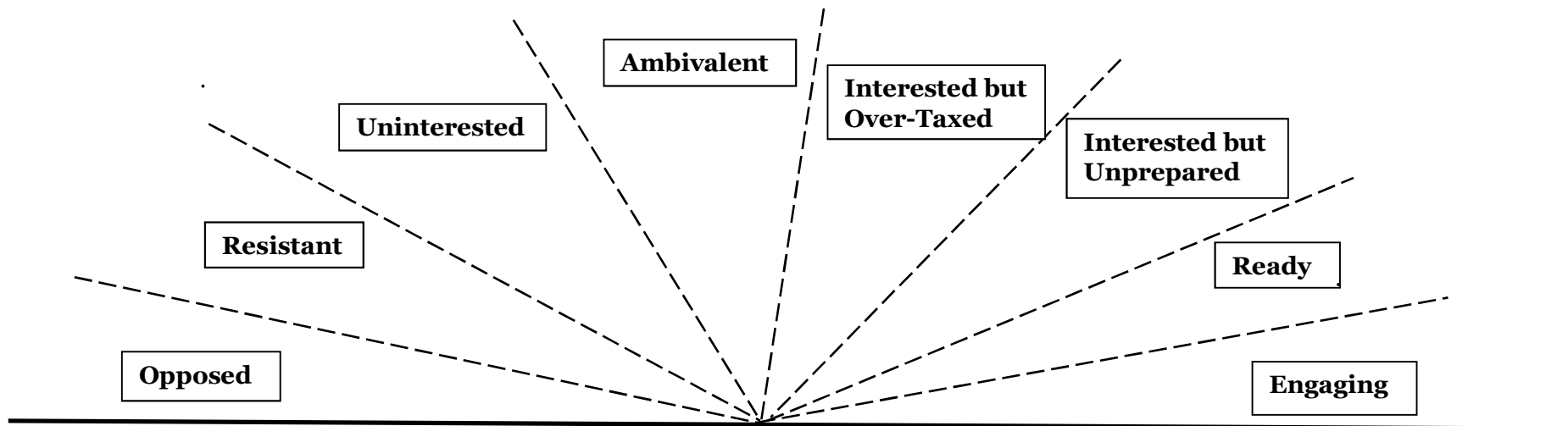


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CONTINUUM OF AGENCY READINESS ENGAGEMENT



Agencies tend to have varying degrees of readiness to engage men in respond to and prevent rape, domestic violence, and other forms of gender based violence. This continuum is designed as a tool that programs can use to self-assess their readiness to engage and involve men. This continuum is not intended to convey “right” and “wrong”, or “best” and “worst”. It merely portrays the possibility that different agencies may find themselves at different places on this continuum. Each place is where your agency is at and carries different implications for the role of men or the relationship men might have with your agency. It might not reflect where you prefer to be or where your agency is heading, just where your staff and organization finds itself. This might be “home”, the stance you will keep or a place of transition.

Opposed are those programs or agencies that are opposed (either philosophically or organizationally) to men’s involvement. They may have philosophical values (such feeling like deferring energy and attention to male engagement would detract from their mission or core work) reasons for not wanting to engage men, see no value in engaging men, or have organizational settings our designs that make it virtually impossible for men to become engaged.

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Resistant organizations are those that see some value in engaging men, but feel that engaging men may detract from their core mission, or defer attention away from their core services to women. Resistant organizations may also agree that it is important to engage men, but lack the resources to do so, and as such, may feel that they'd have to divert resources from critical services.

Ambivalent organizations are those in which either the staff are decidedly split on the question of engaging men or how to engage men, or where the organization may be unsure of the benefits or unconvinced about the potential for impact. These organizations may also lack clarity or confidence about how to begin and/or may face some emerging discomfort as they initiate preliminary efforts.

Interested but Over-taxed are organizations that are conceptually in full agreement with the idea for engaging men, and who may have done some preparatory work to engage men (such as some initial staff training) but find that they do not have the resources (energy, staff availability, funding, etc.) to follow through. They want to engage men, but lack community willingness, financial support or facing shortages that make launching or sustaining a male engagement initiative untenable.

Interested but Unprepared organizations are those that like the idea of engaging men, but have not done the philosophical, nor the program development work (review of agency policies, a plan to develop staff skills and competencies, identifying necessary resources, etc.) to be prepared to truly accept men who may be engaged. They may have limited ideas how to prepare to work with men, or may assume (wrongly) that there are no differences in what men do, how men work, or the kinds of environments that engage men.

Ready are organizations that have made the collective decision to consider men's programming, but have yet to develop a concrete plan. They may have done some initial work in terms of internal policy, examining their own organizational culture, started some staff training, and identified some initial funding sources.

Engaging are organizations that are ready, have launched efforts to engage men and are finding success in their efforts.

The level of readiness that an organization finds itself has implications for whether and how that organization will work to engage men, the kinds of roles that it will create for men who become engaged, and the ultimate effectiveness of the organization in its male engagement efforts. As rape crisis or domestic violence agencies consider the question of engaging men, it is important that they take some time – organization wide – and provide opportunities to examine what it means for them to engage men, and in what ways they are comfortable for men to be involved.

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