

Analysis of three transcripts from a

Mens Group

for

**Kelowna Family Centre
and
Okanagan University College**

by

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Method

Mens groups were conducted and tape recorded at Kelowna Family Centre. The audio tapes were subsequently transcribed. Three transcripts were chosen for analysis by the principal investigator. The data analyst received the transcripts on paper with sections marked for analysis. The designated sections were identified on the computer files provided on disk. The text files in Word format were then saved as ASCII text files ready for importing into the graphical qualitative data analysis software Atlas-ti.

Import, First Reading and Memoing

In Atlas-ti the three transcripts (Sessions 5, 9, and 12) were imported as primary documents P1, P2, and P3 into the main "hermeneutic unit" (Muhr, 1997). During the first reading of the transcripts electronic notes were made on it resulting in over 40 free memos listing ideas for coding, reflective comments and other observations. From the memos a coding scheme was created with which to analyse the transcripts using three dimensions: area of change, in relation to whom, and theme.

Second Reading, Selecting Quotes, and Coding

The second reading of the transcript involved first of all selecting quotations. Selected for coding were more than 160 particularly clear sections, quotes illustrating themes, unique thoughts and key issues. As the quotations were marked they were coded using the three dimensions above.

Tabulation of Themes and Quotes

Once coding was done queries were run to recall the quotations for each code. Using the query results themes and their representative quotations were tabulated into several ordered matrices (Miles and Huberman, 1994) with rows representing one dimension, columns another, and frequencies of their co-occurrence as numbers in the cells. Rows were then reordered in descending order of total frequency.

Creation of Network Views

The matrices provided the relations and frequencies (most to least) to create several graphical conceptual networks, resembling mind maps (Buzan, 1974). Networks were created for the men's areas of change related to self, women, men, and their families. As well, networks were created for themes related to non-change (speaker indicated confusion) towards self, women, men, and families.

Conclusion

Finally, using the theme lists, tables and network views, some general conclusions were drawn from the analysis. Conclusions are tentatively stated and are more indicative than conclusive given the fact that parts of only three transcripts were used. Also additional information, such as the identity and demographics traits of the speakers, was unavailable.

Results of Analysis

Results are presented for quotations, codes, matrices and networks. These are the results of several iterations of coding and analysis. The analysis necessarily involves some back tracking, remarking of quotations, and reassignment of codes as the analysis progresses.

Quotations

More than 50 quotations were marked on each of the three transcripts for a total of 163 quotations. An example is shown in the box below. Quotations were almost all taken from the group participants, rather than from the leaders.

I see a lot of strengths - I see her standing up for what she wants - what she needs you know I see it and that makes me happy that she can do because I come from a marriage that the other partner wouldn't do that or couldn't do that or when she did it was finally too late to do that.

Coding Scheme

The following three dimensions were used for coding the quotations.

Area of Change:

- Belief (foundational assumption)
- Attitude/understanding (view based on belief)
- Behaviour (action based on belief/attitude)
- Change aspect - other
- Confused/non-change

In Relation to:

- Female partner/friend/ex-partner
- Females in general
- Self
- Males in general
- Men in Group
- Family

Theme:

- Theme - balance of physical vs other traits
- Theme - change/reverse perspective is positive
- Theme - dealing with pain via anger/blaming vs healthy ways
- Theme - effect of circle of friends
- Theme - emotions affect interaction
- Theme - female friendship is positive
- Theme - giving/sharing responsibility is positive
- Theme - his need to "fix", hers to be "heard"
- Theme - myth of the perfect partner
- Theme - need to name her positive needs/strengths
- Theme - neediness/suicide response
- Theme - respectful equal interaction/space is positive
- Theme - sex and expectation can be damaging
- Theme - time for self is positive, sacrifice is not
- Theme - to show acceptance is positive
- Theme - weight of provider role

An example of a quotation with three codes is shown in the box below.

