

IMPACT OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ON
CHILDREN--FAMILY--SOCIETY

Purpose: Recognize feelings, attitudes, and beliefs associated with children who live with domestic violence. Recognize some typical reaction of children from violent homes.

1. Children's Feelings

- A. Guilt
- B. Helplessness
- C. Fear
- D. Anger
- E. Hurt
- F. Emotional problems
- G. Increased risk of abuse
- H. Injury or death
- I. Repetition of abusive behaviors

2. Typical Reactions of Children from Violent Homes

- A. *INFANTS*
 - +Irritability
 - +Sleeping difficulty
 - +Diarrhea
 - +Frequent illness
- B. *TODDLERS/PRESCHOOLERS*
 - +Irritability
 - +Reluctant to leave mother
 - +Fearful of being alone
 - +Somatic complaints
 - +Regression
 - +Openness about violence in the family
- C. *ELEMENTARY SCHOOL AGE*
 - +Verbal about home life
 - +May feel responsible
 - (a) Males
 - *Aggressiveness
 - *Disruptive behavior
 - (b) Females
 - *Somatic complaints
 - *Withdrawal
 - *Passive clinging
 - *Anxious

D. *ADOLESCENTS*
+Guardedness
+Denial
+Anger

- (a) Males
 - *Identify with father
 - *Run away
 - *Aggressiveness
- (b) Females
 - *Generalized distrust of men
 - *Acceptance of violence

E. *ALL AGES*
+Initial method of problem solving--hitting
+Developmental delays
+High degree of anxiety
+Hostility (overt)

F. *OTHER FAMILY*

- (A) Women
 - *Isolation from others
 - *Low self-esteem
 - *Increased substance use--alcohol/drugs/OTC Meds
 - *Emotional problems
 - ! Frightened of partner's temper
 - ! Overly compliant
 - ! Apologetic
 - ! Anxious
 - *Psychosomatic illnesses
 - *Visible injuries--temporary and permanent
 - *Death--30% women murdered are by husband/boyfriend
- (B) Men
 - *Lowered self-esteem
 - *Increased violence
 - *Increased contact with law enforcement
 - *Emotional problems

G. *SOCIETY*
+Increases in crime
+Increase in legal, police, medical costs
+Increase in prison costs
+Perpetuation of cycle of violence
+Overall decrease in quality of life
+Kids living on the street, joining gangs, living with friends or neighbors

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE WARNING LIST

This list identifies a series of behaviors typically demonstrated by batterers and abusive people. All of these forms of abuse, psychological, economic, and physical, come from the batterer's desire for power and control. The list can help you recognize if you or someone you know is in a violent relationship. Check off those behaviors that apply to the relationship. The more checks on the page, the more dangerous the situation may be.

Emotional and Economic Attacks

- * **Destructive Criticism/Verbal Abuse:** Name-calling, mocking, accusing, blaming, yelling, swearing, making humiliating remarks or gestures.
- * **Pressure Tactics:** Rushing you to make decisions through "guilt-tripping" and other forms of intimidation; sulking, threatening to withhold money, manipulating the children, telling you what to do.
- * **Abusing Authority:** Always claiming to be right (insisting statements are "the truth"), telling you what to do, making big decisions, using "logic."
- * **Disrespect:** Interrupting, changing topics, not listening or responding, twisting your words, putting you down in front of other people, saying bad things about your friends and family.
- * **Abusing Trust:** Lying, withholding information, cheating on you, being overly jealous.
- * **Breaking Promises:** Not following through on agreements, not taking a fair share of responsibility, refusing to help with child care or housework.
- * **Emotional Withholding:** Not expressing feelings, not giving support, attention or compliments; not respecting feelings, rights, or opinions.
- * **Minimizing, Denying & Blaming:** Making light of behavior and not taking your concerns about it seriously; saying the abuse didn't happen; shifting responsibility for abusive behavior; saying you caused it.
- * **Economic Control:** Interfering with your work or not letting you work; refusing to give you or taking your money; taking your car keys or otherwise preventing you from using the car; threatening to report you to welfare or other social service agencies.
- * **Self-Destructive Behavior:** Abusing drugs or alcohol; threatening suicide or other forms of self-harm; deliberately saying or doing things that will have negative consequences (e.g., telling off the boss).
- * **Isolation:** Preventing or making it difficult for you to see friends or relatives; monitoring phone calls; telling you where you can and cannot go.
- * **Harassment:** Making uninvited visits or calls; following you; checking up on you; embarrassing you in public; refusing to leave when asked.

