The impact of a brief structured intervention on young offenders masculine identity: A mixed methods study

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Abstract

Masculinity in young men can be considered a dynamic risk factor. There is a call for programs and initiatives that not only engage adolescent boys in masculinity issues but also promote positive constructs of masculinity. The 'Man-up' programme is designed to support men and young men to explore the ways in which the concept of masculinity contributes to shaping their individual identity. The aim of this research evaluation was to explore young offenders' perceptions of the programme and whether the programme contributed to any personal change/development and what core learning they took from the course. The evaluation utilised a mixed-methods programme of research to address these aims. The quantitative results found that there was a pre/post course reduction in 'toughness' and increases in self-esteem and risk-taking perceptions. The qualitative results identified 4 superordinate themes 'reconstruing masculine self', 'self-realisation, awareness and reflection', 'group dynamics and course relationships' and 'unintended consequences'. The course assisted participants in helping to reconstrue aspects of being a man, made them think about the future and allowed for participants to consider their possible and desired selves. However, for some participants, the course appeared to reinforce some traditional stereotypical beliefs. The implications for course and recommendations are unpacked in the report.

Introduction

Research has demonstrated that young adults (18-25 year olds) comprise one in ten of the population, however, they account for one third of individuals who are sent to prison annually, with high rates of reoffending (Prison Reform Trust, 2012). Youth criminality, like adult criminality, is gendered and as Silvestri and Crowther-Dowey (2012) have highlighted males account for a much larger percentage of violent offences, sex offences and many other criminal behaviours in comparison to females. Masculinity, masculine identity and been found to play an important role in young men's involvement in criminal behaviour (Whitehead, 2005).

Whitehead (2005) identified that masculinity may be a dynamic risk factor for male violence. He argues that young men may experience anxiety around their masculinity being challenged, a term labelled "masculine anxiety", which enhances young males' likelihood of behaving violently to reduce this anxiety. Masculinity has also been associated with a variety of risk-taking behaviours including problem drinking, sexual aggression, violence and anti-social behaviour (see e.g. Locke & Mahalik, 2005; Miller, 2008). Indeed, statistics reveal that young people drive faster than adults, have the highest rates of sexually transmitted diseases, have the highest rate of self-reported drug use and commit the vast majority of crimes (Gullone, Moore, Moss & Boyd, 2000).

Connell (2005) argues masculinities are constructed, over time, in young people's encounters with a system of gender relations. Gender orders differ between societies and change over time (Connell, 2005). Research surrounding 'hegemonic masculinity' has been particularly important in helping to understand masculinity and crime. Hegemonic masculinity can be understood as a pattern of practice that allows for men's dominance over women. It embodies the most stereotypical image of what it is to 'be a man' and allows for the ideologically-legitimised subordination of women (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). This form of masculinity is sustained through culture, institutions and persuasion (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). In striving to achieve hegemonic masculinity, young men believe they are required to refute any behaviour construed as feminine and to hide/disavow any such unwelcome character traits in themselves (Harland and McCready, 2014). Traits that are key to masculine identity include toughness, dominance, and the willingness to resort to violence to resolve interpersonal conflicts (Krienert, 2003; Messerschmidt, 1993). Such masculine traits have also been linked to low self-esteem (Ostrowsky, 2010).

Addressing salient dynamic risk factors and bolstering protective factors in young offenders can assist with the desistance process (Bushman et al, 2016; Mulvey at al, 2004). A central aspect of

the desistance process is the transformation and changes in the narrative identity, which would also encompass a central shift in one's masculine identity (Maruna, 2001). It has been argued that "cognitive shifts" or transformation in the minds of the offenders is important for the desistance process and involves initial movements toward a different, more conventional, way of life. These cognitive transformations, which may include a change in identity and felt preferences for crime, enable the individual to actively pursue behaviours that lead to new identities and ways of being (Paternoster & Bushway, 2009). Intervention can help assist with this process and it has been argued that early intervention with young offenders can act as turning points or hooks for change in young offenders (Deuchar et al, 2015). Carlsson (2012) highlights the salient nature of 'turning points' in the criminal desistance process for young and adult offenders. A turning point constitutes a change in the life course, which, in turn, constitutes a change in the individual's offending.