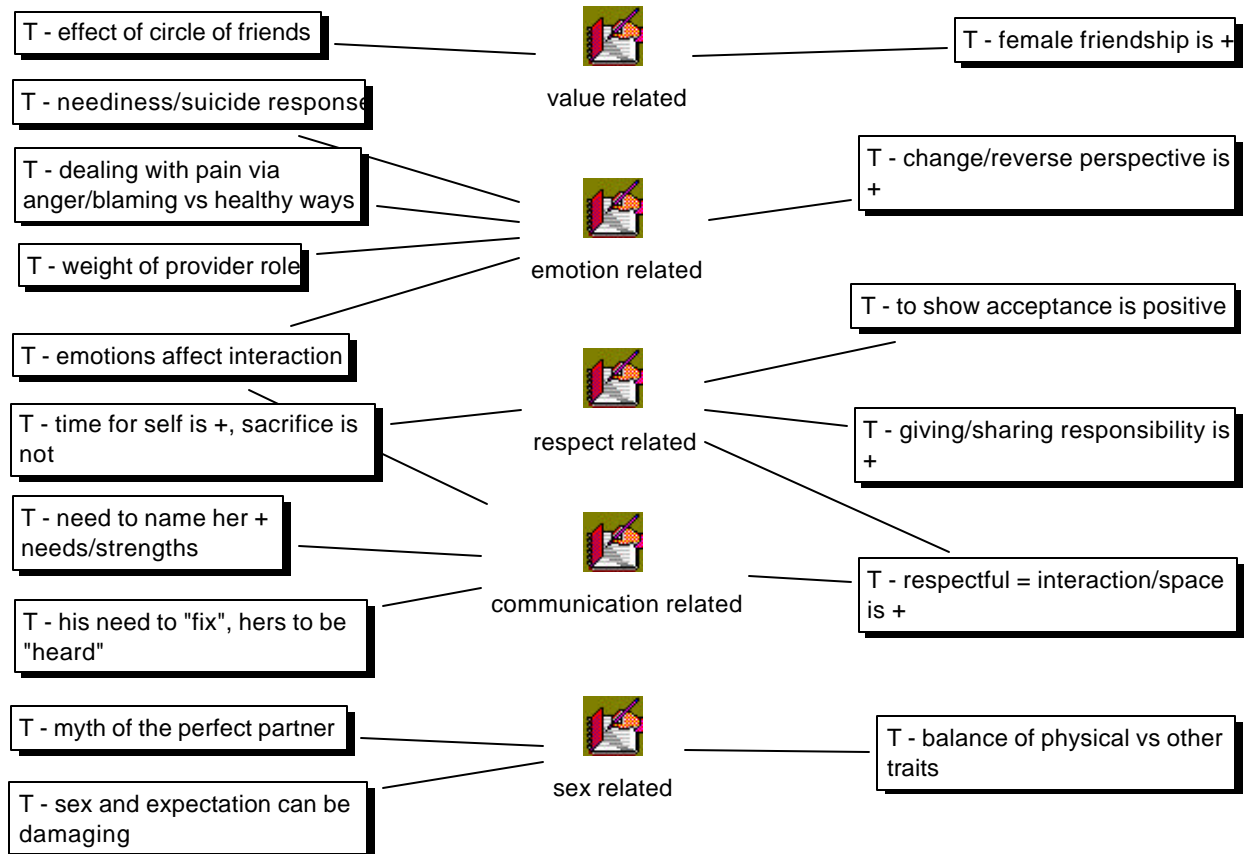
P 1: Session 5.txt - 1:22 (689:694)
 Codes: Attitude/understanding (view based on belief)
 Female partner/friend/ex-partner
 Theme - need to name her positive needs/strengths

I see a lot of strengths - I see her standing up for what she wants - what she needs you know I see it and that makes me happy that she can do because I come from a marriage that the other partner wouldn't do that or couldn't do that or when she did it was finally too late to do that.

Categorized Themes

The 16 themes were categorized into five subject groups based on value related, emotion related, respect related, communication related and sex related logical categories. The groupings shown are not mutually exclusive, as can be seen by multi-linked themes. Themes that are predominantly positive are to the right. Themes that involve negative and/or positive issues are on the left. Themes are heuristically grouped and are not listed in order of frequency.

Figure 1
Categorized Themes



Tabulation of Themes and Quotes

Quotations illustrating the 16 themes are shown below in descending order of frequency. Frequencies should be seen as indications of rank, rather than any type of interval indicator. The most common theme is "dealing with pain via anger/blaming vs healthy ways."

Table 1
Themes, Quotations and Frequencies

Theme - dealing with pain via anger/blaming vs healthy ways	<i>So before you shoot yourself in the foot - share it with someone, share the pain you are going through so that you don't have to blow up at home or blow up at your wife or one of your kids and do something that provokes more stuff.</i>	23
Theme - respectful equal interaction/space is positive	<i>I just, you know, just very calmly and just said, I have a right to say how I feel and that's all I'm doing - I am just telling you how I feel, I am not saying that I am right and you are wrong, or vice a versa or anything like this - this is just how I feel and that just seemed to bring the whole thing down to a level playing field and then from there we sort of got into the meat and potatoes of, so to speak, and both realized that, yeah we are both falling into that trap, that, you know, kids, work, la de da, you can just get so entangled in it, you forget there is two people that deserve some time for each other to, you know, cultivate a good relationship</i>	18
Theme - time for self is positive, sacrifice is not	<i>That goes to one of my thoughts I had in the last little while and that is I used to love myself and I told my wife and taught my kids, you love yourself first and look after yourself first and then you can look after somebody else.</i>	15
Theme - balance of physical vs other traits	<i>...its her personality and her emotions that I am attracted to now, not just her body, and that's the best part for me, and I think once you get more centred with yourself, you don't even see the physical side as much.</i>	14
Theme - weight of provider role	<i>I've got to the point where I don't know who I am anymore, you know, I am my wife's husband and my kids father and the provider, but underneath it all - who is _____, and I think that having your own business and a family - you get to that point, it is not like you can walk out the door and say that was my job - I'll come back tomorrow morning.</i>	12
Theme - sex and expectation can be damaging	<i>I really took a long time to learn that expecting sex is damaging to the relationship, hugely. I can respect the fact that it wasn't easy, that it was in her court, but that way it was up to her if she wanted to be intimate</i>	10