Acts of Violence

* **Intimidation:** Making angry or threatening gestures; use of physical size to intimidate; standing in doorway during arguments; out shouting you; driving recklessly.

* **Destruction:** Destroying your possessions (e.g., furniture); punching walls; throwing and/or breaking things.

* **Sexual Violence:** Degrading treatment based on your sex or sexual orientation; using force or coercion to obtain sex or perform sexual acts.

* **Physical Violence:** Being violent to you, your children, household pets or others; Slapping, punching, grabbing, kicking, choking, pushing, biting, burning, stabbing, shoots, etc.

* **Weapons:** Use of weapons, keeping weapons around which frighten you; threatening or attempting to kill you or those you love.

Information from "Domestic Violence: The Facts"- A Handbook to STOP violence

STATISTICS

- ☐ The FBI reports that Domestic Violence is the single most UNreported crime.
- ☐ 95% of reported incidents of family violence is committed by men against women (*March of Dimes*). (There is violence committed by women against men.)
- ☐ The FBI reports that a woman is battered every 12 seconds.
- ☐ Domestic Violence occurs three times more often than sexual assault (rape), per the FBI.
- ☐ In 60% of violent homes, children are also beaten (*League of Women Voters*).
- ☐ 85% of prisoners in the penitentiary come from violent homes (*League of Women Voters*).
- ☐ One-fourth of female suicides are preceded by a history of battering (*Time*, 9-5-83).
- ☐ 30% of women killed are murdered by their partners and 10% of men killed are by their partners -- many in self defense (*National Woman Abuse Prevention Project pamphlet*).
- ☐ 25-45% of battered women are battered during pregnancy. Men who batter pregnant women are three times more violent outside the home (*NCADV*).
- ☐ Battering is the single major cause of injury that requires medical attention to women, more than rape, auto accidents, and muggings **COMBINED** (*Surgeon General, National Woman Abuse Prevention Project pamphlet, "Violence Among Intimates: An epidemiological Review," Handbook of Family Violence, 1987*).
- ☐ In Texas in 1995, 130 women were killed by their intimate male partners.
- ☐ In 1991, the U.S. had 32,000 animal shelters and 12,000 shelters for abuse victims. (FBI)
- ☐ In 1999, the San Antonio Police Department recorded approximately 31,108 domestic violence/domestic disturbance calls.
- ☐ The national Institute of Justice estimates that from 1987 to 1990, domestic violence cost Americans \$67 Billion a year.

CAUSES OF ABUSE

1. Learned behavior

- ☐ Grew up in a violent home
- ☐ Adult role models were violent
- ☐ Victimized/neglected as a child physically, emotionally, and/or sexually
- ☐ Violence accepted as "normal" way of life

Example: Research has proven that many child abusers were abused as children. The same cycle is often seen in Family Violence; children who grow up in violent homes may accept violence as normal and may be violent toward children and/or spouses as adults. We often call this "learned behavior". Growing up in a violent home does not mean the child will automatically become a victim or a batterer; however, they are at high risk of doing so.

2. Sex Role Stereotypes

Girls are taught/encouraged to be submissive.

Color pink is girl's color, soft, feminine

Submissive, be good, don't cause waves, do what others want

Sexually active = slut, whore, tramp

Caretakers, nurturers; good mother and wife first, career second

Let boys win

Dependent

Aggressiveness discouraged

Sports tolerated, but not encouraged

Love, honor and obey

"A woman's place is in the home"

"Barefoot and pregnant"

1990 - Abilene Christian University:

Women's dorms still have a curfew. Men's dorms have no curfew.

Women cannot wear shorts, men can.

Role Models (Cinderella, Ally McBeal, Barbie)

Boys are taught/encouraged to be aggressive.

Boys:

Color blue is boy's color, strong, stands out

In charge, in control

"He's all boy"

Independent

"Boys will be boys"

Words used to insult a male are "girl", "pussy", and "wus"

Sports encouraged

Sexually active = "real" man, "sowing wild oats", "stud"

Breadwinner first, father and husband second

Love, honor and cherish

"A man's home is his castle"

Aggressiveness encouraged

Role models (Robo Cop, GI Joe)

3. **Cultural**

Violent society

TV, movies

Music videos (M-TV)

Newspaper, magazines promote physical abuse of women

Advertisements show women as sexy, submissive; men as powerful, decision-makers

Violence is accepted as "normal"

Corporal punishment allowed in schools (but not in prison).

