



EFFECTS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ON CHILDREN

Lauren Garder LPC

Overview

- Goal of today is to zoom out, rethink
- New language for exposure and impact
- Skills for partnering

Reflection

- Where did you first learn about domestic violence? Before you had the words “domestic violence”
- What did you call it?
 - Strict parents, bad kids
 - Parents who don't go to church
 - Drug/alcohol problem
 - Normal
- Where did you see examples of domestic violence growing up?
 - Your home
 - Relatives' or friends' homes
 - Church, community
 - News, social media
- How did this shape how you saw it then and now?

Reflection

- How did this shape how you saw it then and now?
- Children are exposed to violence and DV in social media, trending cases, and their communities
- Children are also exposed to people's *ideas* about DV in these same places
- Remembering that the effect of dv in the home is mediated by all of the messages outside of it

Prevalence

- 2011 OJP survey on exposure to family violence, representing 4,549 children
- 1 in 15 children are exposed to IPV
 - May be both parents or one parent and that parent's partner
- 1 in 4 children are exposed to at least one form of family violence
- 90% witnessed it personally

What is exposure?

Holden, 2003.		
Prenatal exposure	Real or supposed effects of dv on the fetus	Fetus assaulted in utero; pregnant mother lived in terror
Intervenes	Child verbally or physically attempts to stop the assault	Asks parents to stop; attempts to defend adult victim
Victimized	Child is verbally or physically assaulted during an incident	Child intentionally or unintentionally injured, verbally abused
Participates	Child is forced or "voluntarily" joins in on the assaults (more often with sons)	Coerced to participate; used as a spy; joins in taunting mother
Eyewitness	Child directly observes the assault	Watches assault or is present to hear verbal abuse

What is exposure?

Holden, 2003.		
Overhears	Child hears, though does not see, the assault	Hears yelling, threats, or breaking objects
Observes the initial effects	Child sees some of the immediate consequences of the assault	Sees bruises or injuries; police; ambulance; damaged property; intense emotions
Experiences the aftermath	Child faces changes in his/her life as a consequence of the assault	Experiences parental reactions to trauma; change in parenting; separation from a parent; relocation
Hears about it	Child is told or overhears conversations about the assault	Learns of the violence from parent, sibling, relative, or someone else
Ostensibly unaware	Child does not know of the assault according to the source	Violence happened away from home or while the child is believed to have been asleep

