



RAPCAN
protecting children's rights

SEMINAR REPORT

Assessing Current Approaches to the Construction of Masculinities: A Focus on Crime & Violence Prevention with Reference to Work with Boys

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Cape Town

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1. Executive Summary

The prevalence of violence, and specifically gender-based violence, currently represents one of the most significant public health, social development and justice crises in the country. Gender-based violence, for the purposes of the Seminar, was asserted as constituting violence that stems from notions of gender. Such violence is viewed to incorporate male-on-female violence, as well as male-on-male violence.

While reports indicate that a growing number of people affected by violence range between 15 and 24 years of age, Van der Merwe and Dawes assert that 'developing and delivering effective interventions for young people engaging in violent and other anti-social behaviour is essential in high-violence contexts.

However, while evidence-based violence initiatives are extremely limited, there is agreement that 'a greater emphasis should be placed on ensuring a high level of programme quality to increase programme effectiveness'.

In cognizance of this, the seminar was driven by the goal of promoting approaches of evidence-based youth violence prevention models.

The Objectives of the Seminar were to:

1. Assess current approaches to the construction of masculinities with a focus on prevention work with boys
2. Identify obstacles against and opportunities for work with boys that is aimed at preventing violence
3. Introduce the importance of different approaches to work with boys and work with girls.

Some of the key discussions revolved around the apparent and significant need for violence prevention work that is based on evidence. Such approaches arguably increase the possibility of programmatic effectiveness and the formulation of sound and appropriate policies.

2. Background to the Seminar

There have been significant developments to address violence, and particularly gender-based violence, in the South African policy and legislative arena. However, barriers to implementation, which includes a lack of appropriate skills and expertise for implementation; a culture of violence; growing inequalities; and the lack of effective responsive and more importantly, preventative measures on behalf of the state and non-state bodies relate that the most vulnerable members of South African society remains cut-off from the potential benefits of these progressive policies and legislation.

At the same time, while decades of work that was aimed at empowering women to be able to resist, avoid, address and if necessary, abandon abusive situations have not improved the actual situation of abused women, a gradual and growing focus has been turned to working with men and boys in an effort to prevent violence against women, and to prevent violent behaviour in general.

The seminar was framed by the idea of how constructions of masculinities feed or inhibit violent tendencies in individuals and in societies. Other individual risk factors were also highlighted, such as alcohol, drug and weapon use, social isolation and marginalisation, which led to discussions on required areas for programmatic focus.

3. Presentations

The presentations set the context of the seminar and provided insight into some of the key issues that need to be considered when developing evidence based programmes that deal with violence prevention and that are aimed at boys and men.

Barbara Holtmann presented key considerations for breaking the cycle of violence and crime;

Elron Fouten discussed the construction of masculinities of Capetonian adolescent and pre-adolescent boys, and how these feed or inhibit violence. The discussion was framed by the gender dimensions of violence prevention, building resilience, strengthening families, and addressing risk factors.

Anik Gevers provided an overview of the “Encouraging Safe Dates” programme as an example of an evidence based programme.

Samantha Waterhouse presented the finding from COAV (Children involved in Organised Armed Violence) as a process of building the evidence base for policy and programmatic interventions.

The discussion below summarises the presentations:

3.1. Breaking the Circle of Violence and Crime by Barbara Holtmann, Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR)

Problem statement

Many strategies and interventions aimed at reducing the vulnerability of women and children focus on the moment at which an act of violence may be committed. Some of the strategies employed rely on separating men and women or men and children from each other. One thus encounters women-only train carriages, women only police stations, etc. Other strategies address the impact of violence that typically include victim support programmes and court support programmes. There are also those that attempt to change the nature of male behaviour, bringing together men to promote non-violent solutions to conflictual situations. We need to start challenging young men in a different way. We need to be rearing young boys differently and inspecting the roles of women in doing that.

Focus and Aim of the Model

The model "breaking the cycle of crime and violence" aims to take us into a different perspective in which the moment that the crime is perpetrated is seen not as a snapshot but as the consequence of fissures and failures in our family and social circumstances. Developed first in an attempt to answer the question "what kind of a person commits a crime like that?" the model attempts an analysis of the moments of failure in the life cycle of someone who becomes a violent criminal. In so doing, it offers insights into remedies that can be put into place as preventative measures, reducing the risk before it is visible and close.