Deuchar et al (2015) found that participation in a boxing rehabilitation programme enabled young men involved in gang violence to find avenues for alternative masculine identity construction. Participants' in this study were beginning to build new and alternative masculine identity centred on the demonstration of his will and ability to desist from crime. Thus, for some of the young men in that programme desistance was becoming a new way for them to 'do masculinity'. As Giordano, Cernkovich & Rudolph (2002) point out exposure to a 'hook' and one's attitude toward it are important elements of successful change. In the desistance literature, identity transformation has been linked to "redemptive" episodes, whereby the negative past self is construed as qualitatively different from the changed self; intervention programmes has been found to assist with the reconstruing of self (McAdams, 2006; Maruna, 2001).

As Claussen (2017) states there is a call for programs and initiatives that not only engage adolescent boys in masculinity issues but also promote positive constructs of masculinity (see Renzulli, Crasper, & Webster, 2013; Wolfe & Jaffe, 2003). Unfortunately, recent research identifies a lack of gender-specific programming for adolescent boys particularly interventions focused on promoting healthy and positive constructs of masculinity (Claussen, 2017, O'Neil et al., 2013). This links with arguments by Beesley and McGuire (2009) who state that there is a real need to take the issue of masculinity seriously in correctional and community interventions. A recent non-accredited programme focusing on masculinity has been piloted in a number of prisons in England and Wales and recently with young offenders in youth offending teams (YOTs). The 'Man-Up' programme is designed to support men and young men to explore the ways in which the concept of masculinity contributes to shaping their individual identity. It allows men to examine the social norms and values impacting on their developments as men and creates a safe space for men to construct and challenge different views of being a 'man' (Sloan, 2016). The programme uses active learning

techniques and aims to challenge some of the attitudes and negative outcomes experienced by men as a result of wanting or needing to fulfil stereotypes and expectations. To this end, the programme fills an important deficit within current intervention provision by focusing on the concept of masculinity. The programme is delivered over 6 sessions and runs for 15 hours (Sloan, 2016).

The aim of this paper is to explore young offenders' perceptions of the Man-Up programme and whether the programme contributed to any personal change/development and what core learning they took from the course. The evaluation of the programme aimed to assess the programme on a number of psychometrically sound measures related to the outcomes of the Man-Up programme. The research aims and objectives are detailed below:-

1) To investigate and explore young offenders' experience of the Man-Up course and whether the course contributed to any cognitive shifts in their offending attitudes and masculine identity.
2) To understand the impact the course had on young offenders, what learning points they gained form the course and whether the course fulfilled its aims.
3) To investigate whether the programme contributed to any significant changes in male role norms, self-esteem, risk taking behaviour and beliefs about offending.

Method

A mixed-methods design was implemented to evaluate any pre and post course changes in participants who had completed the man-up course at a Youth Offending Team based in England. The research also aimed to explore participants' experiences of the course and the impact the course had on participants. A strength of a mixed-methods approach is that it offsets the weakness of both qualitative and quantitative methods and can provide rich and detailed data that would not be possible through either approach alone (Creswell & Clark, 2007). Specifically, this research used a convergent mixed-methods design to gain a more complete understanding of the research topic. The purpose of the convergent design is "to obtain different but complementary data on the same topic" to best understand the research problem (Morse, 1991, p. 122). This design is used when the researcher wants to triangulate the methods by directly comparing and contrasting quantitative statistical results with qualitative findings for corroboration and validation purposes (Creswell & Clark, 2007). A convergent mixed-methods design is pragmatic in the sense that it is orientated toward exploring and solving problems in the "real world"; such a position reiterates that epistemologically and ontologically quantitative and qualitative research share many commonalities (Feilzer, 2010). The approach is also best suited for exploring under-researched phenomena and

research evaluations (Creswell & Clark, 2007). This research was implemented using two research strands, which were conducted simultaneously, as is common using the convergent approach. The two phases including the results of the phases are detailed over the coming sections.

