Military Veterans and Domestic Violence

SOROS Fellows Conference
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Responsibilities of the Movement to End VAW

- Collaborate with battered women and victims of sexual assault.
- Build organizations that learn and are responsive.
- Create cooperation, coordination and collaboration in the community.
- Create a society and world without violence.

— Debby Tucker

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**MANIFESTATIONS OF VIOLENCE**

Abuse can occur in different forms. It can be physical, emotional, sexual, spiritual, social and/or economic. The diagrams below describe some of the abuse tactics batterers use as they attempt to gain or maintain power and control over their intimate partners. Abuse does not always progress in the steps shown here. Sometimes the abuse may advance from pushing or hitting directly to more severe physical violence such as the use of a weapon. Although each relationship is unique, any type of abuse must be considered a serious cause for concern. Despite different circumstances, it is important to remember that abuse can escalate (especially if there is no intervention). A coordinated community response holding batterers accountable for their abusive behaviors is essential, as is a response acknowledging and respecting the rights of victims of domestic violence.

**Exercise:** It is helpful to be aware of the different manifestations of domestic violence. Circle the type(s) of abuse you are now experiencing (or that you have experienced). Notice if the violence is increasing in intensity, severity or frequency. Talk to a domestic violence advocate to develop or review your current safety plan or explore your options. Remember, domestic violence is never your fault, even if you were drinking or using drugs.

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**EMOTIONAL ABUSE**

- insulting jokes
- ignoring feelings
- jealousy
- isolation
- humiliation
- harming of pets
- calling you “crazy,” a “drunk” or a “junkie”

- silent treatment
- insults
- blaming/accusations
- monitoring of activities
- threats
- degradation
- homicide/suicide

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**PHYSICAL ABUSE**

- scratch
- slap
- push
- hit
- target hit
- kick
- strangle
- beat
- use of a weapon
- murder

- deny physical needs
- bite
- force drug use
- punch
- throw objects
- burn
- deprive of sleep
- poison
- disfigurement

*continued...*
Four theories: what causes domestic violence?

1. Individual pathology
2. Relationship dysfunction
3. Learned response to stress and anger
4. Theory of dominance
Individual Pathology

- The person using violence has some kind of illness or condition (mental, PTSD, TBI)
- Batterer is problem – not society
- Individual problem preferred way of thinking but considered least common cause
- Individual psychiatric care, treatment for addiction, or counseling is a typical response
Relationship Dysfunction

- ‘It takes two to tango’
- Couple is playing off of each other
- Either could stop the violence
- Both parties are responsible
- Couples counseling, or relationship counseling separately, is needed
Learned Response to Stress and Anger

- "Cycle of Violence" theory – Lenore Walker
  - tension-building phase
  - explosion of violence
  - honeymoon phase or respite
- Men socialized to use violence
- Increases in frequency and severity
- Popular theory among therapists
- Anger management is a typical response

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Theory of Dominance

- System of power and control tactics
- Includes:
  - Physical violence
  - Sexual violence
  - Other tactics on Power and Control Wheel
- Battering comes from social conditions, not individual pathology
- Need to balance power differential by using power of the state to effect re-education and sanctions
- Most widely held theory within the movement

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**POWER AND CONTROL WHEEL**

Physical and sexual assaults, or threats to commit them, are the most apparent forms of domestic violence and are usually the actions that allow others to become aware of the problem. However, regular use of other abusive behaviors by the batterer, when reinforced by one or more acts of physical violence, make up a larger system of abuse. Although physical assaults may occur only once or occasionally, they instill threat of future violent attacks and allow the abuser to take control of the woman’s life and circumstances.

The Power & Control diagram is a particularly helpful tool in understanding the overall pattern of abusive and violent behaviors, which are used by a batterer to establish and maintain control over his partner. Very often, one or more violent incidents are accompanied by an array of these other types of abuse. They are not easily identified, yet firmly establish a pattern of intimidation and control in the relationship.

**VIOLENCE**

- **PHYSICAL VIOLENCE**
  - Coercion and Threats: Making and/or carrying out threats to do something to hurt her. Threatening to leave her, commit suicide, or report her to welfare. Making her drop charges. Making her do illegal things.
  - Male Privilege: Treating her like a servant: making all the big decisions, acting like the “master of the castle,” being the one to define men’s and women’s roles.
  - Economic Abuse: Preventing her from getting or keeping a job. Making her ask for money. Giving her an allowance. Taking her money. Not letting her know about or having access to family income.
  - Using Children: Making her feel guilty about the children. Using the children to relay messages. Using visitation to harass her. Threatening to take the children away.
  - Minimizing, Denying, and Blaming: Making light of the abuse and not taking her concerns about it seriously. Saying the abuse didn’t happen. Shifting responsibility for abusive behavior. Saying she caused it.

