioned in the literature review, this position has been set as the practice standard which continues in social work today. It forms the concrete base on which the house of social work stands. If gender and power are thrown into a more contemporary mix with relationship-based values, the base is all the less clear. What can be construed is that the external forces of power, socialised, and internalised, within the gendered self, reveal a more descriptive and insightful understanding of the nature of self, and infuse the client with a character more real to life than what Biestek and

Rogers may have seen. Socio-historical analysis was largely ungendered during the time of their writing on relational work. Social work today has moved toward integrating complexity into practice, and it may be that this study cohort firmly recognises this current reality. To disentangle one aspect from another is an exercise in unravelling complex systems that often reveal more internalised complexity. This is the nature of male hegemony. It has defined the lives of all for several millennia and, as the profeminist authors in this paper have argued, it must therefore inform the methodology for describing and changing this arrangement of power, at all levels, from relationship to society. It must also inform the profession of the problems of male socialisation that lead to issues such as substance abuse, among other issues of maladaptive coping, mentioned in the literature review.

Mentoring

It is not difficult to enter into the debate on the fit between mentoring and social work practice as the field of mentoring remains uncontested in social work. It is largely unfallowed, unsown land. There are no shibboleths to be demolished or myths to break through. As mentioned in the literature review, it has been a time honoured practice world-wide, but one that has not been tried for goodness of fit in relationship-based practice. It was hoped that there would be recognition, in the qualitative response to the survey, of the fact that the practice has been a part of men's lives for millennia. There was an absence of any mention of this, despite the wide spread influence, and popularity, of Biddulph's (1995; 2010; 2014) writing in Australia on the contemporary social and psychological development of males. The imparting of skill and wisdom, between the young and the old, received no historical recognition. Perhaps this is a reflection on the nature of relationships in a technologically advanced, globalised world, where either tradition has been eroded, or holds little meaning, and community has been unable to hold fast against the constant battering from forces beyond one's control (Bauman, 2007).

It is problematic to tie mentoring in social work back to studies within this profession, as so little literature exists. As mentioned in the literature review, what does exist within the field of youth work is not of a comparable standard, due to the lack of mentor professionalism. It was hoped that the female respondents in this study might make mention of perceived or tried mentoring by female social workers

with female clients. No concrete practice experience was detailed. No mention of cross-cultural mentoring was given. This was surprising, considering Australia is a multi-racial society, and therefore some cultural examples may have been put forward. Self-disclosure, as a forerunner to mentoring, received no mention, despite the importance given by Norcross and Lambert (2013) to self-disclosure, as a means of establishing congruence with the client. Further to this, no recognition was given to any perceived benefits of culturally specific mentoring, as a means of side-stepping western psychotherapeutic approaches, which may carry short-comings within minority indigenous, Asian, and African cultures, a matter that Moodley, Rai, and Alladin (2010) have given considerable attention to, and which carries relevance in the context highlighted by Hendra, Fitzgerald, and Seymour (2013). Interestingly, no mention was made of boundaries and mentoring, despite the recently renewed interest on the importance of the concept of boundaries in social work (O'Leary, Tsui, & Ruch, 2013; Reamer, 2012).

Despite the above gaps, the gathered data reveal a rich story formed from the respondents' views on mentoring in social work. Overall, 74.3% were in favour of increased attention being given to mentoring of males by male social workers. Here 65.4% of males were in favour, in comparison to 34.6% of females. Mentoring received considerable support across nearly all age groups, with only the 31-40 age group recording a minority in favour. Two age groups showed 100% in support of mentoring, 20-30, and 41-50. A distinctive trend emerged with males, where they recorded greater support for the notion of male social workers achieving better outcomes with male clients (70.6%), compared to female social workers (29.4%). In the case of matching male clients with male social workers a majority of males were in favour (56.3%), compared to the female respondents (43.8%). In the question regarding adopting policies of positive discrimination for the employment of male social workers, males recorded a majority in support (53.3%) compared to female respondents (46.7%). In this study, males are adopting the view that there are distinct advantages for male clients having contact with professional male social workers, a position acknowledged by Pease and Camilleri (2001), who state that "at the level of direct practice, male human service workers are becoming increasingly involved in work with men . . ." (p. 2). As highlighted in the literature review, gender matching has been foreshadowed, for as far back as several decades, as an issue requiring attention in practice (Hill, 1975; Hollis & Woods, 1981). More

