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Queensland Centre for Domestic and Family Violence Research

Who are you?

Characteristics of DFV offenders who strangle their intimate partner: a document analysis.



PRESENTED BY

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I proudly acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the lands across Queensland and Australia's other states and pay our respects to All First Nations Peoples. I acknowledge that sovereignty over this land was never ceded. I value the ongoing contribution of our many First Nations partners in advising, supporting and contributing to our work and projects – so that your voices and those of your communities are reflected in our work. I thank you with humility.

Why Focus on Strangulation?

1. **High-risk tactic of abuse**
2. **Sevenfold increase in risk of homicide**

   (Glass et al., 2008)
3. **Often leaves few visible injuries ⬇ under-recognized**
4. **Unique psychological & physical harm**

Research Design

AIM:

Explore characteristics of men who strangle in DFV contexts

OBJECTIVES:

- Describe common factors in men's lives (lifestyle, attitudes, behaviours, beliefs, actions)
- Consider implications for MBC programs and risk management

METHOD:

- Document analysis.

Document Source

31 CASE FILES

From a Men's Behaviour Change (MBC) program in SE Queensland (2018–2021)

Each file included:

- 22-page self-assessment form (completed pre-entry)
- Referral documents (courts, probation, parole)
- Victim advocate summaries

Topics covered:

- Demographics
- Relationships
- Substance use
- Family violence
- Childhood experiences
- Education
- Risk
- Motivation

Data Analysis

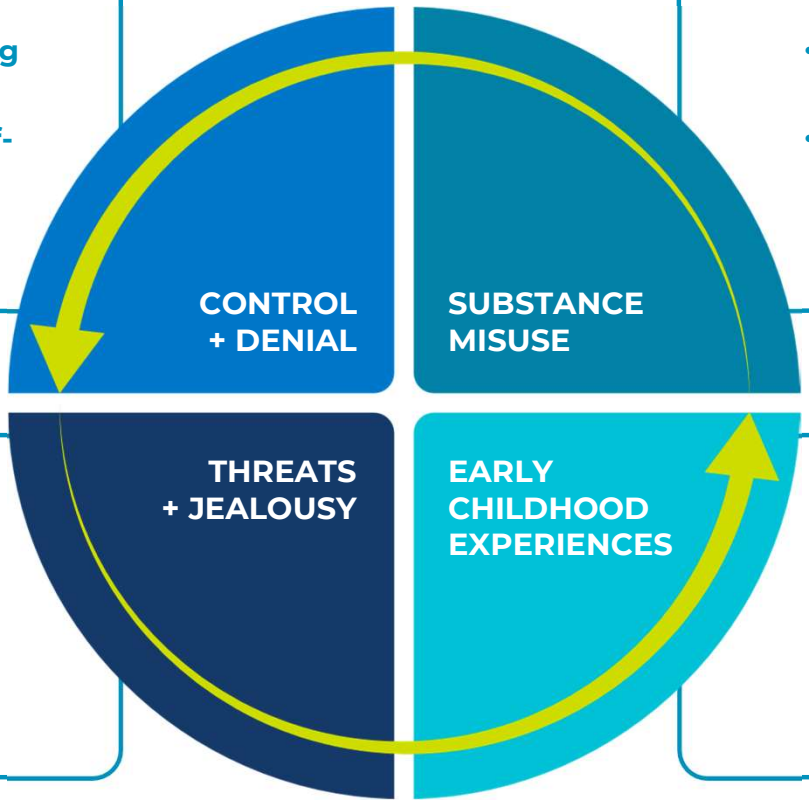
Descriptive analysis exploring themes, aligned with existing literature:

- Control
- Threats
- Substance misuse
- Masculinity and childhood experiences
- Theories about violence
- Intentions and “triggers”
- Emotional regulation
- Responses to DVOs

Compared men’s accounts with referral information and victim advocate notes

Findings

- ¾ of men denied being controlling
- Violence was often framed as self-defence



- Substance use was common
- Nearly ¾ reported daily alcohol use

- Nearly ½ reported being jealous
- Some reported threatening partners, children, or family members
- ⅓ reported suicide attempts