- **SEXUAL VIOLENCE**

**POWER AND CONTROL**

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Use of Violence has Different Intents

1. **Battering** – intends to control the relationship

2. **Resistive violence** – intends to stop the battering

3. **Situational violence** – intends to control a situation

4. **Pathological violence** – intent is controlled to some degree by pathology

5. **Anti-Social Violence** – abusive to many in public and private settings

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Battering

- System of power and control
- Includes:
  - Fear
  - Threats
  - Intimidation
  - Coercion
- Belief in entitlement
- Social movement

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Resistive Violence

- Substantial numbers of victims of battering use force against the batterer
- May not legally qualify as self-defense
- Victim’s violence *usually* different
- Less sympathy from practitioners
- Different impact – individual and social

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Situational Violence

- The violence is related to a situation
- Not part of a larger system of controlling tactics
- No pattern of dominance
- Battering looks like this if the pattern is invisible
Pathological Violence

- Violence is due to some kind of illness
  - Mental health
  - Alcohol
  - Drugs
  - Brain injury
  - PTSD

- Not typically part of system of controlling tactics
- Because a person’s violence is linked to a pathology does not preclude that its intent can also be to batter, to resist battering, or to control a situation
Anti-Social Violence

- Abusive in several settings: bars, work, home, sports field, etc.

- No empathy, shame, or remorse, and little understanding of consequences

- Not gendered – appears to be caused by childhood abuse, neglect and chaos

- Not amenable to change through self-reflection or therapy, may not benefit from existing batterer’s programs (Gondolf, 1999)

- 25% of men court ordered to batterer’s programs could be ‘anti-social’ (Gondolf, 1999; Gondolf & White, 2001)

- Separate anti-social violence of individuals from group violence created by systematic oppression and domination

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Understanding Intent or "Cause" is Important

Why?

- Help us to differentiate between acts of violence
- Help us to determine most appropriate response
- Not getting it right could be dangerous
- Review Handout KCSDV

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Pathological Violence, Deployment Context

Post Traumatic Stress Disorder

Traumatic Brain Injury
Post Traumatic Stress Disorder

- Anxiety disorder after a traumatic event
- During event, your life or others’ lives are in danger
- Feel afraid or that you have no control
- Anyone who has gone through a life-threatening event can develop PTSD
Post Traumatic Stress Disorder

- Events can include:
  - Combat or military experience
  - Child sexual or physical abuse
  - Terrorist attack
  - Sexual or physical assault
  - Serious accident, such as car wreck
  - Natural disasters, fire, tornado, etc.
Post Traumatic Stress Disorder

- Not clear, why some develop and others do not. Likeliness may depend upon:
  - Intensity and length of trauma
  - Whether someone dies or is badly hurt
  - Proximity to the event
  - Strength of reaction
  - Feelings of control
  - Help and support received afterwards
What to Look For?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Physical</th>
<th>Behavioral</th>
<th>Emotional</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fatigue</td>
<td>Withdrawal</td>
<td>Anxiety or Panic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chest Pain</td>
<td>Restlessness</td>
<td>Guilt</td>
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<tr>
<td>Weakness</td>
<td>Emotional Outbursts</td>
<td>Fear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sleep Problems</td>
<td>Suspicion</td>
<td>Denial</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nightmares</td>
<td>Paranoia</td>
<td>Irritability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breathing Difficulty</td>
<td>Loss of Interest</td>
<td>Depression</td>
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<tr>
<td>Muscle Tremors</td>
<td>Alcohol Consumption</td>
<td>Intense Anger</td>
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<tr>
<td>Profuse Sweating</td>
<td>Substance Abuse</td>
<td>Agitation</td>
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<td>Pounding Heart</td>
<td></td>
<td>Apprehension</td>
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<tr>
<td>Headaches</td>
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Traumatic Brain Injury

- Occurs if the head is hit or violently shaken (such as from a blast or explosion)

- Results in a concussion or closed head injury, not life-threatening but may have serious symptoms, worse if exposed more than once, behavior and personality changes possible
Common Symptoms of Brain Injury

- Difficulty organizing daily tasks
- Blurred vision or eyes tire easily
- Headaches or ringing in ears
- Feeling sad, anxious or listless
- Easily irritated or angered
- Feeling tired all the time
Common Symptoms of Brain Injury

- Trouble with memory, attention or concentration
- More sensitive to sounds, lights, or distractions
- Impaired decision-making or problem-solving
- Difficulty inhibiting behavior, impulsive
Common Symptoms of Brain Injury

- Slowed thinking, moving, speaking or reading
- Easily confused, feeling easily overwhelmed
- Change in sexual interest or behavior
Consider the Source of the Conduct

- Regardless of source, offender must be held accountable and victim protected.
- Accountability strategy must take into account the source and how to intervene appropriately.
- In other words, untreated TBI sufferer unlikely to be helped by battering intervention.