The model suggests that the problem is not so much about violence against women and children, and is perhaps more about violence by men. Interventions are about increasing the capacity of families and communities to love, nurture and build the self esteem of young people, to harness and use their creativity and talents and about reducing anger. The model provides a framework for fixing South Africa one kind act at a time.

Discussion

The cycle describes pathways through which vulnerable victims may become offenders later in life. Risk factors include access to guns, alcohol, drugs; poverty; the feeling of uselessness and migrancy. We see that 41 billion rand is spent on alcohol per year. 50 % of victims of homicide are drunk at the time of their death. So alcohol not only lowers your inhibitors to becoming violent, it also renders you more vulnerable to be victimised. The vulnerability around drugs and alcohol cannot thus be overstated. There is also quite a lot of bullying that takes place using guns – we don't hear much about how weapons are used to bully others, even though this may be the cause of great trauma in individuals. We need to start grappling with the realities of trauma.

The social marginalisation of males creates a sense of uselessness and the loss of hope for the future. We thus see a lot of problematised young men in our society.

The model looks at the need to focus on breaking the cycle of violence and crime through focussing on prevention, and thus rendering interventions before the victims become the offenders. The model emphasises the physical contact of nurturing, rather than the physical contact of violence.

The speaker highlighted current trends and noted that in our society, we see 'bullying taking place at the highest levels'. The speaker put forward that we need to make use of opportunities to hold our leaders accountable and challenge the endorsement of violence from these levels.

The speaker further highlighted that we need to grow male babies and children that will help create a nurturing and protected society. WE cannot further build a safe society on accidental motherhood.

We need to ask ourselves 'what do we mean by leadership'; and we need to ask 'what does an admiral young man look like?'

The Q&A Session

Q: How do we hold politicians accountable?

A: We should break the silence. When we see our leaders doing something wrong we should not be silent about it. We usually hear one or two voices when something goes wrong, but we need to speak out when our leaders promote violence. We should capitalise on the election process and raise the campaign to end violence. Our campaigns should not just be contained within the 16 days of activism, but we should make use of democratic vehicles that are aimed at promoting accountability.

Q: How do we do role-modelling for our young people?

A: Role-modelling starts in the home. We have made too many mistakes looking at material popular/famous sporting and other individuals. How can we, for

example, use Makhaya Ntini on a 'Safe Sex' poster? Role-modelling starts in the home, by teaching young people parenting skills.

Q: Imams use the mass media to speak out against the dress code of females, citing this as the cause of violence in our society. They argue that dressing provocatively leads to sexual violence. Nothing is mentioned on the roles and responsibilities of boys and men.

A: Religion is usually cut off from the current social contexts. It is often difficult to engage with FBO's as they operate along a different set of principles. We often question the need for women to have to feel unsafe when walking alone at night. WE need to work towards a society where we can all be free. Reactions from faith-based organisations have been to separate males and females, but we need to question whether this is absolutely necessary. Other approaches involve teaching self-defence to women and girls. Both approaches are actually counter-productive. We need to learn to interact with one another in a healthy way, and we need to talk to our religious leaders.

3.2. **Strategies of resisting and negotiating hegemonic masculinity** by Elron Fouten, University of the Western Cape

Problem Statement and Focus of the Study

It needs to be emphasised that masculinities are constructed – we are not born that way. One of the key components in critical men’s studies is the notion of hegemonic masculinity which acknowledges the imperative for men and boys to “prove” masculinity through conforming to the cultural ideal of successful masculinity. It is accepted that masculinity, like femininity, is constantly and continuously fought for through performances of idealised and normative versions of masculinity, including being macho, hypersexual and so on.

What we have seen in the past was the construction of the white, middle class identity as the hegemonic construction of masculinity, and the ultimate marginalisation of the effeminate, homosexual/gay masculinity.

Now we see the ruling or hegemonic masculinity at the top of the social hierarchy, being defined through affluence and material resources. The economically marginalised male has become the socially marginalised male.

These constructions of masculinity impact perceptions of power. Material and economic power thus translates into social power. Those at the top of the hierarchy impose power upon those at the bottom. This perpetuates the feeling of uselessness in those at the bottom of the social hierarchy, who display marginalised constructions of masculinities.