Quantitative Study

The quantitative phase of the research evaluation explored pre and post course differences on measures related to the outcomes of the Man-UP programme. The measures assessed whether participation on the Man-up programme had an effect on masculine beliefs and norms, risk taking behaviour, beliefs about offending behaviour and self-esteem. The measures were chosen due to hypothesised relationships with the aims of the man up programme. The measures were administered pre-course and then approximately a week after participation on the course. In total *n*=10 provided pre and post course information. The demographic information (for the participants which provided it) is provided in table 1.

Table 1: Demographic Information

	Mean	SD	Min	Max
Age	15.13	2.10	13	18
Age at first arrest	14.00	2.00	12	16
Number of prior arrests	2.80	1.64	1	5

The available demographic information demonstrates that the sample had multiple contacts with the criminal justice system prior to attending the man- up course.

Measures

Male Role Norms Inventory –Adolescent Revised (Levant et al, 2012) – The MRNI-AR is a 29 item measure of the endorsement of traditional masculine ideologies and male role norms. The measure consists of three subscales 'Emotionally Detached Dominance', 'Toughness', and Avoidance of Femininity (Levant et al., 2012). Boys indicate their agreement with statements (e.g., "Guys should play with trucks rather than dolls") on a 7-point Likert-type scale (e.g., 1 = strongly disagree and 7 = strongly agree). A total MRNI-A-r score is obtained through the averaging of scores on all 29 items.

Higher scores indicate more agreement with traditional masculinity ideologies, and lower scores indicate less agreement with traditional masculinity ideologies.

The Implicit Theory of Offending Behaviour (Blagden et al., 2014) is a reimaging of the domain-specific implicit theories of intelligence and personality, and Gerber and O'Connell's (2012) implicit theory of crime and criminality (self and other). The 'implicit theory of offending behaviour (self)' (ITOB) is concerned with prisoners' beliefs in whether they could change their offending behaviour. The scale is a six-item measure and consists of items such as "My offending behaviour is a part of me that I can't change very much". Participants indicated how much they agreed with statements on a 6-point Likert scale which ranged from 1 (strongly agree) to 6 (strongly disagree). Previous studies have shown that the measure has good internal consistency (Cronbach's α = .893) (Blagden et al, 2014).

Rosenerg Self-esteem - (Rosenberg, 1965) – The Rosenberg Self Esteem measure consists of 10 items assessing global self-esteem (e.g., "On the whole, I am satisfied with myself"). Previous studies have reported alpha reliabilities for the RSE ranging from .72 to .88(Robins, Hendin & Trzesniewski, 2001).

The Adolescent Risk-taking Questionnaire (ARQ; Gullone & Moore, 2000). Risk-taking behaviours and judgements were assessed using the two-part risk questionnaire developed on the basis of adolescent-nominated risk behaviours (Moore and Gullone, 1996). The 73-item questionnaire involves the rating of each item twice, first in relation to judgement of riskiness (on a 5-point Likert scale: 0=not at all risky, 1=not very risky, 2=risky, 3=very risky and 4=extremely risky) and a second time in relation to frequency of participation in the behaviour (also on a 5-point scale: 0=never done, 1=hardly ever done, 2=done sometimes, 3=done often, to 4=done very often). A total risk judgement score is calculated by adding ratings on all items, with a high score indicating a stronger overall judgement of riskiness for the behaviours depicted in the questionnaire. Similarly, a total behaviour score is calculated by summing the frequency rating of all items, with a high score indicating a higher overall level of participation in risky activity.

Ethics

Ethical approval was granted from the lead author's university and by the National Offender Management Service.

Quantitative Results

Table 2 details the pre and post course means, standard deviations and alphas for the measures used to evaluate the man-up course. The measures ranged from acceptable – good levels of internal reliability. Using guidance from Stevens (1996) which recommends using a less conservative alpha with a small *n* research a less conservative alpha was set (in this case set at 0.1) for detecting pre/post course change.