Theme - emotions affect interaction	<i>...if you just change the anger, if you just get rid of that anger, you can fall in love again - and hopefully she can fall in love with me again</i>	9
Theme - need to name her positive needs/strengths	<i>I see a lot of strengths - I see her standing up for what she wants - what she needs you know I see it and that makes me happy that she can do because I come from a marriage that the other partner wouldn't do that or couldn't do that or when she did it was finally too late to do that</i>	9
Theme - neediness/suicide response	<i>I'm not capable or willing to deal with children losing their mother - as sick as she is - they obviously still love her. They may not like what she has done but kids are very resilient, they seem to be able to take a hell of a beating before they actually disown their parents but, if you want to call it that.</i>	7
Theme - effect of circle of friends	<i>I still feel this group of friends of my ex is a horrible influence. I don't think she is getting anything great by hanging out with them.</i>	7
Theme - giving/sharing responsibility is positive	<i>I am the one who kept me all closed in all the time and shut off - it wasn't anybody else but me and the anger would just build and build and build until I would just explode all over whoever was in front of me and usually it was her or my daughter. So when you take that away and give that back to the person who should have that responsibility, you are free - free to be yourself.</i>	6
Theme - to show acceptance is positive	<i>I think that the biggest thing is getting here, you know, like I, this, this is food for life, you know, you can come here and you can talk and be honest, like, nobody judges you, there is no right and there is no wrong - it is what you are going through - we can be as open and as transparent as we want to be and nobody rejects you - we are accepted for, I am accepted for who I am and I am loved for who I am, and what more could we want</i>	6
Theme - female friendship is positive	<i>...one of my best friends in the whole world is a female - I have known her since we were two years old and ah, after my marriage fell apart - we had been friends, but distant friends you know</i>	5
Theme - myth of the perfect partner	<i>...when we talk, we are not even going to the emotional side whatsoever when we say Barbie doll, but with the, when we say the, the myth of the perfect woman - that encompasses everything.</i>	3
Theme - change/reverse perspective is positive	<i>... it is not uncommon at all for people to go looking in the next relationship for what they didn't have in this relationship and go to the other end of the spectrum.</i>	2

Theme - his need to "fix", hers to be "heard"	<i>Yeah, like dealing with me wanting to fix something for her - just getting past all the stuff is a struggle for me</i>	1
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The themes are shown cross-tabulated by whom they are in relation to. The theme "dealing with pain via anger/blaming vs healthy ways" occurs most often in relation to "self" while the theme "respectful equal interaction/space is positive" is most often directed at a female in their life. Again the numbers are more indicative than conclusive and should not be taken as measures of strength.