There is much current work looking at especially young males it is confined to the margins in terms of both research and practise. Yet many researchers have highlighted the way in which certain masculinities are facilitative of unsafe sexual practices as well as violence in intimate relationships.

The central aim of the study reported here was to explore the processes and strategies used by adolescent school-going boys in their negotiation of

hegemonic masculinity and constructing and adopting alternative masculine identities in their particular local contexts.

The study participants were groups of 14-16 year old school-going boys from 4 schools in the Western Cape, covering a diversity of racial, linguistic, religious and cultural backgrounds.

Findings highlighted the well-theorised process in which masculinities are defined, which is that boys' notion of masculinities take on their meaning through negative distancing and 'othering' of different, socially less valued masculine identities.

It was interesting to note that many of the participants cited the role of men as breadwinners in the household. It is thus easy to see how many young men feel useless, given the high levels of unemployment in our society.

The idealised and normative versions of masculinity are therefore constituted by:

- A sense of responsibility for the family (men as the breadwinner);
- Taking your place as the head of the household (men as decision-makers);
- Gaining the privilege of having a social life outside of the home;
- Being heterosexual;
- Having a high sex drive

The Q&A Session

Q: If we compare the context of sports now and then, and what is cool and not cool among the young people, we can see a difference. We see now how school children are influenced by their peers and older siblings. Sex is regarded as 'cool' and we also see the influence of violence in the movies. How powerful are these influences and how do we counter that?

A: It is normal for teenagers to experiment, but it depends on the boundaries that they are accustomed to – if they are already 'running wild', it could mean using guns, etc. There are certain rights of passage for teenagers that are socially determined – by their peers. 'Kids need to be bad'. We should ensure that there is

a safety net to cushion kids when they fall. It is important that we have positive influences out there.

Q: Is the working/career women the cause of the problem?

A: Men do feel disempowered nowadays. Even though it is a problem in some families, it is much less of a problem than if there is no relationship between the husband and wife. The employment situation in the country does give rise to a sense of uselessness in males, but women have had to enter the economy in order to become self-sufficient and to be able to fend for themselves where they need to. The problem is male aggression, an imbalance of power, inequalities and a culture of violence, and that there are no mechanisms to deal with these.

3.3. The Encouraging Safe Dates Programme: An Intervention to Prevent Intimate Partner Violence among Adolescents: An Example of an Evidence Based Programme by Anik Gevers, University of Cape Town

Researchers have found high levels of intimate partner violence among adolescents in South Africa; approximately half of a representative sample of adolescents reported involvement in a violent intimate relationship (Swart, Seedat, Stevens, & Ricardo, 2002).

Such violence has been associated with a multitude of negative sequelae that have a long-lasting impact not only on the victim, but on those in the victim's social networks, public services, and extending into the level of society. In an effort to address this urgent public health concern, our team is developing an evidence-based intervention to prevent adolescent intimate partner violence.

Based on a model of intimate partner violence developed by our multi-disciplinary research team, we seek to impact adolescent relationships by increasing social support for girls; questioning male norms of superiority, sexual entitlement, and control of females; reducing alcohol and drug use; and improving communication skills. The presentation will describe the process of developing an evidence-based intervention and provide a brief overview of the intervention content.

We are seeing that the relationship style during adolescence is mirrored or exacerbated during adulthood, and that inter-partner violence begins at adolescence.

What do the stats tell us?

- Approx. 20-40% of inter-partner violence is perpetrated in the Western Cape.
- A significant number reported reflects an intention to perpetrate the violence - when irritated by partners
- Inter partner violence takes many different forms- emotional, sexual and physical
- It has wide reaching impacts

Background research to the project

The evidence based practice has been informed by the following:

- The team included first hand research with teens in the 8th grade.
- Reference was made to the Safe Dates programme (the aims of the programme are to change dating and relationship norms, peer helping norms, etc)
- Stepping stones (Rachel Jewkes) is a community based programme, mainly aimed at adults, but it may be implemented with youth as young as 15 years
- It is especially directed at men
- Our times our choices is being tested in KZN. It is an HIV and alcohol prevention programme comprised of 15 sessions. It aims to delay the early sexual debut and use of alcohol. Preliminary assessments of the programme indicate an increase in alcohol refusal and an increase positive attitudes to abstinence

Evidence based practice allows one to learn from experience. There is a lot of team-building around strengths and experiences of other members, and in addressing challenges.