Table 2 Pre and post course scores on measures

Measure	Pre-Mean	Pre-SD	Post-Mean	Post-SD	*α - pre*	*α - post*	*T*	Df	*P*	Effect size
Male Norms: Emotionally detached dominance	3.30	.484	2.99	.941	.661	.716	.882	8	.403	.09
Male Norms: Avoidance of femininity	4.26	.905	3.92	.142	.891	.859	.700	8	.504	.07
Male Norms: Toughness	4.80	.718	3.95	.888	.717	.774	5.810	8	.001	.82
ITOB	4.05	.566	3.99	.719	.889	.898	.193	9	.850	.002
Adolescent risk taking behaviour	16.20	9.56	20.12	20.63	.791	.862	-.732	7	.488	.04
Adolescent Risk Perception	23.00	9.9	41.33	11.72	.896	.938	-3.446	8	.005	.63
Self-Esteem	15.90	3.21	19.30	3.88	.7.08	.711	-2.613	9	.020	.46

preliminary analyses were conducted to ensure no violation of the assumptions of normality, linearity, and homoscedasticity. Paired samples *t*-tests were conducted to evaluate the impact of the Man-Up intervention on male gender role norms, beliefs about offending behaviour, adolescent risk taking behaviour and self-esteem. A sequential bonferroni adjustment for multiple comparisons was conducted, though all pre and post course significant results remained statistically significant (Abdi, 2010). The effect size was calculated using the eta squared statistic.

There were significant pre and post course mean changes for the male role norm of toughness, adolescent risk perception and self-esteem. There was a statistically significant decrease in mean scores for the male role norm of toughness from pre-course (*M*= 4.26, SD = .484) to post course (M = 3.92, SD = .142). The eta squared statistic (.82) indicates a very large effect size. The was a statistically significant increase in adolescent risk perception from pre-course (M = 23.00, SD = 9.9) to post-course (M = 41.33, SD = 11.72). The eta squared statistic (.04) indicates a small-moderate effect size. There was also a statistically significant increase in self-esteem from pre-course (M = 15.90, SD = 3.21) to post-course (M = 19.30, SD = 3.88). The eta squared statistic (.46) indicates a very large effect.

Qualitative study

The qualitative interviews featured in this research were used to gain an understanding of participants (*n*=7) experiences and learning from the Man-Up programme. This is a vitally important aspect of this research as there is a shortage of qualitative research, which focuses on the perspectives of young offenders on their rehabilitation and their progress through a rehabilitative programme. Interview schedules focused on how participants felt before participating in Man-Up, and what they thought about gender roles and masculinity at this time point. They explored the content of the course, and how participants experienced and learned from this content. They also focused on how participants might embed and use their newly-acquired knowledge in everyday life, if at all. All interviews in this research were semi-structured. Semi-structured interviews allow participants to discuss issues of central concern to both themselves and the research topic. This interviewing style is flexible and naturally enables participants to elaborate on issues important to them. In order to facilitate discussion, all questions were kept open (Knight, Wykes & Hayward, 2003). This style of interviewing also enables "rapport to be developed; allows participants to think, speak and be heard; and are well suited to in-depth and personal discussion" (Reid, Flowers & Larkin, 2005: 22). The mean age of participants was 14.66 (*sd* 1.*78).*

Qualitative Data Analysis

Data were analysed using thematic analysis; a method for identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns and themes within a data set. It aims to capture rich detail and represent the range and diversity of experience within the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). It differs from other qualitative methodological approaches in that it is not tied to an explicit theoretical assumption or position. Thematic analysis has been described as a 'contextualist method', sitting between the two poles of constructionism and realism. This position thus acknowledges the ways in which individuals make meaning of their experience, and, in turn, the ways in which the broader social context impinges on those meanings. As such, thematic analyses are seen as reflecting 'reality' (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The analysis adhered to the principles of qualitative thematic analysis as outlined by Miles and Huberman (1994). Data analysis commenced with detailed readings of all the transcripts, and then initial coding of emergent themes. A process of sorting initial patterns then took place, and this was followed by the identification of meaningful patterns in the data, and then an interpretation of those patterns (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The data was organised systematically and themes were identified and reviewed. The final themes were representative of the sample as a whole. A form of inter-rater reliability was performed on the data, which involved the analysis being 'audited' (Lincoln & Guba, 1985 as cited in Seale, 1999 p. 467) in that both authors of the report coded the data separately before synthesising the final themes. This process ensured that the interpretations had validity.

Qualitative Results

The themes that emerged from the coding of the data are presented in the table below.