- ¾ were exposed to violence in their childhood homes
- Of those, childhood experiences included severe trauma

Emotional Regulation



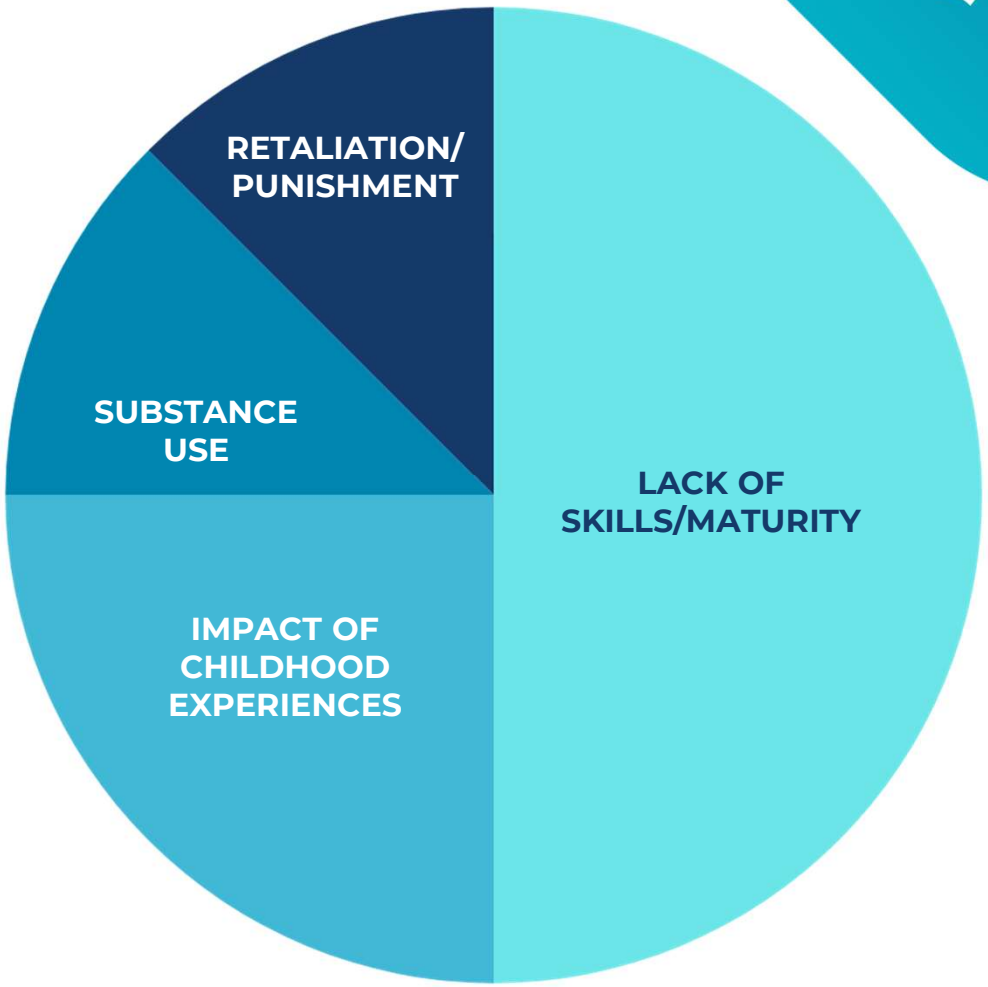
Most reported being "triggered" by partner's behaviour.

7/10
reported some mental health concerns.

4/10
had formal diagnoses (anxiety, depression most common).