recently this same issue has been reiterated as holding considerable importance in agency practice (Gehart & Lyle, 2001). This is so much the case that Wodarski and Feit (2010) and Seabury et al. (2010) conclude that client matching must be considered, if the client is to benefit, to the greatest degree, from his or her encounter with the human service worker.

The qualitative data concurred with the data presented in the previous paragraph. (See Theme 7). Female respondents stated that client matching between males should be considered, not always as a definite rule, but if it was assessed to be of benefit to the client, and if it was what the client either requested or desired, when asked. There was no reticence by male social workers, in their perception of the benefits that client matching would have with male clients, notwithstanding the checks identified in theme one, where male workers need to reflect on their own privilege, and ensure that this does not enter the relationship as collusion with the client. One male respondent cited the example of female only staffed women's refuges, implying that a precedent exists for male to male work. Work with male perpetrators of violence perhaps provides the best example of where male social workers can work with a male client group, as women may be less inclined to deliver services to the perpetrator group.

Does the qualitative data dovetail with the above quantitative results? Theme five sought to group together comments that indicated, or identified, an existing gap for males in service delivery. What can be ascertained is that a range of issues are apparent for males across the board, from training to increase the capacity for men to work with male clients, to an identified increase in demand for services for male clients, to the positive impact from the employment of male social workers in the agency, and the impact of the culture of a female dominated profession on male social workers. When mixed together a picture emerges of an overview of a constructive appreciation of the place of males in all aspects of practice, that highlight a need to improve the situation for male social workers, so they in turn can improve their ability to deliver services to male clients.

What was stated about mentoring per se in this theme? Mentoring, and modelling, was commented upon as an issue for male clients that was lacking within the agency, and for that matter within the wider community. Respondents were strongly implying that there was a role for this type of service. Modelling, a practice not taken to the same depth as mentoring, but vital none the less, was recognised by

respondents and given prominence in practice, as highlighted by the studies in this thesis (Seabury, et al., 2010; Bachelor & Horvath, 1999; Kadushin & Kadushin, 2013). Before venturing into mentoring, as an adjunct to the social work role, it is worth exploring within the comments whether respondents thought mentoring had no place within professional practice. Two male respondents were clear that it was either not a social work role, or failed to fit the professional level of skill required of a social worker. For one female, mentoring would not always be applicable. She did not identify when and where it would be applicable, but her view remains important, and concurs with Bachelor and Horvath (1999) that mentoring has its time and place. It is only one aspect of relationship building.

This discussion now enters into the heart of the study question. What place do respondents give to mentoring in contemporary social work practice, as expressed in their comments to the survey? Upon closer scrutiny of theme 9, several sub themes were extracted, to condense the overall content into the most significant meaning. These themes are definition, role model, masculinity, and contribution to community. What is apparent is that mentoring has a place in the lives of male clients. Twice, a female respondent wanted to pin down an exact definition of mentoring, as it applied to this study. Others sought no clarification, seemingly comfortable to entrust their thinking to mentoring as the use of self-knowledge, and attributes, from personal life experience, used to build skill and resilience in the client. Commonly, the term role model was used. Perhaps respondents are more familiar with this term, due to its mainstream use. There is a lack of the word and concept of mentoring in the social work literature, especially in relationship-based practice. All of the key relationship-based theorists in social work do not speak of mentoring, despite it being so closely tied to structured, purposeful relational learning. One respondent used mentor and role model interchangeably. Mentoring was closely tied to masculinity on two occasions. Here respondents were saying that mentoring will only have a place in practice if it is positive in its portrayal of men, and widens the scope of how men can be in the world. This use of masculinity conforms to the 'new male' that Hendra et al. (2013, p. 7), Pease (2009, pp. 162-167), and Pringle et al. (2011, pp. 4-5) believe should be the focus for any work with males, in their adjustment to a world of gender equality and emotional wellbeing. The last sub-theme takes mentoring for males out of relationship, and into the wider world, where it is seen as an important contribution to the advancement of community. This is embellished by comments

