A domestic violence program’s turn towards
philosophical, theoretical and discursive
integration: A response to how domestic violence is
gendered through language

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This thesis is presented in partial fulfilment of the
requirements for the degree of Bachelor of Psychology
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ABSTRACT
The acts, accounts of and explanations for domestic violence are frequently misrepresented by professionals. The Interactional and Discursive View of Violence and Resistance framework and Response-Based therapy have contributed to understanding how this is accomplished through particular language practices. Research has shown that language is used strategically, not only by men who choose to use violence, but also by professionals to conceal violence, mitigate perpetrator’s responsibility, conceal victim’s resistance and blame and pathologise women (Coates and Wade, 2007). This current study used narrative analysis to examine how Relationships Australia’s men’s domestic violence group programs have changed language practices; in response to developing an increased knowledge and awareness of how domestic violence is misrepresented through language. It was found that program staff responded by reviewing and changing language practices in a deliberate effort to represent domestic violence accurately and align language with a feminist post-structural theoretical ideology across three sites in the program; program policy, practice and reporting. These data suggest that both social and structural organisational factors present difficulties in aligning theory, policy and practice.
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