Table 2
Themes In Relation To

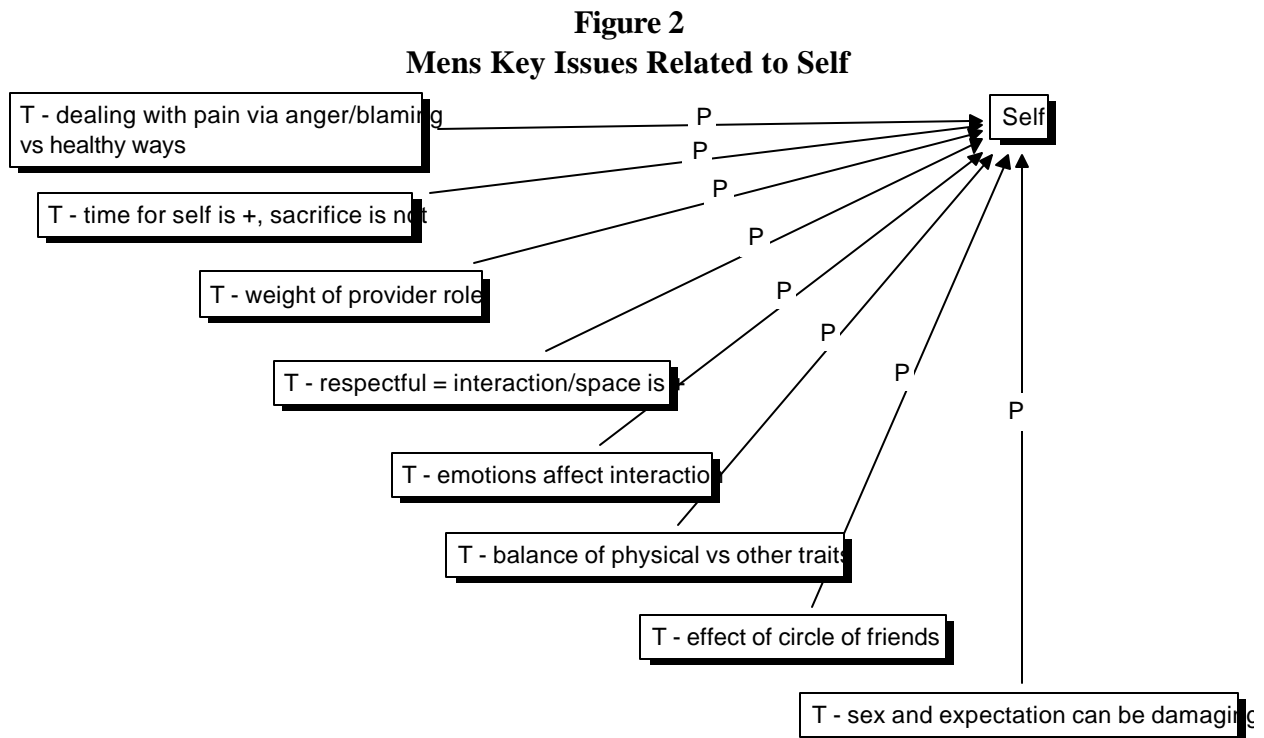
THEME:	Self	Female Partner/Friend/expartner	Females in General	Males in General	Men in Group	Family	TOTAL
Theme - dealing with pain via anger/blaming vs healthy ways	13	4		2	2	3	24
Theme - respectful equal interaction/space is positive	4	15					19
Theme - time for self is positive, sacrifice is not	12	4			1		17
Theme - weight of provider role	8	1				5	14
Theme - balance of physical vs other traits	3	5	5	1			14
Theme - sex and expectation can be damaging	3	4	3	3			13
Theme - emotions affect interaction	4	5				1	10
Theme - effect of circle of friends	3	6			1		10
Theme - need to name her positive needs/strengths		9					9
Theme - giving/sharing responsibility is positive	2	5					7
Theme - to show acceptance is positive	2	3			1		6
Theme - neediness/suicide response	2				2	2	6
Theme - female friendship is positive		4	1				5
Theme - change/reverse perspective is positive	1		1				2
Theme - myth of the perfect partner			2				2
Theme - his need to "fix", hers to be "heard"		1					1
TOTAL	57	66	12	6	7	11	159

Network Views

Network views are graphical views of code relations, often used for the formulation of theory. The above matrix provided the relations and frequencies for the following four network views:

- Men's Key Issues Related to Self - Figure 2
- Men's Key Issues Related to Women - Figure 3
- Men's Key Issues Related to Men - Figure 4
- Men's Key Issues Related to Family - Figure 5

In the following networks "Key Issues" includes all areas of change: belief, attitude, behaviour, other and non-change. The abbreviation T stands for "Theme", P stands for "Property of," + stands for "positive", = stands for "equal" and ° indicates "in relation to." Themes listed at the top are most common, descending to least common at the bottom.