that mentoring helps boys, young men, older men, and fathers who have not had a male mentor in their lives. Whether the respondents reflect an essentialist world view of maleness, or that simply client gender matching be given priority, for improved clinical outcomes, is not clear. Perhaps it is considered that the complexity, and diversity, of men's lives requires an approach that is flexible as possible, notwithstanding the fact that the social worker should be cognisant of principles and power as applied to practice.

Social Work Training

Biestek (1957) gave considerable attention to the ongoing professional development of the social worker. He argued that no worker can keep abreast of the times, and follow new trends in practice, without ongoing enquiry. For Biestek, the field of the social and behavioural sciences was there to plunder. Today, as mentioned in the literature review, the profession has broadened its inquiry into entirely new fields, such as medical biology and neuroscience, to bring contemporary thinking into practice. It is with this understanding, of the vastly increasing field of knowledge available to the profession, that men in social work must engage in ongoing learning, to both reposition their practice in relation to the changing shifts in gender roles, and transform their own self, in light of new insights into the place of masculinities in their community. Glicken (2005a, p. 304) holds concerns that "few social work programs offer training for work with troubled men". Cree (2001, pp. 151-152) expressed concern that social work programs in the United Kingdom showed little interest in including gender in the curriculum. Seabury et al. (2010, p. 133), like Biestek, argues that social workers must continue with ongoing training and recommends that social workers join consciousness-raising groups. Cree (2001) believes these groups could be a part of social work training for men in the university. Some writers have not just confined ongoing training to the university, or workplace setting, but encourage more deep seated learning. Hollis and Woods (1981, p. 294) "encourage every clinical social worker to undertake personal therapy". Pringle (1995, p. 30) advances the idea of encouraging male practitioners to join men's support groups.

Of interest to social work training in the study was question six, in the survey, that asked respondents to consider the view of whether men were sufficiently skilled

to mentor male clients. An implication that could be read into this question was that of gender insight and preparedness. This was tested in a measurement of gender against modifying the professional self. As described in the results section, seventy five per cent of males believed they needed to modify their professional self in preparedness to work with male clients. What did the male respondents have to say about compulsory training in men's/gender studies? A majority of males, i.e., fifty six per cent supported this idea, thus aligning themselves with Pease's (2011, p. 411) view that "we should not expect men in social work to provide role models for boys without engaging these men in thinking about gender issues". In themes ten and eleven mostly men commented on the need to modify one's professional self and engage in further learning. Overall, the comments concurred with the writers mentioned immediately above. Growth and development as a social worker was placed as a necessity through the process of self-reflection, ongoing training, and the need for the employing organisation to ensure that staff were provided with opportunities to stay abreast of current thinking in their field. No mention was made of the more concrete forms of developing deep seated self-awareness, via men's groups or consciousness raising groups, which Pease wrote about in his 1997 and 2000b studies. Women too held views on whether males should attend to specific training to improve their capacity to work with male clients. One concurred with the above men. Another expressed this as developing a greater awareness of the use of self, and of the climate created between the worker and male client, mirroring Hennessey's (2011) work on the development of the use of self in relation to the client, by the process of self-reflection. Decades after Biestek (1957) wrote of the necessity for the social worker to view professional learning as a permanent feature of practice, many respondents in this study maintain a commitment to this. As mentioned previously in this study, only one respondent believed the template was finalised at university and as a result no further training was required.

What is most notable is that the least apparent interest in compulsory training in men's/gender studies came from the age group 61 plus. This is the age group who would have been more likely to have their gendered worldview moulded by the tumultuous years of the women's movement, where gender construction was upended, and the place of both men and women redefined for the first time by the interpretation of feminist thinking. The formative intellectual years for this group, it appears, are not seeing gender enduring as a key ideological influence in their

personal practice. The most successful movement for gender equality from the last century (Gardiner, 2005) has not left a lasting imprint for all.