Men's Theories About Their Violence

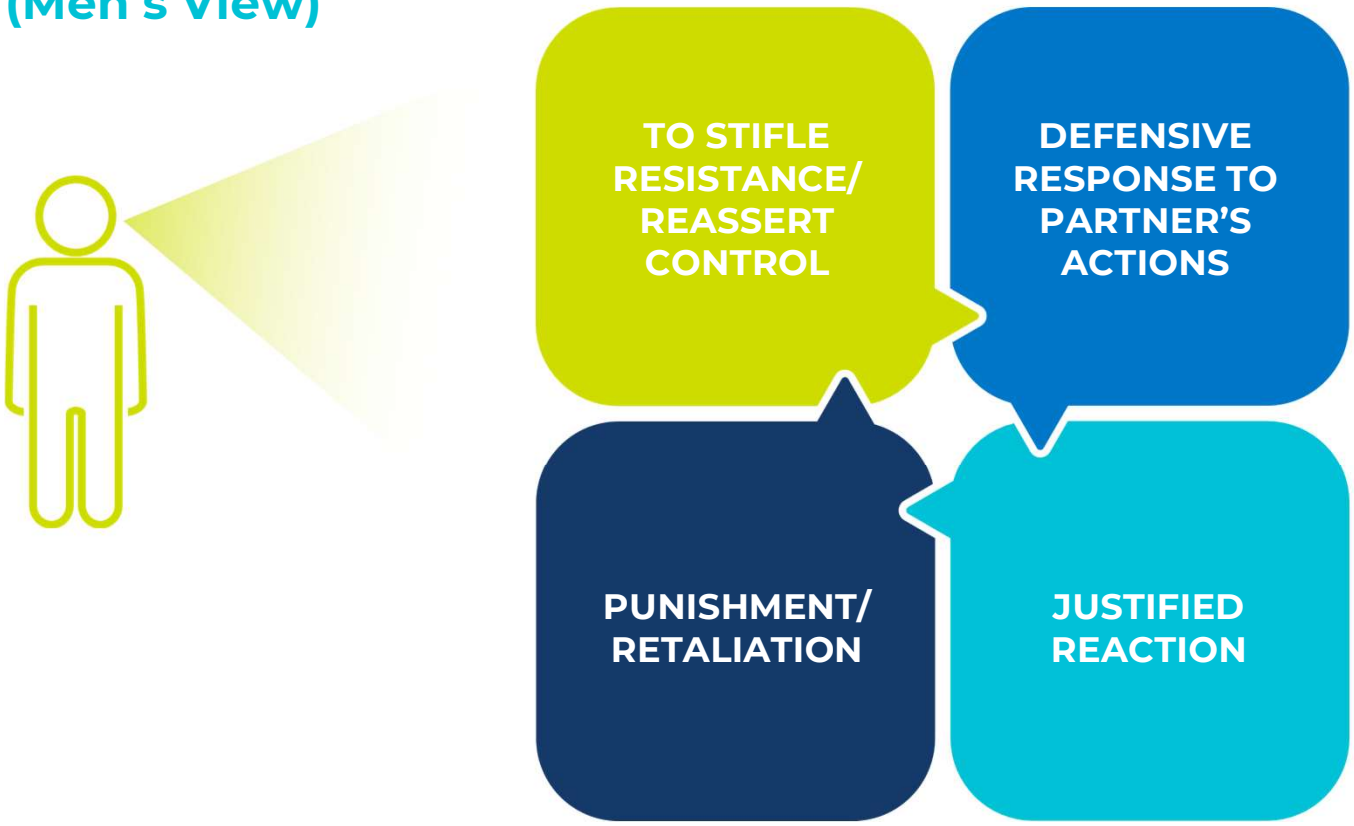
4 main explanations offered:



Reflects rationalisation and denial of control

Intent of Violence

(Men's View)