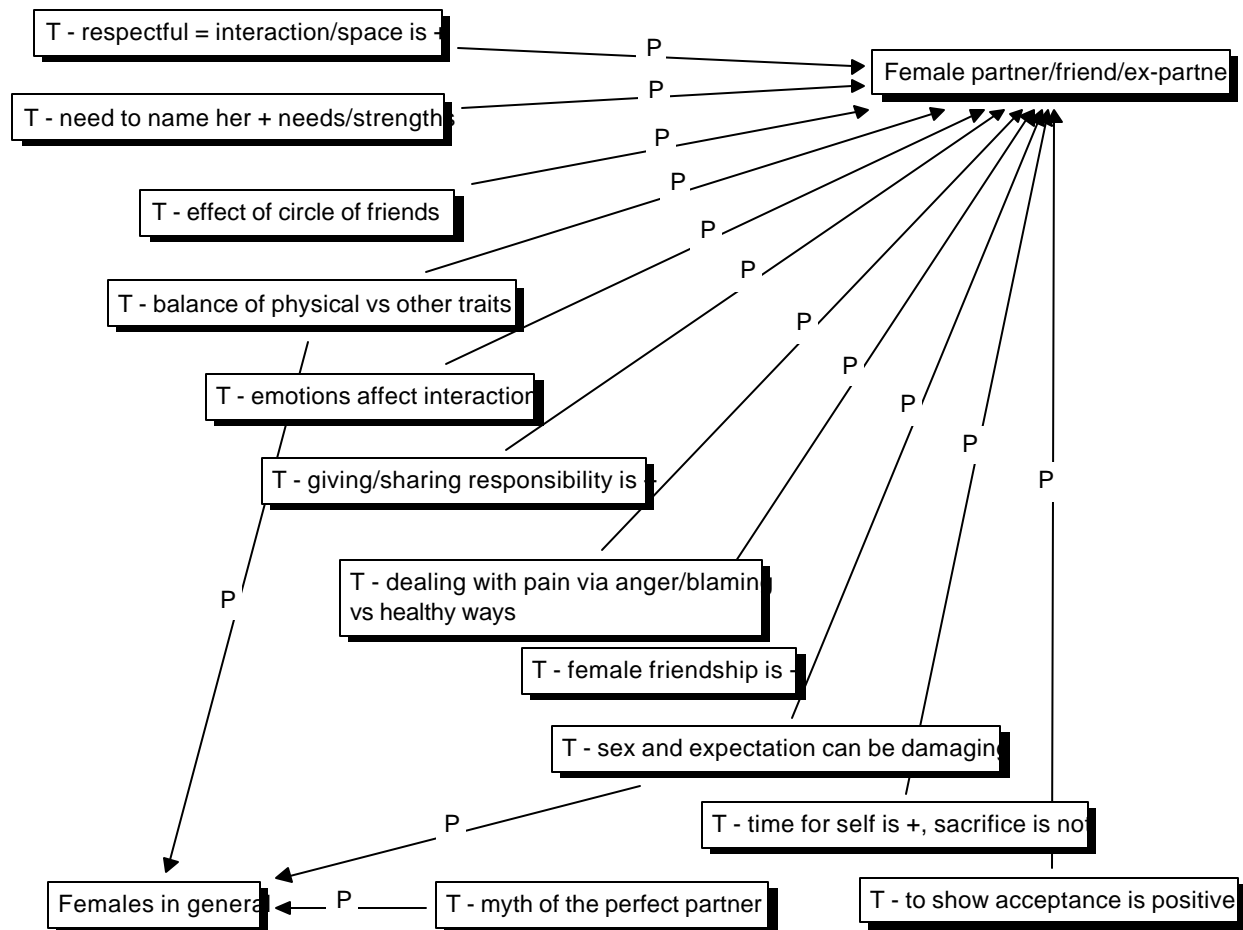
Men's Key Issues Related to Self

The themes indicate that managing emotions, time, and interactions are key self issues these men are grappling with. One theme is how pain and hurt are often displaced onto anger and blaming. For instance *"I have noticed that I am getting healthier like I am not angry or getting loud like I used to I'll just go back to the point that I am trying to make and, you know, just try to stick with the issue and not go everywhere."* They discuss how to curb their anger and express pain in healthy ways. They also discuss how to take personal time and avoid sacrificing themselves. There are 57 themes related to self.

Men's Key Issues Related to Women

The most frequent themes related to female partner/friend/ex-partners involve "respectful equal interaction/space is positive." Towards women in general the most frequent theme is "balance of physical vs other traits."