Human Service Agency Employment Practices

Is it a logical path to think that mentoring, in the context of this study, would lead to changing employment practices in the workplace, to engage more men in assisting boys and men? This could easily be misconstrued as a radical, even misplaced, idea in a profession that seeks to promote equality between the sexes. One male respondent in the study, in response to the question on adopting policies of positive discrimination, stated, "I think we've (men) got enough privilege as it is". This man framed it in a way that diminished the potential for consideration to be given to an increase in the employment of men, to assist in human service work, where male staff numbers are low. Positive discrimination for males has precedence in human service agencies (Pringle, 2001; Clapton, 2013). Englar-Carlson, Stevens, and Scholz (2010, p. 225) remind the helping professions that "there is still a great degree of gender role restriction among men". The repercussions of fewer males in human service agencies are less opportunities for the mentoring of alternative masculinities that commit to equality.   Women and minorities have been afforded positive discrimination. Men, per se, are not an excluded or minority group. But despite this, does a case exist for positive discrimination in employment practices in human service agencies? When tested for support across both genders slightly more than a majority of men (53.3%) were in support, of positive discrimination, and just below half of women (46.7%). This is not a ringing endorsement of support, for positive discrimination for the employment of men to work with males, in agencies employing social workers. But it recognises that the proposal carries some validity.

This is not the outcome that Glicken (2005b, pp. 345-346) would have hoped for. The flavour of Glicken's text on men is one of giving consideration to every opportunity to alleviate the problems of men. Essentially, his argument is that the profession must do whatever it takes to alleviate the poor mental health of men. Two respondents raised the issue of the need to attract more men to the social work profession to create the circumstance whereby more men are available as mentors for males. Glicken, like Pease (2011), is aware of the lack of males entering social work training, and thus both are conscious of the fact that there are fewer men than women

working in the field with men. Here Glicken (2005b) argues for gender equity. Pease (2011) is more reflective, stating that an increase in the recruitment of more men into social work may not necessarily resolve problems for the client group, as these new male recruits may not adopt a profeminist stance in their practice. In reality their presence may simply reinforce male hegemony. A healthy level of support for including men's/gender studies in the social work curriculum, as indicated in this study, may rectify the positions of Glicken and Pease. From this study, it could be construed that currently in social work, as indicated by a healthy support for mentoring and a lesser percentage support for positive discrimination, there lies a disconnect between practice and policy. This contradicts what writers in social work view as a practice philosophy with foundation, as outlined in this study (see p. 44), the engagement of males to work with males.

Some Final Comments

Having a professional body of workers evaluate the veracity and practicality of male mentoring was a very different approach to surveying, say, male clients in a community or secure corrections facility, or mental health agency, male coaches at a soccer club, or male students and/or teachers at a primary or secondary school. Would the outcome have been different in regards to the value and place of male mentoring? This study cannot really extrapolate, as each setting will be nuanced by its own culture and framed by the imposition of factors beyond the control of clients, and staff, dependent and influenced by the policies and politics of their employers and gatekeepers. The point of interest in this study was the closeness that social workers have with their clients, and thus their access to a depth of understanding arising from the challenges of relationship, that are cause for their client's involvement in human service agencies. It is these stories that reveal the relationships, or lack of, that expose the vulnerabilities in the life of the client which could potentially be filled by mentoring.

Can social workers contribute toward the development of life skills in the client, through the disclosure by the social worker of his experience, which helped him manage in one of the multitude of social settings that we are all required to participate in today? Biestek (1957) has brought to our attention the depth of meaning and learning that occurs through our relationship with others. This

interaction is immeasurable in what it can offer the client for adjustment to a more constructive and fulfilling way of being. Within the social work relationship lies the potential for clients to shift away from anti-social behaviour, and maladaptive coping, toward pro-social, active engagement in community life. Self-disclosure by the social worker has held a minimal role, albeit an important one, up until now. The interest in self-disclosure is increasing as an area of study in relationship-based practice. As such, mentoring is not a leap in practice but a continuation of a practice that already has a place in social work encounters. But, the word mentoring has not been applied to self-disclosure. The question is what exposure can we give to the practice? This study has not sought to test the intricacies of how, and under what circumstances, can the social worker mentor, but has provided a general view of whether and where the gendered nature of mentoring could occur with males. An empirical examination of styles is the next step to be undertaken in other studies. What can be stated is support is given in this study for mentoring to proceed as a component of practice to teach responsibility and build resilience in the client.