Triggers the Violence



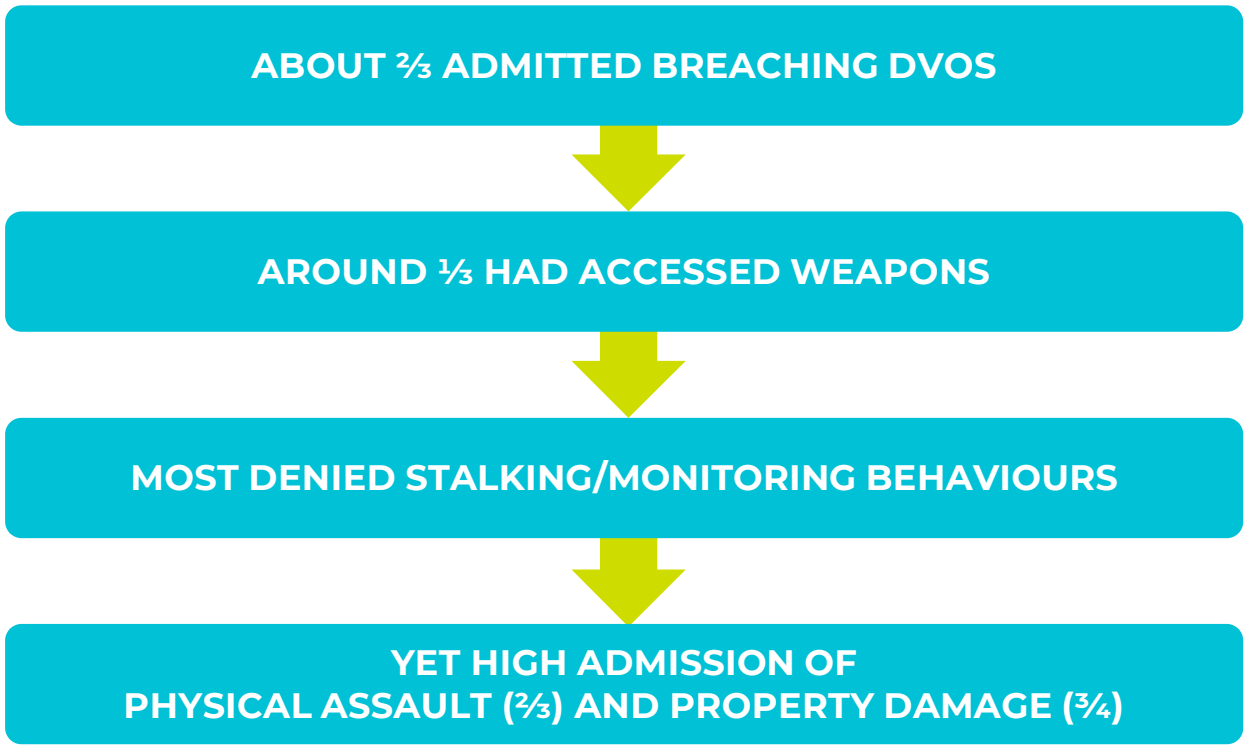
Drug and alcohol use

Response to feeling accused, put down, controlled or unfairly treated.

MORE THAN ½ OF RESPONDENTS

Don’t have triggers – just happens.

DVOs


ABOUT ⅔ ADMITTED BREACHING DVOS
AROUND ⅓ HAD ACCESSED WEAPONS
MOST DENIED STALKING/MONITORING BEHAVIOURS
YET HIGH ADMISSION OF
PHYSICAL ASSAULT (⅔) AND PROPERTY DAMAGE (¾)

Who are these men?

They have a range of complexities with layered histories and situations

(childhood trauma, substance misuse, denial of control).

They deny and/or minimise their abusive behaviours

Many present themselves as victims, not perpetrators.

Strangulation = high risk high harm
Requires intensive, sustained, specialist interventions



Implications for BCPs

There is a need for:

- Comprehensive and nuanced risk assessment.
- Tailored programs, inclusive of high-intensity program.
- Integrated responses: substance abuse, trauma, mental health (Butters et al., 2021).

Men see themselves as victims → challenge for accountability



Recommendations:
Practice

- Ongoing training, support, and supervision should be available to practitioners responsible for risk assessment to ensure the most comprehensive and complete assessment of risk is carried out.

- Pre-entry assessment should contain a measure of attitudes and behaviours towards women.

- Service providers should be given sufficient resources to provide high-intensity programs.



Recommendations: Research

- This study is a foundational one.
- Further research into the intentions, theories, and beliefs of intimate partner abusers is crucial.
- Specifically, studies that highlight certain tactics, such as strangulation, should continue, highlighting the views of both PUVs and victim/survivors to contribute to our collective understanding of how best to stop the violence and eliminate the harm.



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Comments



Questions

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