The programme is guided by the theoretical model as adapted from and by R. Jewkes and it is influenced by the ideology of male superiority in the context of social violence. It therefore encapsulates the notion of the low power and influence of women, and of male sexual entitlement. These ideas of gender are linked to the controlling of women. There is also very little social support for women to say no. these contexts enforces obedience to men, where violence is seen as a legitimate response to situations of disobedience. These problems are also linked to the earlier initiation of sex. Many young girls thus report the forced first experiences of sex, coupled with which we see the lack of correct condom use.

The project is currently still in its early phases.
The process includes the following three phases:

- 1st stage
 - compiling lessons and plans
 - a multi-disciplinary approach
 - establishment of curriculum by the development committee in consultation with LO teachers and group of students
- 2nd stage
 - Testing phase
 - Recruitment and training of a health educator
 - Teachers will still be involved
 - Focus on 3 schools
 - 2-3 grade 8 classes
 - Tagged on to LO
 - Feedback will be received from all involved, including parents
 - Format for feedback: Audio feedback- adolescents respond better to this format
 - Final revisions
- 3rd stage
 - comparison of curriculum
 - measurement tools
 - 6 schools: 3 new and 3 control schools
 - Implemented by health educator
 - Participation is voluntary for learners and other participants.

The programme is school based, and latches onto the first 3 LO orientation outcomes- it does not replace existing outcomes

It is pitched at grade 8 because of the focus on prevention. We want to target young people before engaging in deviant behaviour

The programme is interactive and participatory, and is not didactic. It allows for some degree of flexibility. It recognises that the context needs to support changes or it will fail.

It allows for the engagement with school staff and parents.

The programme is comprised of 9 units:

- An introductory session

- Gender and violence- what it is to be a man and what it is to be a woman- using media- adverts, movies, music, peers etc
- Differential power that is inherent- how power is used and abused
- Control related to gender
- Addressing different forms and contexts of Violence
- Motivations for violence
- Consequences of and response to violence
- Sexual decision making: talking about decisions on sex; talking about making decisions as a pair; problem solving in relationships
- Consent issues- particularly grey areas
- Confronting myths
- Paying attention to the emotional consequences of sexual relations
- De-linking the ideas of anger and violence

The Q&A Session

Q: How would the participating schools be identified? Would you track these learners for a year?

A: Schools will be randomly selected to be representative of the population of the WC. This is also a funder requirement. One of the team members works with schools and has a relationship with 39 schools. The random selection will be within these.

The follow up period will be after the first 6 months – the grant doesn't extend beyond that. We will possibly have booster sessions in grades 9-12, but the plan doesn't include that as yet. It is, however, a consideration.

The randomised control trial will be implemented by the teachers, and the final revisions would be presented to DoE for inclusion in the LO curriculum.

Q: Why concentrate on girls?

According to research, women are not as supported as males. However, the programme addresses the needs of both boys and girls throughout. But the lack of social support for girls is seen as more problematic.

3.4. COAV: A Process of Building the Evidence for Policy and Programmatic Interventions by Samantha Waterhouse, RAPCAN

The presentation provided a background to the Children in Organised and Armed Violence project (COAV) and process, including some of the original findings of the 'Neither War or Peace' ten country study and the rationale behind the Four City Policy Development Project in four countries. It will detail the objectives, process and key findings and outcomes of the COAV Cape Town project.

A 10 country comparative research study of Children in Organised Armed Violence (COAV), which included South Africa was undertaken by Viva Rio in Brazil in 2004. The study has demonstrated that there are causal and functional similarities between traditionally defined 'child soldiers' in situations of armed conflict and children and youth in organised armed violence, including criminal gangs, within the countries studied.

Cape Town Process

The COAV Cities Project: Cape Town consisted of a rapid assessment that was undertaken in order to gain a picture of the situation in the Province. This was followed by five themed consultative workshops during 2006 with a wide range of stakeholders from government and civil society, this included the participation of children through a research process. During 2007 the focus was on developing a policy paper series and doing internal advocacy with different departments and 2008 on strengthening service quality.