Table 2 Superordinate and subordinate themes

Superordinate	Subordinate
Reconstruing masculine self	Generating alternative versions of manhood
	Perceptions of being a man
	Portraying a masculine self
Self-realisation, awareness and reflection	Increased self-reflection and self-realisation
	Self-awareness and personal change
	Looking to the future
Group dynamics and course relationships	Facilitating change
	Cohesive Environment

Unintended Consequences	Reinforcement of traditional stereotypical roles
	Ensuring personal challenge
	Attrition

The analysis revealed four superordinate themes, 'reconstruing masculine self', 'self-realisation, awareness and reflection', 'group dynamics and course relationships' and 'unintended consequences'. The main aspects of these superordinate themes will be unpacked in the following analysis.

Superordinate Theme 1: Reconstruing masculine self

Participants articulated how the course had assisted in them reconstruing and reconceptualising what being a 'man' means to them. Participants emphasised how they had begun to reconsider men's role and what was important for being a man.

> Extract 1
>
> when it came to the end of the course… I started realising, how society wants you to be and that sort of stuff, that's not what a man actually is…made me notice that I realised being a man is not about having all the luxurious stuff more about basically just standing up on your own two feet and getting stuff done…being a man is looking after your family yeah and being responsible, that's what a man is, sums it all up being a responsible person being a man. Not doing crazy stuff or getting into trouble but yeah being responsible

In this extract, the participant's self-perception has begun to change through reconceptualising what it is to be a man. Through accepting responsibility for him and his family he is in turn strengthening his social bonds and social support network which have both been shown to be protective factors for youth offending and later life criminality (Borum et al 2002; Bushman et al, 2016). Giordano et al.'s (2002) model of youth-adult desistance stresses the influence of social processes, social interactions, social experiences, socially derived emotions, and social influences in developing both the motive to change and the mechanisms to do so. The programme had begun assist the participants in realising what it is to be a 'man'. This realising and reconsidering of what is to be a 'man' could enable participants to begin to change their behaviour. As Carlsson (2012) states it is not employment, marriage, military service, residential change or other changes in themselves that bring about desistance, but rather the way such changes under certain circumstances can bring about other

changes. In this extract, such a change in thinking may bring about changes in behaviour. In numerous extracts participants appeared to be engaging in a form of 'active responsibility-taking' (Ware & Mann, 2012) in that there was a recognition that they could not change the past, but that they had control and ownership of future behaviors and that was process was linked to their reconceptualisation of being a man.

Extract2

Respondent: Made me think, you know, I don't have to be like that, doing all stupid stuff, I can be different, that to me is a man. Not getting involved with all stupid stuff, just doing things for a laugh or whatever, but saying I actually want to do something different and going for it

Interviewer: Sounds like it got you thinking about the future

Respondent: Yeah it did, what I want from it and what kind of a man I wanna be

Participants spoke about how the course began to make them think and challenge their views of being a 'man', while demonstrating that there were alternative ways of construing 'man'. The course, in some ways, appeared to allow 'headspace' for participants to reflect on their current situation and crucially reflect on where they want to go (Perrin and Blagden 2014). This appeared to provide participants with an opportunity for reflection and this is important for self-growth and self-development. Blagden et al (2014), argue that headspace allows for participants to reflect on their 'self in transition'. It appeared from this extract that reflecting of their views of being a 'man' was akin to a hook for change. In Giordano et al.'s (2002) discussion of prison and treatment as a hook for change, they discuss how treatment programs can assist in the transformation process to the extent that they provide a specific "cognitive blueprint" as to exactly how one goes about changing oneself. The course also allowed participants to reflect on the pressures and expectations they feel as a man.

Extract 3

It's that pressure…you feel a pressure to act in ways

Extract 4

You feel that, you basically have to have money, drive a certain car, be doing certain things, so that basically put pressure on me to be that man they [his view of society]

> wanted me to be…the course helped me to change, it's actually helped me a lot, made me see things in a different way…think about being a man differently

Extracts 3 and 4 highlight the perceived socio-cultural pressures some participants felt in terms of their current view of being a 'man', which was a more stereotypical conceptualisation. Participants articulated how the course had begun to challenge those conceptualisations and help them to begin reconstruing their views of being a 'man'. Literature suggests that men put more pressure on themselves to fulfil their gender roles (see e.g. Pleck 1981). Doyle (1983) and Eisler and Skidmore (1987) have noted that attempting to live up to these standards of the masculine stereotype has stressful effects on men as they strive for power through competition with peers while engaging with a restricted set of emotions. The Man-Up course appeared to allow some participants to reconcile past preconceptions of what a man should be and that they were not necessarily the only ways to understand masculinity. Participants' views of masculinity were thus malleable rather than fixed entities, which is in line with Whitehead's (2005) conceptualisation of masculinity as a dynamic risk factor.