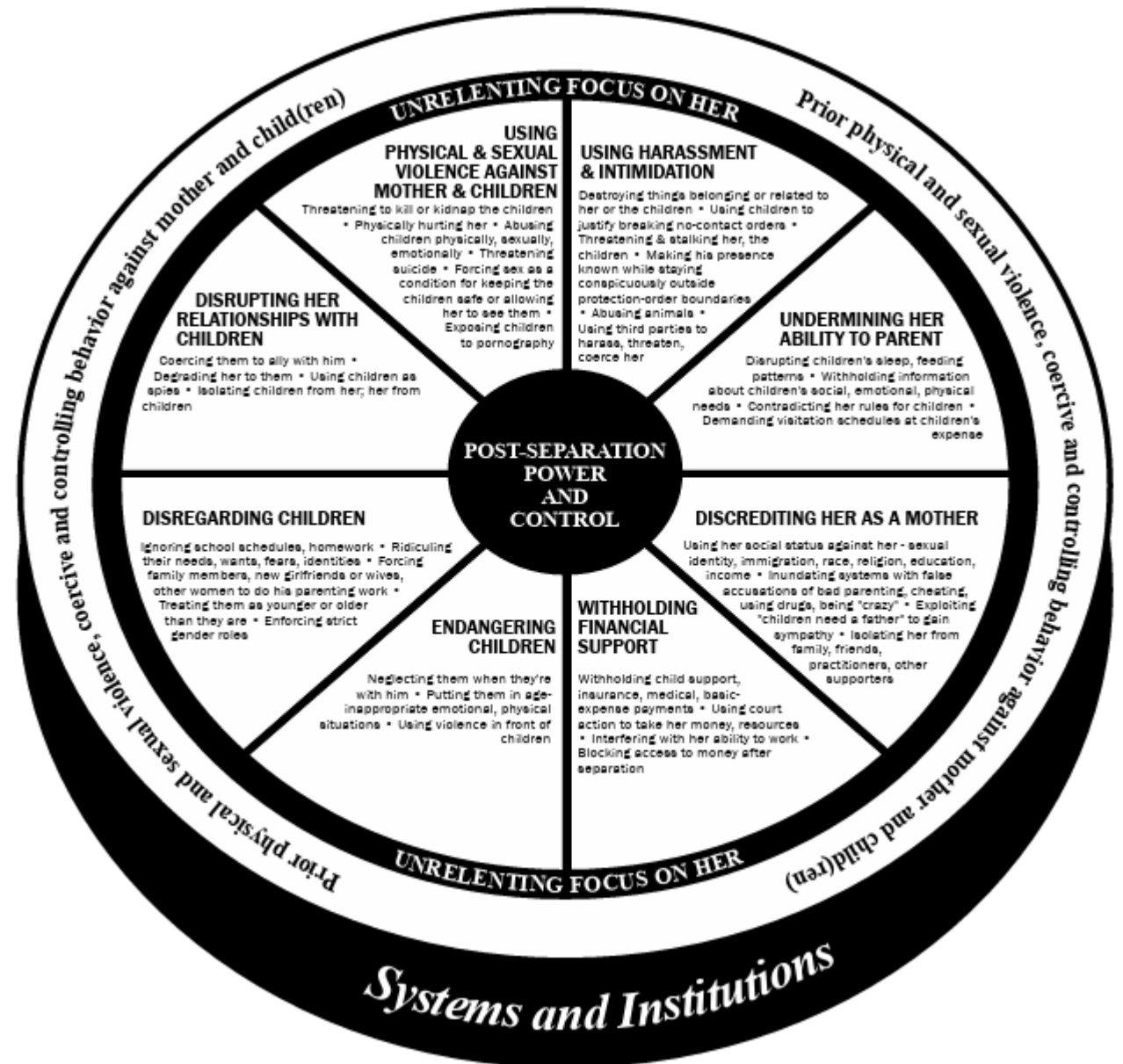
Abuse of Children Wheel

- Duluth Model



Post Separation Power and Control Wheel

- Duluth Model
- How do the vessels change post separation?



Traumatic Reactions

- Symptoms and coping are the same things- can't put down that which still serves you
- Typical trauma expressions and trauma to the development
- Fight, flight, freeze, flock- Consider how the children survived
- Trauma triggers vs. ongoing trauma
 - Example, coping when the trauma is ongoing
- Considerations for practice: What is hard, but still needed?

What are the impacts?

Terrorized	Behavior that threatens or is likely to hurt a child or put a child or loved ones in dangerous situations	Threaten to hurt or abandon child; abuse of pets
Corrupted	Modeling, permitting, or encouraging inappropriate or harmful behavior	Father models misogyny, verbal and physical aggression, substance abuse
Spurned	Verbal or nonverbal acts that degrade or reject a child	Perpetrator calls child names

What are the impacts?

Denied emotional responsiveness	Ignoring child's attempts and needs to interact and showing no positive emotion to the child	Father uninvolved and mother may be unable to be affectionate with child
Isolated	Confining or placing unreasonable limits on child or on contact with others	Father isolates family or child isolates self to avoid the batterer
Neglect of mental health, medical, or educational needs	Failure to provide or refusal to allow necessary treatment	Child's needs not met because father ignores and mother is overwhelmed

Before we go any further...

- Increased risk is a risk, not a certainty
- Protective factors and intervention matter
- Tell the whole story- Impact of ACES and PCES

- Trauma lowers the floor not the ceiling

Effects of DV on Later in Life Outcomes

- Younger children
 - Regression, delayed milestones, FTT
- School aged children
 - Difficulty with peer relationships, emotional regulation, relational balances (eg learning “I am responsible for other people’s feelings” vs “I can make people feel good and bad, but I am not always responsible for other people’s feelings”)
- Any age
 - Sleep disruption, bed wetting, verbal, motor, and cognitive delays, aggressive behaviors, anxiety, depression
 - Masking as other mental health diagnoses
- Increased risk of juvenile delinquency
- Children who saw a parent use a weapon were more likely to commit an offense involving a weapon as an adult (Murrell et al., 2005)

Effects of DV on later life

- Increased risk of becoming a perpetrator or a victim
 - Girls are more likely to demonstrate internalizing behaviors
 - Boys are more likely to demonstrate externalizing behaviors
- Particularly in homes with a father causing harm and a mother as a victim, what are the messages being conveyed?

Harmful Lessons

- Violence is an appropriate way to resolve conflicts
- Violence is a part of family relationships
- The perpetrator of violence in intimate relationships often goes unpunished
- Violence is a way to control other people
- (Osofsky, 2003)

Note for Practice

- Ask yourself these things about the children you serve:
 - What are the impacts of being raised by someone who thinks this is an acceptable way to treat your partner?
 - What are the impacts of things indirectly related like how they observe their parents when violence is not happening? (eg, religious abuse)
 - What are they learning about emotional expression and regulation or how to treat others or seek help?
 - What are they learning about relationships, safety, and their internal skills?
- **“Being able to feel safe with other people is probably the single most important aspect of mental health; safe connections are fundamental to meaningful and satisfying lives.” – Bessel van der Kolk, The Body Keeps the Score**

Protective Factors

- How much or how often during your childhood did you:
 - Feel able to talk to your family about feelings
 - Feel your family stood by you during difficult times
 - Enjoy participating in community traditions
 - Feel a sense of belonging in high school
 - Feel supported by friends
 - Have at least two non-parent adults who took genuine interest in you
 - Feel safe and protected by an adult in your home.