Bandura (1977) demonstrated through social learning theory, the power of the transmission of values and behaviours from one person to another. It is a natural part of everyday social and psychological development that we observe, copy, and integrate parts of another into our self. This osmosis of growth of self is centred in the relationship. The benefits of mentoring are that this learning process can be crafted to meet the needs of the client. The advantage of the social worker enabling this mentoring is that he can accelerate the growth of the client through his expertise in the field of human relationships. The process of change for the client can be enhanced by another dimension of understanding in relationships, one that has hitherto been given little thought in social work practice.

The word 'purposeful' was included in the study title to indicate that mentoring could not be a practice that held no clear delineated boundaries. For if mentoring is to be embedded in social work practice it must be very clear that its use would only come into play when the social worker saw the space, and opportunity, to venture his own experience as having value for the furthering of the therapeutic relationship and growth of the client. As every aspect of the social workers' engagement in the relationship with the client must be crafted to fit the overall developing picture and direction, so too is any mentoring that is included in this work. To overdo or misplace mentoring would be detrimental to the client. Mentoring is an adjunct not a

central feature of practice. It may hold significant meaning and value with some clients and little, if any, for others. ‘Purposeful’ generates an understanding of the importance of selectivity of this role in practice.

This study sought both to test the waters on the support for mentoring within the context of male social workers working with males, and to determine if mentoring could become an accepted social work practice. The study did not seek to establish detailed guidelines on how mentoring may proceed, other than to frame it as profeminist. The precise application of mentoring can be explored through existing casework, psychotherapeutic, and theoretical approaches and models. It has been noted in the literature review that multicultural and feminist approaches are consciously building self-disclosure into the relationship. Neither did the study seek to set mentoring within the early or traditional frames, such as Bandura’s (1977) social learning theory. Instead it posed the question of what qualities men in social work would need, to advance as skilled mentor practitioners. This question was set within a broader theoretical frame of gender, or more specifically men’s practice. Men’s practice was not defined in the survey, other than the mention of profeminism in the title. It was left for the respondents to tease this out from their own professional experience.

Much has been made of the lack of male teachers as mentors in Australian schools, to overcome the absence of fathers in the family home, for many male students (University of Wollongong, undated). To the writer’s knowledge, and experience, this discussion has rarely ventured into social work to explore the absence of male mentors for boys and young men in the youth justice setting, where a father is absent from the family home. Neither has this subject been ventured in adult corrections, mental health settings, or anti-violence counselling. The scope for testing the support for male mentoring across the human services carries significant potential. It certainly responds to Glicken’s (2005b) quest for the profession to explore new avenues in working with men, to open up their potential as citizens, that are achieving in all areas of life, from work, to marriage, and parenting. The literature review has set a solid argument for this quest, for the statistics in many cases are poor, for many males managing in relationship with others.

One thing this study did not attempt to do was to take answers from the field where mentoring is succeeding, namely university mentoring between student and teaching staff, or research supervisor. The context for this is different in the level of

competency in the student and his ability to share. Social work clients often do not have the level of knowledge and insight that a university student has. Their level of education is often lower, as seen in their socio-economic status. The capacities, or rules for engagement, are entirely different in university mentoring, with ethical boundaries creating the only limitation. Otherwise, everything is up for discussion. Social work practice cannot throw caution to the wind. Here, the relationship is very different, with professional and ethical norms combined with evidence based practice, determining and limiting disclosure, or the personal sharing by the practitioner.