Male dominance of family life accepted

Religion

Romance Novels

Material used in education, primary and secondary

1. **Everybody lives with stress. Dealing with stress APPROPRIATELY is the key.**

Precipitatory Stressors

Isolation: social, geographical

Financial: job loss, large debt

Sex

Children

Chores

Alcohol/drugs used to lessen stress, may heighten violence

A LOOK AT CONTROL ISSUES

Isolation

He controls what she does, who she sees and talks to, where she goes, monitoring her every move (in rural areas, transportation is a real issue).

Emotional Abuse

Degrading and demoralizing her, causing her to feel bad about herself, her role as a mother and wife, calling her names, making her think she's crazy.

Intimidation

Putting her in fear by using looks, actions, gestures, raised voice, smashing things, destroying communal or her personal property.

Using "Male Privilege"

Treating her like a servant, making all the "big" decisions, acting like the "master of the castle", he is the decision-maker. Her thoughts and needs aren't usually considered.

Threats

Making and carrying out threats to do something to hurt her physically or emotionally, threatening to take the children, commit suicide, report her to CPS, hurt her family.

Using Children

Making her feel guilty about her relationship with the children, using the children to give messages, using visitation as a way to harass her, making fun of her parenting skills.

Sexual Abuse

Forcing her to do sexual acts against her will, physically attacking the sexual parts of her body, treating her like a sex object.

(from Domestic Abuse Prevention Project)

He may have learned that the control methods listed above "work". He uses them. Out of fear or survival instincts, she does what he wants, and so he continues. **It works.**

Male Victims of Domestic Violence

- Domestic Violence is a subject that has often viewed women as victims and men as batterers. Historic, Biological, Cultural, and Religious facts support this theory. These are the traditional male and female roles. But there are exceptions to this theory.
- About 5% of all reported domestic violence cases are from male victims. That may be a smaller percentage than the actual one as most cases might be unreported. A recent national survey showed that there were 15% male victims of domestic violence.
- One reason why male abuse is not as talked about as female abuse is because many times it is more emotional and less physical. Biologically smaller build of women and weaker muscular structure (which makes her so open to abuse by the males) make her physical abuse less effective. There is mild to no bruising. Few bleeding injuries occur because men may be able to protect themselves better.
- The reasons for the violence may be the same as with male perpetrators.
- The reasons for not reporting the incidents of taking action can be:
 - His manliness/manhood is in jeopardy. He is supposed to be the stronger sex. He doubts his own strengths.
 - Low self-esteem will prevent his taking any action.
 - He may be ashamed to admit the marriage isn't working out.
 - He may be embarrassed to tell people he is being abused.
 - He may feel helpless that she does not respect the traditional gender roles.

REASONS WOMEN GIVE FOR STAYING

Love, Hope

He is not always brutal or violent. She hopes he will change, and the beatings will stop. Often he is very nice and charming. She prefers to identify with his kind and generous nature, not his abusive one.

Examples: Often, children who are abused still love their abusing parent. They don't want to be taken away and placed in foster care..

People love their partners who have faults -- drinks too much, spends too much money, sloppy, poor personal hygiene, unfaithful -- and they stay married in spite of these problems. An abused spouse still loves the abuser even though he hits her. Both rationalize and minimize his abusive behavior (know as "sincere delusion").

She hopes he will change, because of promises made after their last fight. Just as people in non-violent relationships think they can change their partner, so do people in violent relationships.

Fear

She believes his threats to beat/kill her, the children, and/or her family if she leaves him. He's hurt her before, she fears he will do it again.

Societal Pressure

Society has conditioned women to believe their primary duty is to keep the family together, no matter what.

She would be admitting failure if she left. She may have been successful in other areas of her life and believes that if she works hard enough, she can also have a successful marriage.

Her success and self-esteem as a woman are dependent on her ability to maintain a marriage and family life.

For the "sake of the children" she may stay in a violent relationship, so the kids have a dad. She may have grown up without a dad in the house and wants her kids to have a whole family. She may be staying until the youngest graduates.

It is still more acceptable for a husband to leave a wife and family than for a wife to leave a husband and family.

Example: Two police officers divorce, both make equal money, she says she doesn't want responsibility of kids and leaves them with him. She'll pay child support. What is society's reaction to her?

Religion

Divorce is not acceptable in many religions

Vowed to love, honor, and obey

The Bible says.....

Embarrassment, shame, guilt

She doesn't want her family, friends, coworkers to find out.