Superordinate Theme 3: Self-realisation, awareness and reflection

Participants who had completed the course appeared to have an increased self-awareness and the course also seemed to increase self-reflection in the participants which enabled them to think about where they are now and crucially where do they want to go.

> Extract 5
>
> It taught me what I need to do in my life to get to be my opinion of what a man is…helped me to know that I needed to mature, that I was making stupid mistakes and that one of these mistakes could turn into something serious and I could get done for it properly…
>
> Extract 6
>
> I was talking to one of the women there and she was saying about thinking about what I do before I do it, because normally I do stuff and think about the consequences after. Making me stop and think about things and what I'm doing

Extract 5 and 6 demonstrate how the course was enabling participants to consider what kind of a man they want to be in the future and as a consequence where they want to be in the future.

Importantly the course appeared to enhance participants' cognitive skills particularly around the ability to stop and think and generating alternative solutions. This is important as interventions which promote cognitive and enhanced thinking skills have been found to demonstrably reduce recidivism (Landenberger and Lipsey, 2005; Travers et al, 2014).

Extract 7

> I know for a fact that I need to change, like what I'm doing at the minute with what I'm doing with school and outside school, like change, now I know the consequences now I know how I might end up if I don't, but I also know how I could turn out if I do and I'd prefer to turn out good

Extract 8

> The course got me thinking, before I was thinking that I can get through school and change after and then I realised that if I did that it may be too late.

The course appeared that it assisted participants in realisation that they needed to change and also helped to facilitate that change. Extract 7 demonstrates how the course helped participants to construe more positive and pro-social futures, by not just focusing on the negative consequences (I know how I might end up), but by consider desired positive futures (I know how I could turn out). Extract 7 offer a powerful narrative of a desire to change and wanting to turn out 'good'. The importance of being able to construct desirable selves, desirable imagined futures and distancing the self from 'old' offending selves has been found to be important in the crime desistance process (Paternoster and Bushway, 2009; Stone, 2015; Vaughan, 2007). As can be noted in extract 7 and 8 there is a realisation of where they are and where they want to go and they are cognisant that they now need to make a change. Paternoster and Bushway (2009) acknowledge the future self is not merely a fantasy, rather it is connected to 'current selves and past experiences' involving not only hopes and goals but also fears and uncertainties. Here the participants understand where they may go if they do not make a change and this is motivating them to want to make a positive change (Paternoster and Bushway, 2009).

Superordinate theme 3: Group dynamics and course relationships

The participants were overwhelming positive about the support they received from the facilitators on the course and how this enabled the participants to engage and disclose. This is important as this

client group in particular can be particularly difficult to engage with interventions (Prior & Mason, 2010).

> Extract 9
>
> Normally meeting new people, I I find it difficult and they made it easier for me
>
> Extract 10
>
> Put us at ease, you'd come in and they be like happy and be like how's your day been? They seemed interested…they made it fun and everyone got along

Extracts 9 and 10 alluded to how facilitators enabled an environment that was supportive and helped create a group climate where participants felt at ease. The general psychotherapeutic literature stresses the importance of meaningful relationships with therapeutic alliance being pivotal for effective treatment (see, for example, Ackerman & Hilsenroth, 2003). Indeed, it may be that social interactions with the facilitators for these young men could be considered testing grounds for future interactions with others.

> Extract 11
>
> The course exceeded my expectations I never thought they would go into that much detail [course content] about things just to help us make, I didn't know they that they would care that much

Following from the previous analysis extract 11 demonstrates how for some the course exceeded expectations and that the participants felt that the facilitators genuinely wanted to help them. Importantly, this kind of relationship has been found to be important in the desistance process in that establishing social relationships is vital in terms of triggering, enabling, and sustaining change (Weaver 2013).