Figure 3
Mens Key Issues Related to Women



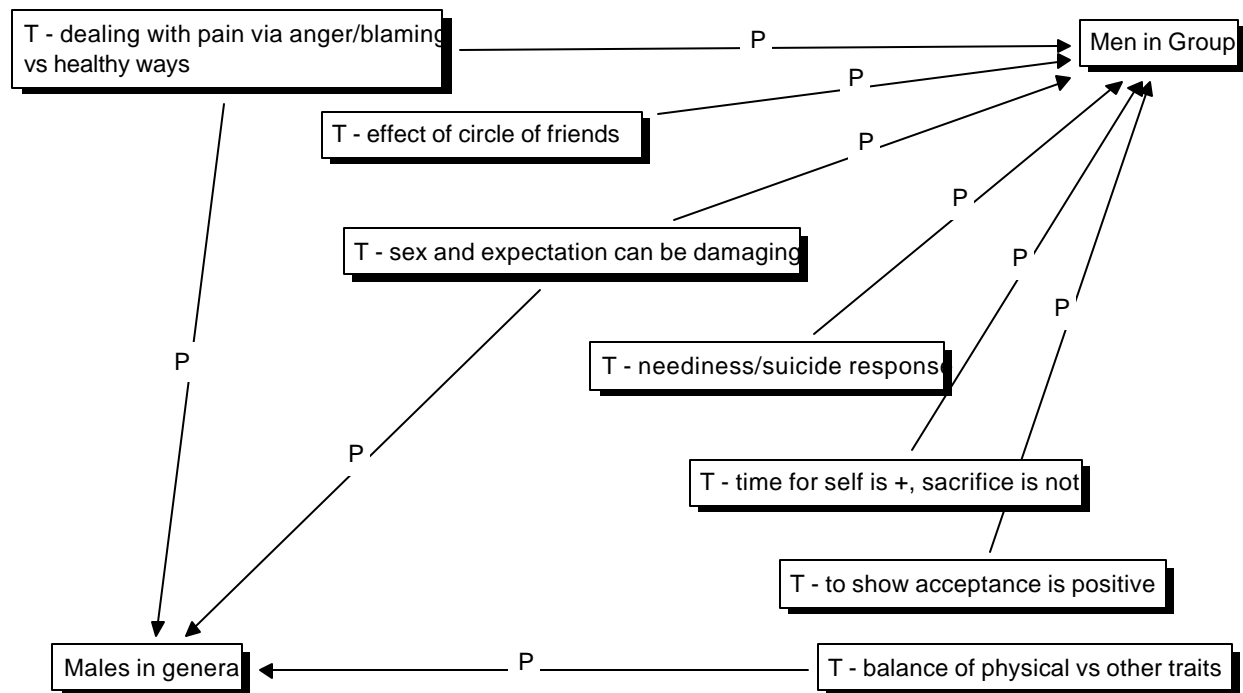
Achieving understanding, respectful and balanced relationships with women are key issues for these men. For instance *"I give her space and go do my own thing, and when she comes around, she comes around you know I don't put any expectations on her and that's about all I can do."*

As well the objectification of women, the "myth of the perfect woman" and stereotypes of physical beauty influence their choice and satisfaction with partners and women in general. Social beliefs about women, roles, and the desirable female traits play a significant part. For instance *"I have always looked for the pretty the smart the good looking body and the whole package deal whereas now me knowing this group knowing that that's not necessarily an appropriate way to be thinking."* There are 66 themes related to women

Mens Key Issues Related to Men

Towards men in the group the most frequent themes are "dealing with pain via anger/blaming versus healthy ways" and "neediness/suicide response". Towards men in general the most common theme is "sex and expectation can be damaging".

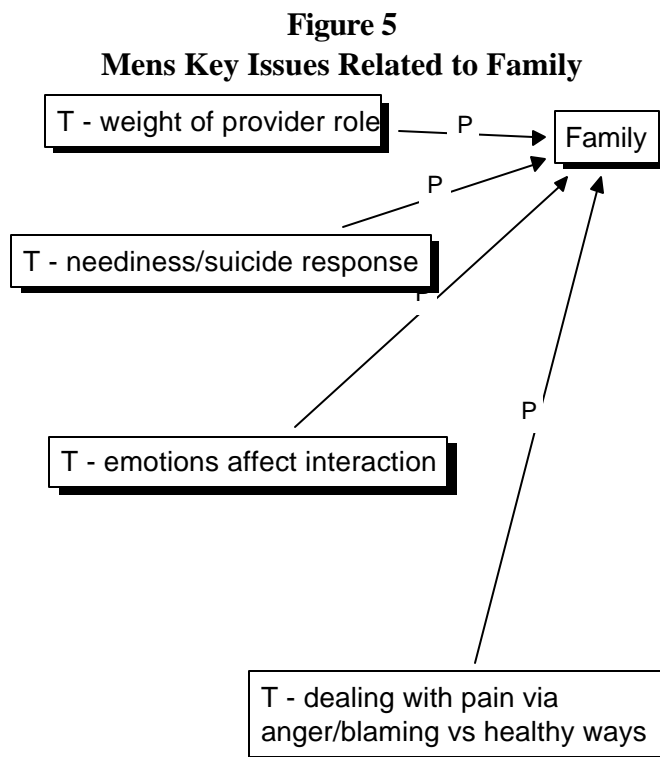
Figure 4
Mens Key Issues Related to Men



The men in the group give each other support, advice, and encouragement about dealing with pain, suicidal thoughts, partners, and women in general. As an example *"So before you shoot yourself in the foot - share it with someone, share the pain you are going through so that you don't have to blow up at home or blow up at your wife or one of your kids and do something that provokes more stuff."* Regarding men and sex one said *"Some men don't believe they have to masturbate in a relationship."* These quotations are fewer in number (13) than those on the previous page directed to women.