Protective Factors

- High quality childcare
- Social emotional learning
- Parenting skill and family relationship approaches
- Household financial security
- Victim-centered services
- Family-centered treatment for SUD
- Treatment to lessen harm and prevent behavior problems
- Communities where violence is not tolerated or accepted

Positive
Childhood
Experiences
(PCEs)

Dose response

Not impacted by # of ACEs

Family resilience contributes
to child flourishing

Healing after exposure

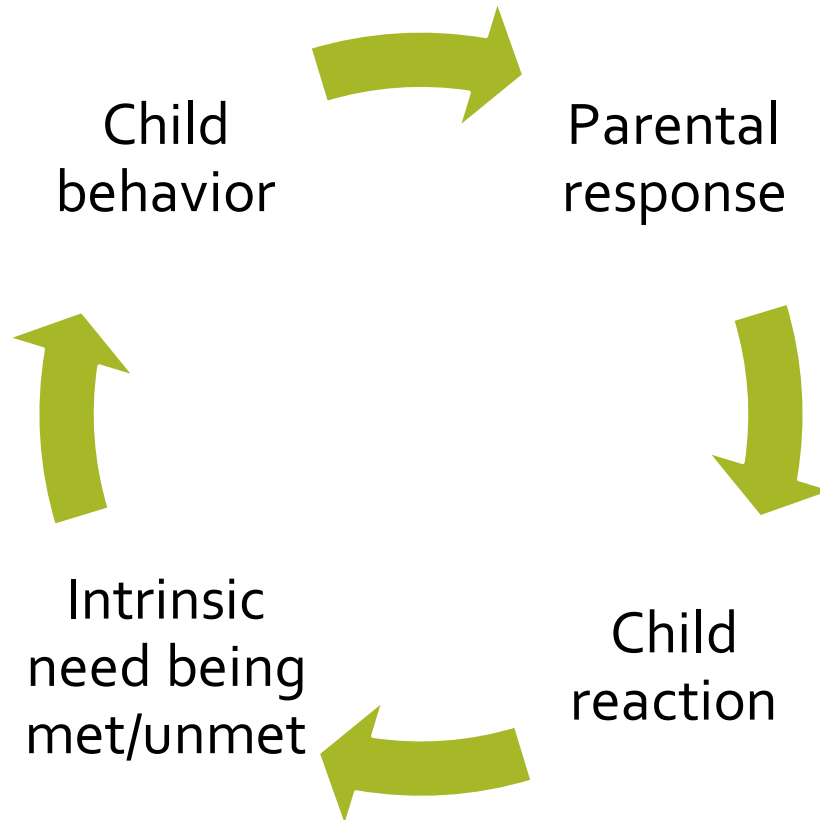
- A child's trajectory largely depends on the quality of the relationship with the non offending parent
- Over 60% of children were exposed to any kind of violence in the last year at school, home, or learning it happened to someone they know
- It is something they integrate, but this is not a violence that happens in a silo

***"Human contact and attunement are the wellspring of physiologic regulation."-
Bessel van der Kolk***

Project Support

- Evaluated the presence of conduct problems
- Parenting styles associated with developing conduct problems
 - Inconsistent discipline
 - Acts of physical and psychological aggression towards children (not necessarily abusive)
 - Expressions of negative affect and behavior
- Mothers psychiatric symptoms
 - Maternal trauma symptoms are associated with child adjustment
- Jouriles et al, (2009).

Behavioral Feedback Loops



- Parental skills component
 - Quality of the relationship first
 - Second phase increasing pro social behaviors
 - Third phase reducing problematic behavior

Parenting Challenges for Non Offending Parents

- Triggering
- Managing reminders of the abuse
- Managing hopelessness- they tried to hard to change the parent, and are facing what feel like similar behaviors
- Single parenthood- providing financially and logistically

Treatment considerations

- Parenting skills
- PCIT
- CPP
- SoonerStart
- OT
- HALO
- Making Sense of Your Worth
- Finding Your Best Self
- Seeking Safety

- Shifting our focus from the absence of problems to the presence of wellness in families lives

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- Lundy Bancroft, *The Batterer as Parent*
- [Post-Separation-Power-and-Control.pdf \(theduluthmodel.org\)](#)
- [Abuse-of-Children-2.pdf \(theduluthmodel.org\)](#)