

ManTalk: Invisible Boys All Grewed-Up

Social Work Camp, June 20, 2015
Robert S. Wright, MSW, RSW

Who is Robert Wright?

- RSW Private Practitioner - direct practice and forensics
- Former:
 - Frontline C.W. Worker
 - Race Relations Coord. DDSB
 - Mental Health Worker ,WSP
 - Ex. Dir. FCS Cumberland
 - Ex. Dir. Child & Youth Strategy
- Facilitator, ManTalk
- PhD Student in Sociology – Race, Identity, Power



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What is ManTalk

- ManTalk is a professionally supported, educational, and emotionally supportive group for male victims of sexual abuse. It was started by Robert Wright as a service offered through his private practice. It meets twice a month on the first and third Wednesdays of the month for 2 hours.

I've Always Worked with Men

- Early Work in Poverty and Homelessness – Turning Point Outreach
- “At-Risk”, Inner-city Youth
- Child Protection
- Race Relations – Growing up Black and Proud
- Correctional Mental Health - WSP
- Child Protection Clinician/Administrator
- Child & Youth Strategy

The “At-Risk” Student

- Federal Stay in School Initiative - HRSB Established “Student Support Workers”
- Code word for “inner-city” Black males
- Grade 7 male victim of rit. sex abuse had hardly any long term memory
- Later as RRC DDSB began diagnosing trauma as cause of explosive behaviour



My Time at WSP



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Johnny's Story

- 21 year old man on PC Range for SA, and host of other charges from 1 incident
- Attended treatment as a diversion until I “fired him” as a client
- When he got serious we started SOT
- After detailed sexual history was able to make connections between victimization and perpetration
- Revelation: “I don’t think I’ve ever truly had consensual sex”
- Transitioned speedily into offender treatment and transfer
- I became notorious as the guy who could ready difficult guys for transfer to lower custody through treating trauma and victimization

Recognizing Power of Victimization . . .

The measure of victimization experience and
trauma symptomatology among protective custody inmates at

Washington State Penitentiary:

Implications for returning persons to general population

Robert S. Wright

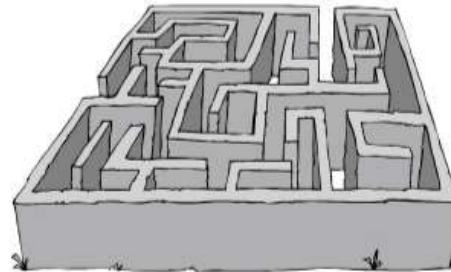
(Last updated on 5/28/97)

The Invisible Boy

- Casework supervisor/
assessor/ Executive Director
FCSCC
- Overwhelmed personally by
high incidence of sexual abuse
- Oversaw an investigation of
an adult female abusing young
adolescent male friend of son
- Commissioned a social worker
to map incidents – The web
was overwhelming
- Was influenced by Fred
Matthews' work



The Invisible Boy: Revisiting the Victimization of Male Children and Teens



Tim's Story

- Bearish, 40'ish, gay, male with failing relationship
- Came for healing from childhood sexual abuse by male siblings, physical and emotional abuse by dad
- Made great progress
- Needed to “break the silence” and join group (there was none)
- After discharge and repeated returns, he “broke the silence”
– I had to start a group



We Established . . .

The logo for MANTALK features the word "MANTALK" in a bold, black, sans-serif font. The text is centered within a bright yellow speech bubble shape. The speech bubble has a rectangular body and a triangular tail pointing downwards and to the left. The entire logo is set against a dark gray background.

MANTALK

ManTalk's greatest accomplishments

- Established a pro-bono service to male victims
- Has been continuous since 2012 except for storm interruptions
- Men have contributed male voice significantly to current provincial discourse
- Have created a space for men without the misogynist lining which can plague such work
- Open acceptance by other SA service providers locally and provincially
- Has served a diversity of men: ANS, trans persons, diverse SES, queer and straight
- Training ground for interns and associates

ManTalk's Greatest Challenges

- Restricted heavily by lack of funding or integration into established services*
- Racial diversity is not where it should be
- Creating a safe space for “diversity” often challenges straight and questioning men
- Based in a private practice limits community based ownership
- The real need is to ensure greater diversity, and in particular male inclusivity, in the SA discourse in Nova Scotia (and everywhere else)

What does “Male-Inclusion” look like?

- Including the needs and experiences of men in the SA discourse would simply add additional fuel to the dynamic and evolutionary changes already underway in the field
- Socio-economics, geography, increasing ethno-cultural diversity, disability, LGBTQ . . . The current SA service providers have already been expanding their understanding of the diverse needs of clients

Matthews' Four Propositions

- Inclusivity must
 - Articulate diverse male-centred points of view
 - Support male victims as they search for balance in their struggle to heal
 - Honour and protect female victims' gains and women's leadership in breaking the silence about violence and abuse
 - Envision the empowerment of all stories into a coherent and inclusive perspective that we can collectively and respectfully own and use in the struggle to reduce and eliminate interpersonal violence.

Q & A



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SAVE THE DATE

OCTOBER 1 & 2, 2015

Trauma Informed Practice:
A Lens on the African Canadian Community

A conference hosted by



Health Association of
African Canadians

www.haac.ca



Keynote Speaker:

Dr. Joy DeGruy

Author - *Post Traumatic Slave
Syndrome: America's Legacy of
Enduring Injury and Healing*
www.joydegruy.com

Location:

Holiday Inn Harbourview
101 Wyse Road, Dartmouth

Fees:

Thursday, 9am-4pm
Pre-Conference Clinical Workshop - \$100
(limited seats)

Thursday, 6pm-9pm
Mental Health Network Mingler - FREE

Friday, 9am-4pm
Conference - \$125

Is Feminism Still Relevant?

- Feminism is an emancipatory theory that seeks to right injustice and promote social inclusion. It is feminism, with its inclusive lens of intersectionality, that has been responsible for much of the progress made in the SA field.
- As male stories begin to be voiced more centrally in the SA discourse we will see that male victimization is fueled in our society by the same forces that are at the root of the oppression of other peoples.
- A male-centric, emancipatory theory, with a powerful analysis, model of practice and critical mass of practitioners does not yet exist.
- What we have seen from the Men's Rights movement is not a progressive, male-centric, emancipatory voice. The men's liberation movement (whether feminism informed or masculinism informed) has yet to show up as a legitimate foundation for this work.
- Feminism is still relevant