

# **DAPP Motivational Session # 4**

## **Moving forward**

### **Aims**

- To start to discuss the concerns that we have about the father perpetrating domestic abuse
- To motivate the father to establish goals to address his behaviour
- To challenge denial, minimisation and blame
- To develop next steps going forward

### **Timing**

1 hour/45 minutes

### **Resources**

Pen and paper. Notes from previous sessions to refer back to

### **Recap**

Start the session with a recap of all the previous sessions. What did the father take away from the sessions? What will he leave behind?

### **Developing goals**

Bring him back to the traits/qualities that we created a spectrum for in the first session. Ask him to rate himself on each of the traits that he identified.

I.e. if I thought I was a very generous person I would put a cross near to their however if I felt that I was very greedy I would put it near to the other end

Generosity {---X-----} Greed

Once completed go back to the needs that he identified for the children, asking him to rate how he feels that he is meeting these;

Completing meeting {-----} Not meeting at all

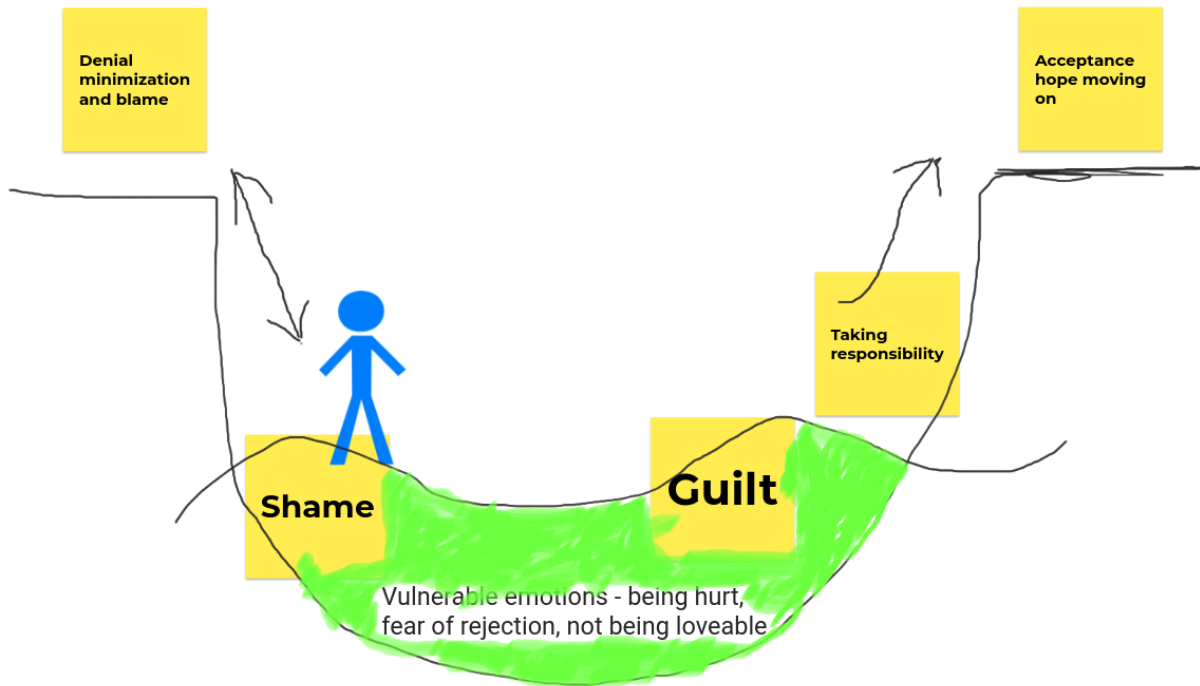
### **Useful prompt questions**

What do you feel is your role as a father? What is important to you as a father?  
What are your hopes and goals for your child/ren? How do you contribute to this?  
What qualities do you have that you want to pass on to your child/ren?

Remind him of the dad in our family that we have been discussing and the reasons that might have made it difficult for him to acknowledge his behaviour and get in the way of him making changes. Does he identify with any of these?  
One thing that may have got in the way is his own feelings.

## The pit of shame

The pit of shame represents these feelings. Draw out the below diagram while you talk through.



One side is denial, minimisation and blame, where we start to avoid the feelings at the bottom. There will be a process of oscillating between touching on the emotions at the bottom, finding them too difficult, then going back to a position of denial, blame or minimisation (saying it's not really that bad).

It's important to note the difference between shame and guilt. Shame is about 'I am' and can lead to feelings of being rejected. While guilt is about 'I have done' something wrong, we can change our behaviours; we can do something differently and repair the damage if we face up to things, acknowledge what we have done and not stay defined by them.

Shame feeds off the secrecy, as we become worried that if people find out about the things that we have done they will reject us. This can stop us from moving over to acceptance, hope and moving on, we remain trapped.

The fathers we work with often struggle to process feelings of vulnerability and more vulnerable emotions, it's important to build their resilience to these and build empathy.

## **Closing**

Ask the father if there are behaviours from the session that he can identify himself using? Whether he would like support to make changes to these behaviours? Identify the next steps for supporting him to make changes, this could be referral to domestic abuse perpetrator programme, it might also include other forms of support such as drug and alcohol, mental health or housing.

**If he is unable to identify with any of the concerns, ensure to be clear about what the concerns are and the expectations of him going forward.**

## **Notes for practitioners**

Following completing these sessions the father you are working with may not be more motivated to address his behaviour, that can be incredibly frustrating, use this to empathise of what the experience may be like for his ex/partner and children. Ensure that you continue to document his patterns of behaviour, particularly those that are seen by the network, therefore do not rely on his ex/partner or children for disclosure, and continue to challenge him on these. The session will also have hopefully supported you to gain some insight into his beliefs and behaviours to plan further intervention.

## **Key messages:**

- That he is responsible for his use of violence and abuse, that this is a parenting choice.
- That he can and that there is an expectation that he makes changes to behaviour going forward
- That his continued denial, minimisation of his behaviour is a continued form of abuse to his ex/partner and children, as it minimises their experience of the abuse and prevents them from moving on.