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Consider the Source of the Conduct

- Nor should a batterer escape appropriate consequences for conduct by alleging TBI or PTSD when those are NOT the cause.
- We must be thoughtful and vigilant to ensure the intervention fits the offense.
How do we determine the source?

- Is the conduct new?
- Have there been other incidents of violence directed to non-family?
- What other factors require attention?
- Does the offender avoid situations that remind him of the original trauma?
- Are power and control tactics more pronounced?
Principles of Intervention

- Victim Safety and Well-being
- Offender Accountability
- Changing the Climate of Tolerance to Violence in the Community

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Five Things to Say to a Battered Woman

- I am afraid for your safety.
- I am afraid for the safety of your children.
- It will only get worse.
- I am here for you when you are ready for change.
- You don’t deserve to be abused.
Five Things to Say to a Person Using Violence

1. I’m afraid you’ll really hurt her badly or kill her next time.
2. I’m afraid you’ll hurt your children.
3. It will only get worse.
4. I’m here for you when you’re ready to change.
5. No one, including you, has the right to abuse/hurt another person.

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COMMUNITY ACCOUNTABILITY WHEEL

This wheel begins to demonstrate the ideal community response to the issue of domestic violence. Community opinion, which strongly states that battering is unacceptable, leads all of our social institutions to expect full accountability from the batter by applying appropriate consequences. This wheel was developed by Mike Jackson and David Garvin of the Domestic Violence Institute of Michigan (PO Box 130107, Ann Arbor, MI 48113; tel: 313.769.6334).

COMMUNITY OPINION

MEN WILL:

CLERGY WILL:
- Conduct outreach within the congregation regarding domestic violence and provide a safe environment for women to discuss their experiences. Develop internal policies responding to domestic violence. Integrate domestic violence education within the religious community, interact with the existing domestic violence intervention community.

EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM WILL:
- Dialogue with students about violence in their homes, the dynamics of abuse, and how violence can be prevented. Place priority on the oppression of women and the working of men. Provide a leadership role in research and theoretical development that prioritizes gender, justice, equal opportunity, and peace. Implement a curriculum about abuse, violence, and intimidation of girls and women in the educational system.

JUSTICE SYSTEM WILL:
- Adopt mandatory arrest policy for men who batter. Refuse to address or investigate programs that fail state or federal standards. Never offer delayed or deferred sentence options to batterers. Provide easy-access protection orders and lock them in the home; incarcerate batterers to correspond with any state or federal education.

EMPLOYERS WILL:
- Condition employment on remaining nonviolent. Actively intervene against men's ending in the workplace. Support, financially and otherwise, advocacy and services for battered women and children. Continually educate and dialogue about domestic violence issues through personal services.

MEDIA WILL:
- Educate the community about the epidemics of violence against women. Promote safety, equal opportunity, and justice for women and children over public, popularity, and leverage. Expose and condemn gender-based privilege, abuse, sexism, and chauvinism. Cut the glorification of violence against women and children.

SOCIAL SERVICE PROVIDERS WILL:
- Become social change advocates for battered women. Select batterers to accountable intervention programs. Stop training batterers' behavior with myths such as drugs and alcohol, family history, anger, or stress. Design and deliver services that are accessible to women and children's safety needs. Minimize the batterers' use of them to continue battering their families.

GOVERNMENT WILL:
- No law that defines battering by men as criminal behavior without exception, vigorously and progressively implement mens' battering behavior, create standards for accountable batterer-intervention programs, and require coordinated systems of prevention in domestic violence. Provide ample funding to accomplish the goal of eradicating domestic violence.
Building Linkages

NCDSV is working with:

- NNEDV and state coalitions against domestic and sexual violence
- John Marshall Veterans Support Center and Clinic, policy Roundtable
- Guy, Helga Luest of Witness Justice and many more!

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- Military Tab
  - DTFDV
  - DTFDV Implementation
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  - TFCVSA Implementation
  - News Accounts
  - Stats/Research
  - Sexual Violence Issues
  - Congressional Testimony
  - New Veterans section.......and more!

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