Superordinate theme 4: Unintended consequences

While participants were clear that they had a positive view of the course and had positive experiences which appeared to very constructive for participants there also appeared to be some unintended consequences from the course. These specifically centred about aspects of the course which prompted participants to think about their constructions of what it is to be man. However, despite course attendance participants were still engaged in stereotypical beliefs.

Extract 12

Respondent: Men work harder…

Interviewer: Ok, was this a belief you had before the course

Respondent: Yeah

Interviewer: And has this changed at all

Respondent: Nah, I still think that way

Extract 13

I wouldn't work harder if I was a girl…women have different roles to men, different jobs, men work harder

Extracts 12 and 13 demonstrate how some participants were engaged in views of men that were stereotypical and which centred on men being 'harder' workers. As well as some participants espousing traditional masculine roles and stereotypical gender norms, there were more subversive signs of legitimising stereotypically gendered beliefs or at the very least not challenging these beliefs. Again these focused around what it is to be a man.

Extract 14

Being a protector, it's our [man's] job to do it, protect family

Extract 15

Respondent: Having a job supporting the family, having food on table, having family, not fighting and not drinking, mainly the ideas we picked up during the course, they were the main things that we talked about

Interviewer: Was this a focus of the course….

Respondent: Yeah we spent a lot of time going over them, these were the main things, you know, having a job, being a provider

One interpretation of extracts 14 and 15 is that participants are articulating traditional 'male' roles as their view of a 'man' and that these appeared to conform to what has been termed benevolent sexism. Ambivalent Sexism Theory proposed by Glick and Fiske (1996) differentiates between 2

forms of ambivalent sexism, hostile and benevolent sexism. Hostile sexism denotes woman as easily insulted, ungrateful of males, seeking to obtain authority over males, and manipulative with their sexuality. This form of sexism was very rarely articulated by the participants. Benevolent sexism denotes women as weak, pure, moral and places them on a pedestal. These unhealthy demonstrations of masculinity develop from a need to protect women and the adherence of stereotypical gender roles. This would include being a 'protector' or 'provider'. Additionally, Gölge, Sanal, Yavuz and Arslanoglu-Çetin (2016) suggests that hostile and benevolent sexism develop due to the reinforcement of stereotypical gender norms, the inequality of genders in society and the following of traditional familial values. While these were displayed by the participants, perhaps worryingly these appeared not to be challenged by facilitators of the group and this may inadvertently have reinforced such beliefs. However, another interpretation of this may be that they reflect participants' wider socio-cultural background. For example in some socio-economic backgrounds and cultures man as 'protector' is seen as a desired and legitimised role and one, at times, shared by women in such social contexts (Thompson & Bennett, 2015). Participants desire to have a job and protect family, while still a stereotypical belief, are likely much more adaptive than the anti-social attitudes previous held.

Discussion and Implications

There is growing interest in the impacts of gender ideology on adolescent boys' well-being and there is a call for programs to support the development of healthy and positive constructs of masculinity for young males. There has also been limited attention paid to non-profit community-based organisations in delivering programmes that challenge traditional masculine ideologies in community and school-based settings (Claussen, 2017; Claussen et al, 2016). The evaluation of the Man-Up programme lends support for the continued implementation of course for this client group. The research provides some evidence that the course lessens boys' endorsement of some masculine roles. Participants in this course had significantly lower post course scores on 'toughness', which forms part of traditional masculine identity and which contributes to male on male violence in young adults (Whitehead, 2005). This links with the qualitative finding regarding some participants' process of masculine identity reconstrual. There was also was also an increase in perceptions of risk-taking behaviours i.e. the extent to which one perceives a given activity as carrying the potential for adverse consequences). This is an important finding as altering the perception of risk may alter the likelihood of engaging in risky behaviour (Cestac, Paran & Delhomme, 2011). These are important

findings as research suggests that as boys move into later adolescence their struggle with masculinity intensifies and they are more likely to rigidly adhere to exaggerated gendered notions. Participation may provide the boys with some degree of "inoculation" from this intensification (Abrams, Anderson-Nathe & Aguilar, 2008). There was also a significant increase in self-esteem scores. While self-esteem and young offending is complicated (Gudjonsson & Sigurdsson, 2007), for general wellbeing and protection from mental health issues in young people in general self-esteem is important (Ekeland, Heian, & Hagen, 2005).