Mens Key Issues Related to Family

A common theme related to family is the "weight of the provider role".



The men have issues related to their roles in the family, related to being providers, showing emotion, and dealing with anger at home. Regarding the provider role one said *"because my family has really never cared that much to help me out or to talk about what I do, but the stress of the financial side of it comes on me."* There are relatively few quotations (11) related to family, as compared to self, women or men.

Matrix of Areas of Change In Relation To

There are more themes related to change in attitudes and behaviours than beliefs. It could be argued that no attitude or behaviour change occurs without some change in beliefs, which are often the foundation of attitudes and behaviours.

Table 3**Areas of Change and In Relation To**

IN RELATION TO:	Area of Change				TOTAL
	Attitude	Behav- iour	Belief	Non- Change	
Female Partner/Friend/Expartner	23	19	9	14	65
Self	12	23	9	12	56
Females in General	3	3	6	1	13
Family	1	4	2	3	10
Males in General	2	0	6	0	8
Males in Group	1	3	1	1	6
TOTAL	42	52	33	31	158

In the table above it can be seen that attitude change is a more frequent topic in relation to females whereas behaviour change is more frequently discussed in relation to self.

Coding of areas of change was problematic as it was discovered that the areas are not mutually exclusive. Greater validity was experienced in differentiating areas of confused/non-change as shown on the next page.

Matrix of Confused/NonChange Themes

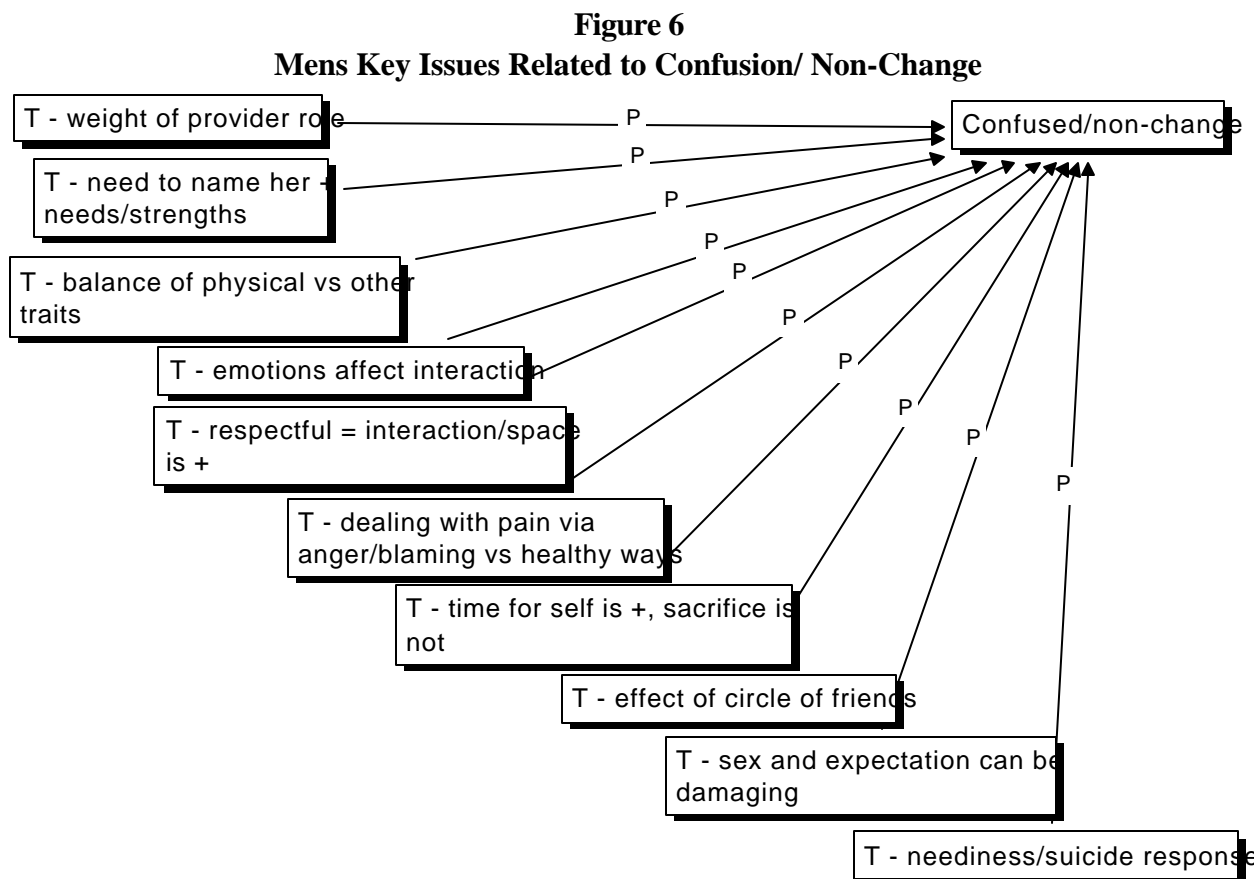
The themes coded as "confused/non-change" seem to relate to areas where men are "stuck" and confused, perhaps representing growth areas. They are shown below in descending order of frequency. Weight of the provider role is shown as the most common theme.