The four key themes of policy recommendations from the Cape Town Project are ensuring co-ordination of efforts across sectors; strengthening programme quality; placing greater emphasis on prevention and early intervention; law reform relating to the management of children in conflict with the law and ongoing research on which to base efforts.

COAV is not an evidence based programme per se, but it provides the scaffolding for advocacy for evidence based practice.

COAV tracks the similarities between risk factors, processes and experiences of child 'delinquents' and child soldiers, though it should be noted that the policy environment around child soldiers is very different to that of child 'delinquents', but in both cases, the violence is structured, organized and armed.

In Cape Town, COAV is essentially an advocacy process, where local projects take on ownership.

The Q&A Session

Q: We always talk about comparable countries or societies, but should we not look at comparable communities and resources instead?

A: Yes, correct. For the COAV process, we looked at communities that are similar and that have similar resource basis.

Q: There is always a tension between the short and long term projects and the issue of sustainability. It is difficult to get funders to make long term commitments. How do we deal with this issue?

A: Prevention work takes a long time, but it is essential. We need to try hard to change people's perceptions. It is about popularising long term interventions. To do this, we need to get the right ears.

A: Consider the move to evidence based approaches, where the way to succeed is known in advance. It is thus easier to get commitment of all parties to the programme. The City is trying to move to an evidence based motivation, but the problem from the outset is that in Cape Town, there is the difference between the City and the Province. There is some engagement between these but it keeps getting undermined.

4. Key Discussion Points: Working Group Sessions

Programmes we know of:

- GETNET (Gender Education Training Network)
- MAP (Men as partners)
- COPE (Trauma centre- children and violence)
Political Violence
- VPUU (Violence prevention, urban upgrading- Khayelitsha)
- The Khulisa programmes – Silence for violence - Anger management programme National programme. Evaluation in Johannesburg
- Soul City
- Working with perpetrators and offenders – Restorative Justice
- Celebrate life: 10 universal principles, e.g. : working in schools – mentorships, workshops
- Valued citizenship initiatives
- Big Brothers Big Sisters
- Water garden (Stellenbosch University social work students grade 3-7 learners)
- Working with Boys in Delft (Molo Songolo)
- Men as partners – international evidence based intervention (?)
- Three Court Family development, conflict resolution in families, skills development in Masiphumelele – 6-month hospitality programme
- FAMSA's 16 week men's programme

Challenges:

Global Challenges

- The lack of evidence for evidence based programmes
- The lack of resources to pursue the required research
- The lack of pioneering work with boys in particular
- The difficulty for service providers to record data efficiently.
- The environment in which data is recorded is rather chaotic
- First world vs third world research: most research re. gangs are first world

- Research expenditure is very low in SA
- Dissemination and sharing of resources and innovations are limited
- Often organisations are under resourced not only in terms of finance but in time for recording of data
- 'Short hand' is required to record data, delineating which data is appropriate and which data needs to be woven into daily activities
- Government programmes are trial and error rather than evidence based
- Lack of training in government – training is problematic
- There is a problem with the distribution of funds from government
- Organisations only take on issues for which there is money available from government
- The government prioritises issues based on politics, not social need
- Funding cycle available for 3 years, but planning only for 1 year not 3 years
- Lack of understanding from management of what happens on ground level
- Political priorities change and this poses a challenge for funding commitments and sustainability
- Access to state funding is limited to NGO 'favourites'
- Challenge in developing an ecological approach
- How do we combine NGO capacity with advocacy around government spending

Organisational Level

- Lack of M&E systems: It is very hard to reach local level programmes in terms of funding and knowledge- makes you vulnerable and protective
- Maintenance of records and information
- Difficult to reach goals- flexibility can be difficult when we want to reach a said end goal
- Most projects are about patronage- threatens gatekeepers- threatens power structures- some have access and they will only allow others in through their systems
- Developing programmes because it sounds good, and because of position within community