The nature of mentoring in the workplace, between paid employees, is also a model that differs significantly to social work. Here the ethical boundaries are looser, than the university setting, and the rules of engagement less clearly defined. A great deal can be disclosed, and it can be argued that perhaps the more disclosed the better. A senior staff member can give great description of his experience and how it is best applied to the workplace. If profit is the motive, the drive to get junior staff up to speed is strong. Step by step instructions can be shared, with the mentor operating not unlike a paper manual. Practice guidelines in this setting differ sharply from those of social work where Biestekian principles must continue to hold sway.

Mentoring in youth work, perhaps the field most close to social work, has, as the literature review revealed, been problematical. Blinn-Pike (2007) offers the strongest guide to mentoring in social work from the gathering of the empirical evidence in the youth work field. We can understand that mentoring with social work clients requires a high level of expertise, because of the nature and complexity of the psychosocial problems presented. This high level of expertise is a combination of the Biestekian principles overlaid with a sound theoretical base. This theoretical base is a shifting field, and for well over half a century social work writers and theorists have emphasised the need for practitioners to engage in ongoing enquiry to build their knowledge base (Biestek, 1957; Bogo, 2006; Hollis and Woods, 1981; Seabury et al., 2010; Glicken, 2005a; Cree, 2001). The matter of ongoing education becomes crucial for mentoring males when we consider Pease's (2000a, p. 136) concern that only a few heterosexual men are working toward a collective politics of gender among men and speaking out against men's violence inflicted on women.

Chapter 5 CONCLUSION

It has been posed in this study, that mentoring be considered a principle in relationship-based practice, as a potential means for male social workers to respond to the contemporary needs of male clients. This paper, which draws from the work of Felix Biestek (1957), presented the following questions, as an entry into the study. Are Biestek's (1957) seven principles alone adequate as the foundation for relationship practice today? Can the social work profession utilise the understanding of self in working with the client to achieve personal and societal change in previously undetermined ways? In answering these questions, it is perhaps first relevant to heed Dominelli's, (2009, p. 21) recent reminder that Biestek's values are fundamental to anti-oppressive positions. That Biestek's values have endured the test of time makes them a safe springboard, from which to venture into new fields of practice, which may yield principles fitting to the contemporary age. This paper has highlighted male violence, among other issues arising from male hegemony and socialisation, as highly problematic across the world. Prominent men's studies and social work theorist, Keith Pringle (1995, p. 211), posits halting violence as a priority for men in social work. In the opening line of her recent book on violence against women, feminist theorist True (2012, p. 3), places ending violence as "one of the key struggles and wishes of our age". These authors reflect the language of pandemic that is now applied to male violence against females. Violence is only one problem that is challenging males in the world, as highlighted in the writer's opening vignette and literature review.

This survey, very deliberately, did not venture into male mentoring as a study question that would stand alone from the problems of male hegemony. While central as a question, it came as part of a package of questions about the gendered nature of practice, wrapped in a profeminist methodology. It intentionally sought to stimulate thought on practice by male social workers, with males, from a very broad perspective. None of the areas of questioning should have been seen as contentious. They have been touched upon in the literature over past decades, but subsumed under the weight of ideological and practice approaches that have inundated the welfare industry. Neither was the study free floating, in the sense that it stood apart from established social work practice. Anchored, as it was, in relationship-based practice, the study reflected professional validity. Mentoring's predecessors, modelling and

self-disclosure, have been areas of research enquiry for many years. In a way the path toward mentoring had been set.

Can this study argue that mentoring become a principle in practice for male social workers in their interventions with male clients? Certainly the position in social work is that many male clients present with deep seated problems, resulting in an inability to manage within a range of educational, relational, and social situations. This is apparent across all communities and societies. Therefore, logically male social workers have a practice obligation to do what they can to assist these clients toward increased functioning and awareness. The men in this study identified that they need to increase their level of competence to fulfil this role. What is evident from this study is that men have an interest in developing their practice with males within a gendered framework. Much of the feedback in the study reflects this. Obviously there is no consensus on this matter. It was understood at the beginning of this study that a set gender template does not exist in any society. Some men made no mention of power, as reflected in the language of theme one. This does raise the question of what broad frameworks these men are practising under, and thus what process of change they are encouraging some of their male clients to consider.