The qualitative findings have implications for how participants were construing masculinity post course and the programme appeared to have some effect on some participants in terms of self-reflection and self-identity. Whether a primary aim of the programme or an ancillary outcome, the programme appeared to assist participants in thinking about the future and with their consequential thinking. There was a recognition in participants that they needed to change if they were to achieved their desired future selves. The narratives of some participants linked with possible selves. A possible self is a future orientated construct of "self" formulated by an individual in relation to hopes, fears, and aspirations for the future. Possible selves draw on versions of the self in the past and how they would like to be in the future (Markus & Nurius, 1986). In the qualitative component participants were clear that they wanted to make a change and had aspirations of what they wanted to achieve in the future. Such possible selves not only contain images of their desired self (or what they fear becoming), but they can also provide a "roadmap" on how to achieve that self and avoid the feared negative self. The 'roadmap' is referred to as the self-regulating component as it allows comparison between past selves, current working self and the possible self and provides directions and strategies for narrowing the current and possible self-gap (Paternoster & Bushway, 2009). Participants articulated roadmaps for achieving the desired self through staying in school, importance of education, through not engaging in reckless behaviour and through wanting a positive life. Such narratives are akin to those espoused by crime desisters in that they are not 'doomed to deviance', their life biographies are not written for them and they can make a positive change (see e.g. Maruna, 2001). The qualitative analysis also pointed to the importance of relational dynamic in the change process, participants alluded to how the course made them relate with other and how staff appeared to "care", such relationships are important for triggering, enabling, and sustaining change (Weaver 2013). There is consistent research on the pygmalion effects and interpersonal expectancy effects on prisoner outcome and a similar process seemed important with this client group (LeBel et al., 2008).

There were some 'unintended consequences', which seemingly need to be addressed in the Man Up programme moving forward. There seemed to be some legitimising of stereotypical

masculine beliefs and this was a particular problem for the course when focusing on what it is to be a 'man'. For example, there appeared to be reinforcement of stereotypical beliefs of man as a 'bread winner'. However, this may be an issue of programme implementation, training and delivery rather than a core issue with the course itself. Indeed, lack of consistency, co-ordination which results in inconsistent delivery is a challenge for community-based programmes, particularly those working with young people in schools or institutions (Claussen et al, 2016). The issue of unintended consequences needs serious consideration as it threatens to undermine programme integrity and contravene the rehabilitative goals.

Conclusion and Limitations

There are clear limitations to this study. The biggest issue is the sample size for both studies. This is particularly the case for the quantitative study where real caution is advised in interpreting the findings. It is difficult drawing any concrete conclusions from this aspect of the research, but instead the results provide useful insights. The qualitative study aimed to build on the quantitative study and explore the experiences and perceptions of the young person's going through the course, the impact it had on them and what this may mean for them going forward. While the sample size is accepted for qualitative research, the scope for generalisability is small. However, this is not an aim for this research and instead the research has given insights into participants' experiences of processing through the course, the impact it had on them, how it shaped beliefs and identities and where the course may be addressing pertinent risk factors in the young offender.

This study agrees and supports the argument from Deuchar, et al (2015) that early and effective intervention programmes need to be targeted at young males who are at risk of entering into offending lifestyles due to the multiplicity of strains they are exposed to. Such intervention programmes need to be given priority and to have a focus on challenging commonly held views on what it means to be a man. Furthermore the discussions that take place within such courses also need to be wrapped around a safe context which will enable some reinforcement of reformed hegemonic masculinity (Deuchar et al, 2015). The aim of this evaluation was to explore young offenders' perceptions of the Man-Up programme and whether the programme contributed to any personal change/development and what core learning they took from the course. The results highlight several positive aspects that participants experienced going through the course including beginning a process of self and masculine identity reconstrual as well as the importance of relationships in supporting and validating that change. There is a dearth of brief structured

interventions for young offenders and this study highlights the potential positives of engaging in such a course (Claussen, 2017).

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