- Government and policies don't understand or buy into evidence based practice- a lot of departments do not have a clue about this type of intervention
- Feedback- especially if a programme is outsourced- promote the idea that the dept funding needs to build feedback into contracts
- People's hearts are in the right place but do not necessarily have the skills- wrong thing for the right reasons
- Delivering and implementation take away time from reflection- responding to crisis and not stopping it- not built into the thinking about programme planning- not having enough prominence. Not seen as integral- white middle class/ academic stuff that we do not all need to engage in
- Money- how does it get distributed
- Changing perceptions about not failing but learning what does not work
- Duplication- particularly sports club- generally there are not enough
- Communication between organisations is a hindrance
- Difficult to isolate your impact – but should you have to? People need to think about impact.
- Lack of tools and strategies for evaluating programmes
- Difficult to 'control' outside impacts
- Different levels of evaluation for different programmes

Grassroots Level

- Not natural for boys to be in a workshop or seminar - they like to be outside- we need to have a programme that engages and involves participants
- Methodology incorrect? Inappropriate to target
- Getting the right team?
- Many people have experienced failure, e.g. in examinations and testing. This results in perceptions of being seen as a failure, which results in negative attitudes and resistance
- Emotional connection to programme or researcher/ evaluator- can effect feedback of project- participants are desperate to be heard, and can say

what they think you want to hear in order to keep being heard. You need to be careful to ask extra questions

- Parenting- having a holistic approach- child is not the problem- how do you create an enabling environment – setting up for failure if you only work with a child- need to change the environment
- Challenge to working with fathers- lack of father figures in society- the minute an outsider gets involved then the child automatically becomes the centre of the problem
- Generational lessons on how to parent boys- lots of mothers not knowing how to parent boys- In respect of raising boys: there is a level of inapproachability that is sanctioned

Opportunities:

- Growing discourse around what evidence base is- gaining knowledge
- Any process that generates hard data is better for gaining resources-huge opportunities for funding etc
- Improved and actual positive impact

Possible solutions to challenges

- Advocacy
- We need to campaign around government funding and budget cycles
- We need to get universities more involved
- Utilising university students to do research
- Continuous resource and financial contribution to research is crucial
- Getting people to work more in a collective collaborative way- means that you don't have to do everything and it reduces duplication
- Consult universities- what are the best indicators we can use to make sure we will have the best impact- uses indicators to influence where resources such as funds and staff will be allocated
- Indicators are important

- Building links between academic institutions and organisations- knowledge can be used to build into programmes from the start- solves lack of knowledge
- Multi-disciplinary team working towards a common goal
- Coordinate / motivate rules of engagement with government
- How can we help government achieve goals
- Training for top management is essential for understanding ground level work
- Top management needs to be sensitised on how their decisions influence society
- Work should be both evidence lead and evidence based
- The integrity of data is an issue within SA - data and evidence has value but needs to be well balanced
- Exporting programmes could add comparable approaches that add to the international evidence – we need to export our programmes
- We need more creative and innovative ways of dealing with problems

Integrate understandings of masculinities into programmatic work

- If you don't understand what makes a young boy tick then you are missing an opportunity
- Girls and women more likely to seek help and to be given help
- Boys appear to have more problems
- Girls have better peer support structures
- Boys are stigmatised by peers and service providers when seeking help
- Lack of emotional support for boys in the home
- Basic ways of being that are gendered- different but equal- need to understand that males have different perceptions of things- different systems of understanding
- Socialised differently
- Contradictory information on how to act
- Women bought into the construction of masculinity as much as men have
- More about what it means to be a good man and a good woman

- Expectations are different in different societies
- We need to counter negative socialisation
- Need to challenge status quo- important to address our issues to everyone
- Masculinity is linked to violence- it is a risk factor- how men and boys are socialised/ constructed
- Most men are good but there is an attention on violent behaviour
- Creating an inspirational space- creating a social space for positive role model- requiring this behaviour

How can influencing this understanding prevent violence?

- Providing space to be otherwise
- Images of men being fathers

Key messages

- Men can be nurturers and caregivers
- Shouldn't have programmes that are discriminatory of gender or that polarises issues
- Men not given space to reflect and evaluate themselves
- Recognise the socialisation process
- Currently we are saying that masculinity is not an issue but femininity is. Men are a lost cause. Women are victims, men are perpetrators, need to change this
- Men are driven by their need and desire to have sex. Men are naturally violent.
- We believe in cure rather than prevention
- There are positive messages but they do not change the attitudes of girls

5. Conclusion

The Seminar evaluation reflected generally positive views on the process. The speakers set the backdrop to the seminar exceptionally well and opened up many avenues for discussion.