The conundrum found within this study is one of complexity. What both genders thought highly of was the relationship. First and foremost, for many in the study, the relationship, and the Biestekian principles embodied in this, was the most important part of their practice. These principles moulded their approach towards relationship building. It was only after this that the gendered nature of power was considered. For some in this study there was no connection between gender, and how it relates to power, and sits within relationship-based practice. This reflects Pease (2000b), and Hearn's (1996), view of power as a construction that is often absent from gender based practice, an issue that is still evident in contemporary social work. This study highlights this fact, and simultaneously contributes towards a correction, to incorporate the gendered nature of the world, that must be included in the mix of relationship-based principles.

Biestek (1957) was instrumental in bringing to the attention of the social work profession the centrality of the use of self as the key to effective practice. Hennessy (2011) has most recently reiterated this fact, by stating "the greatest influence on relationships is workers themselves" (p. 2). Biestek was not fixed to holding to his seven principles alone. He opened up the discussion of ongoing learning for practice

competence. Biestek encouraged the social work profession to explore widely across the social sciences for new knowledge that could enhance work with the client base. We can understand from Biestek's (1957) work that new practice principles would emerge as the profession evolved. What this study indicates is that mentoring by male social workers of males has a place as a key principle within practice. The severity, range, and extent of problems experienced by males, and consequentially others, necessitate this new understanding within relationship-based practice.

Appendix 1

Frequency Tables

Q1. What is your gender?

Gender	Count	Percentage
Male	21	53.85%
Female	18	46.15%
Total	39	100%

Q2. What is your age bracket?

Age	Count	Percentage
20-30	5	12.82%
31-40	9	23.08%
41-50	4	10.26%
51-60	14	35.90%
61-plus	7	17.95%
Total	39	100%

Q3. Are you currently studying to be a practising social worker?

Response	Count	Percentage
Yes	7	17.95%
No	32	82.05%
Total	39	100%

Q4. What year did you graduate as a qualified social worker?

Calculation	Result
Count	32
Average	1995.5
Minimum	1958
1st quartile	1984
2nd quartile	1997
3rd quartile	2006.75
Maximum	2013

Q5. Should increased attention be given to mentoring by male social workers for male clients, as a new dimension in the social work relationship?

Answer	Count	Percentage
Yes	26	66.67%
No	9	23.08%
Comments	21	53.85%
No answer	4	10.26%

Q6. Do male social workers need to modify aspects of their professional self (attitudes, behaviours, and values) to become more skilled at mentoring male clients?

Answer	Count	Percentage
Yes	20	51.28%
No	12	30.77%
Comments	20	51.28%
No answer	7	17.95%

Q7. Are male social workers better able than female social workers to achieve effective change in male clients in ameliorating violence, father absence, and improvements in maladaptive coping and mental health?

Answer	Count	Percentage
Yes	17	43.59%
No	12	30.77%
Comments	26	66.67%
No answer	10	25.64%

Q8. Should priority be given to matching male clients with male social workers?

Answer	Count	Percentage
Yes	16	41.03%
No	14	35.90%
Comments	28	71.79%
No answer	9	23.08%

Q9. Should human service agencies adopt policies of positive discrimination and employ male social workers to mentor to male clients the positive attributes of pro-social, skilled engagement in community life?

Answer	Count	Percentage
Yes	15	38.46%
No	16	41.03%
Comments	24	61.54%
No answer	8	20.51%

Q10. Should university schools of social work compulsorily incorporate men's/gender studies in the curriculum, to educate male social workers on the socialisation of men, the oppression of women, and the pathways toward gender equality?

Answer	Count	Percentage
Yes	25	64.10%
No	6	15.38%
Comments	25	64.10%
No answer	8	20.51%

Q11. Please feel free to add any other comments about this research.

Answer	Count	Percentage
Answer	17	43.59%
No Answer	22	56.41%

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