What will people think? If her family likes him, they may not believe her or they may blame her. If they don't like him, they may say, "We told you not to marry that no good so-and-so. We tried to warn you, now you're stuck with him". "You made your bed, now lie in it".

She minimizes the violence in order to cope and to avoid embarrassment.

Pillar of the community -- if she is the wife of a prominent citizen, she may worry about how the publicity will affect his reputation, career, and whether people will believe her. The same is true if the spouse is in the military or law enforcement.

Feel responsible

She doesn't know anyone else who is being beaten, so she must be doing something wrong. If she were a "better wife" he wouldn't beat her. She believes what her abusive partner says -- that somehow it's her "fault". He had to hurt her.

Only wife beaten

She feels this is happening only to her. No one will understand or be able to help her. This feeling is closely related to being isolated from others.

Has no place to go

She may not know about shelters. She may lack transportation, especially if she lives in a rural area. She may have worn out her welcome at her mom's, sister's, aunt's, or friend's. She may have no relatives or friends in the area.

Survival is all she thinks about

All her energy and thoughts are focused on surviving. Everything is confusing. The idea of formulating a plan to leave is overwhelming. Trauma is similar to that of a prisoner of war who is reduced to the level of mere existence and survival.

Lack of support

Family

- ☐ Violent families can't offer help.
- ☐ Family members are threatened physically, financially by the abuser.
- ☐ After repeated attempts to help, family may decide to distance themselves from the victim. "She doesn't really want help."
- ☐ Family may not believe her; they have never seen it and he seems so nice.
- ☐ Batterer's family may call and beg her to forgive and forget. They tell her that he loves her and can't live without her.
- ☐ Family members think violence is okay.
- ☐ There is still the attitude that "You made your bed, now lie in it."
- ☐ Some family members don't understand why she stays; others may feel she is abandoning the family if she leaves.
- ☐ Isolation from family makes it difficult to ask for support to leave; large geographic distances from family and friends also play a part.

Children

- ☐ There is less money if dad leaves (no more name-brand sneakers, jeans, T-shirts, no more tickets to concerts).
- ☐ Children may think that if mom leaves, they're more likely to be abused either by mom or by dad because they think the parent will blame them for the problems and the fights.
- ☐ Children may minimize the violence or pretend it does not exist.
- ☐ No matter how bad the relationship is, children want their family to stay together, just as children in non-violent relationships do.
- ☐ Partner has undermined her ability to parent effectively.

Friends

- ☐ Don't want to get involved or have tried to help before and were rejected.
- ☐ Ignore the violence.
- ☐ Often isolated from friends.

Isolation

He controls what she does, who she sees and talks to, where she goes, monitoring her every move (in rural areas, transportation and secrecy are real issues).

No transportation

No telephone

No shelter

Economic Dependence

Over 50% of victims have no marketable skills. He has not allowed her to work or attend/complete school. She may be a professional; however, she may have quit her job thinking it would help end the violence. She has been out of the workforce so long, her skills are no longer useful or adequate.

Accustomed to a specific family standard of living.

Feels that she can endure beatings so that kids have a family and more financial advantages.

Many batterers have strict control over the purse strings. She may be naive or ignorant of financial matters. She may have no or limited access to money. He may keep her ignorant of how much money there is, what properties he owns, and what other investments he may have. She may be working and supporting the family, yet he controls use of and access to the money.

She is unaware of the available social assistance programs and incorrectly believes that she would not qualify (he may have told her this). Or, she may consider it too embarrassing to have to use public assistance.

Husband convinces her that he will not provide any child support if she "abandons" the family. He may threaten to seek custody of children and deny her visitation.

Example: Salary \$5.25x 40 hours = \$210
 \$210 X 4 weeks = \$840
 \$840 - 25% taxes = **\$630 take-home pay/month**

Expenses Child care (\$50/wk) = \$200
 Rent = \$300
 Electricity = \$ 50
 Food, clothes = = \$200
 Car, gas = \$100
 Total expenses = \$850/month

\$630 take home pay ----- \$850 total expenses

60-75% of battered women eventually leave

Victims do leave. Each person has to work out her own process and time schedule for leaving. She has to decide whether or not she is ready to end the relationship and live with the consequences of the decision. She has to figure out when and how to leave as safely as possible. Like all decision making processes, this one does take time. **On the average, a woman will leave 5-7 times before she leaves for good.** The first time may be to stay with her sister for the night, or she may sleep in the car, or take the kids and spend the day in the park just to be away from the violence and her partner.