Table 4
Confused/Non-change Themes

Theme - weight of provider role	<i>I know what you are talking about, I run a _____ business and it doesn't make ends meet most of the time and you want to hang on and some of its because of the fear of not knowing what else to do. You know, facing that fear of what's next is sometimes, for myself, harder than, you know, than going on with the business because you have to face a fear that weighs heavy on you.</i>	6
Theme - need to name her positive needs/strengths	<i>No, I see no strengths there I see just a confused and lost person under the influence of people who have no relationships in their lives whatsoever and like my wife because she makes them look good.</i>	3
Theme - balance of physical vs other traits	<i>Yeah, and again that gets back to the statement I said about how healthy I am - if I am doing things because of other people's expectations, does that make a statement about me?</i>	3
Theme - emotions affect interaction	<i>Well, I feel like it was a good decision, you know, I am kind of a stubborn old hen but, it takes forever for me to make a decision but, once I make it, I stick with it.</i>	2
Theme - respectful equal interaction/ space is positive	<i>She is that way but only because of the alcohol and the pats on the back that she just is enjoying a change in her life. So I don't have a problem that she is weak.</i>	2
Theme - dealing with pain via anger/blaming vs healthy ways	<i>I remember before feeling that way and, as I mentioned before, feeling really frustrated not knowing exactly what to do and then you just get from frustrated to angry and then, then it just goes wrong</i>	2
Theme - time for self is positive, sacrifice is not	<i>I am struggling with where to draw the line with what I want myself to do for her - but the kids still live in the house and if the furnace is bad, you know, am I doing it for her or am I doing it for the kids - where do I draw the line on what I want myself to do in that respect.</i>	1

Theme - effect of circle of friends	<i>I get out of bed and say, I got to do something today that makes me feel like the day was worth getting out of bed for. You know, going to work was usually my reason but now I have to find something else</i>	1
Theme - sex and expectation can be damaging	<i>Its just really hard to sit and wait for her to decide what she is going to do. I don't think she would be moving her stuff into my place if she just wanted to be strictly friends.</i>	1
Theme - neediness/suicide response	<i>I'm not capable or willing to deal with children losing their mother - as sick as she is - they obviously still love her. They may not like what she has done but kids are very resilient, they seem to be able to take a hell of a beating before they actually disown their parents but, if you want to call it that.</i>	1

The network view associated with the confused/non-change themes is shown below in descending order of frequency (top to bottom)



Men seem to most often demonstrate confusion and non-change when they speak about their role and interactions with their partners and significant others in their lives. For instance *"Yeah, and again that gets back to the statement I said about how healthy I am - if I am doing things because of other people's expectations, does that make a statement about me?"*

Conclusion

Three transcripts yielded over 160 quotations for analysis. The following points summarize the results of analysis:

- In relation to themselves these men struggle to express their pain as sadness and hurt rather than anger and blaming. Some have begun to see their destructive behaviours and are learning how to change them.
- In relation to women they tend to follow stereotypical views of women and find it difficult to counteract social messages about physical versus other traits. These factors influence their choices and satisfaction with their partners and women in their lives.
- There are fewer examples of their issues in relation to men. While on a few occasions the group is mentioned as supportive there are no explicit mentions of their relations to other men except in regard to dealing with issues with self and partners.
- With regards to their families, the men's principal issues relate to their roles as provider and struggles over handling anger in the family context.
- Results suggest that attitude change is discussed more in relation to females whereas behaviour change is discussed more frequently in relation to self. These results should be taken with caution due to the overlaps between attitudes, beliefs and behaviours.
- Areas of confusion/non-change tend to be role related and involve interaction with significant others in their lives. What should be said is that the mere fact that these topics are being discussed in a circle of men is a positive step towards their change.

The results of the analysis are more illustrative than conclusive, given the constraints and limitations of the data. However, should the findings be corroborated through analysis of interviews conducted with the men and their female partners then there is more strength in the findings.

This study reveals the nature of themes in a small sample of discussions in a mens group. Themes identified relate to self, women, men and family. The men show a range of changes and some non-changes in their beliefs, attitudes and behaviours. The group provides support for these men to express a variety of issues and often involves discussion of change in their beliefs, attitudes and behaviours.

References

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