

Engaging Families and Assessing Risk in Cases Involving Domestic Violence

Curriculum by

Jill M. Zuccardy, Esq., New York, New York

Who we are and what we do

- Jill M. Zuccardy, Esq.
 - Attorney in New York City with 20 years experience in family law and domestic violence
 - Attorney for battered mothers in the lawsuit Nicholson v. Williams, which challenged removal of children from battered mothers due to domestic violence in the home
 - Has worked extensively with CPS, judges and advocates to develop and promote best practices in child welfare cases involving domestic violence

By the end of this training, we hope you will have . . .

- Expanded your knowledge about battering behavior and domestic violence
- Identified complicated issues and challenges for battered mothers and children
- Developed and improved your practical skills for working with families impacted by domestic violence
- Committed to weighing the harm of removal in all safety assessments

Part I

DEFINITIONS AND BEHAVIORS

Defining Domestic Violence

As a result of this segment, you will be better able to ...

- Recognize and distinguish between different types of abusive behaviors
- Understand the significance of the context of the behaviors
- Avoid over-reporting, while at the same time supporting the victim in keeping children safe

Types of domestic violence

- Physical violence
- Sexual abuse
- Emotional abuse – put-downs, insults
- Verbal abuse – name calling, cursing
- Economic abuse – controlling money, not letting her work
- Controlling social and community ties

Physical Violence

MODERATELY VIOLENT

40→70%

ONGOING REASSAULTERS

30→50%

**HIGHLY DANGEROUS/
POTENTIALLY LETHAL**

less than 5%

(Matthews)

We should not – but often do – frame our work in terms of the smallest group: ***HIGHLY DANGEROUS***

Coercive Control

- Male dominance over time and through social space in ways which subvert women's autonomy, isolate them, and infiltrate the most intimate corners of their lives (Stark, 2007)
- Abusive partner grants rewards, needed or desired things (affection, economic support, freedom from violence) in exchange for compliance with a set of rules or demands; use of physical violence may be atypical
- Often based on abusive partner's feeling of entitlement
- Incidents may appear minor in isolation

Coercive control (cont'd)

- Some examples:
 - Monitoring phone, email
 - Control of \$\$\$, withholding of financial information
 - Mandates about clothing, hair, make up
 - Jealousy , restrictions on socializing
 - Anything else that inhibits her free choice
- Abuse may be “triggered” or escalated by victim’s attempt to assert independence
- Many women find coercive control to be worse than physical violence

The importance of context

Measurement of violent acts alone does not provide the whole picture of what is going on in a family or the degree to which the children are at risk:

- Abuser's INTENT in acting
 - Isolated conflict-based incident of violence vs. pattern of intimidation, threats, stalking intended to control
- MEANING of act to the victim
 - What is her perception of the abusive behavior?

- EFFECT of the act on the victim and children
- CULTURAL / COMMUNITY norms and expectations
 - How does culture/community inform the abuser's expectations and the victim's response to domestic violence?

In other words, what is the CONTEXT of the abuse?

What is culture?

- Shared experiences or commonalities that have developed and continue to evolve in relation to social and political contexts based on . . .

(S. Warrior, Ph.D)

Examples of Culture

Race

National origin

Gender

Class

Disability

Sexuality
status

Location

(rural, urban, tribal)

Ethnicity

Religion

Age / generation

Language

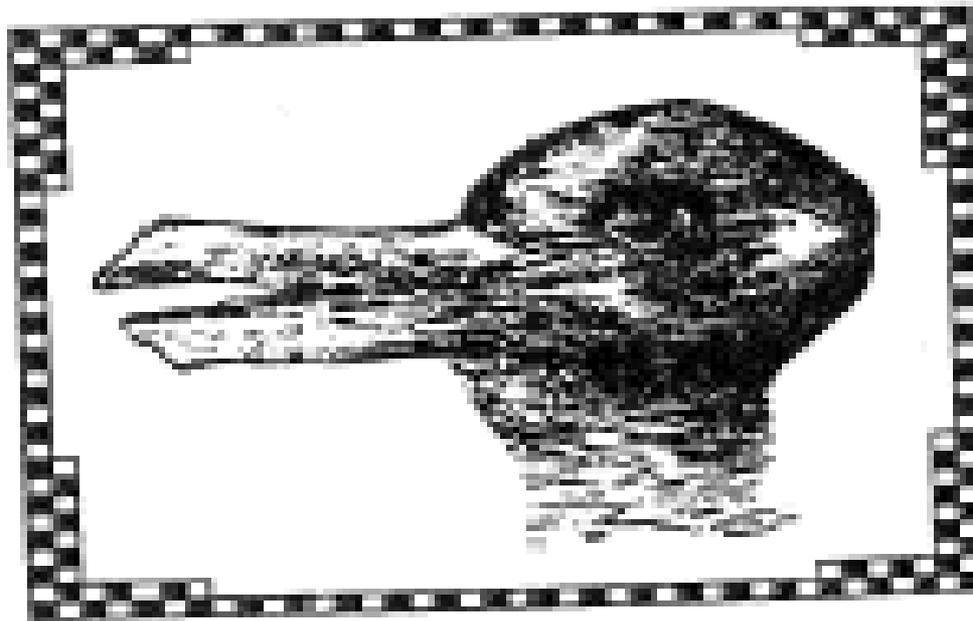
Education

Immigration

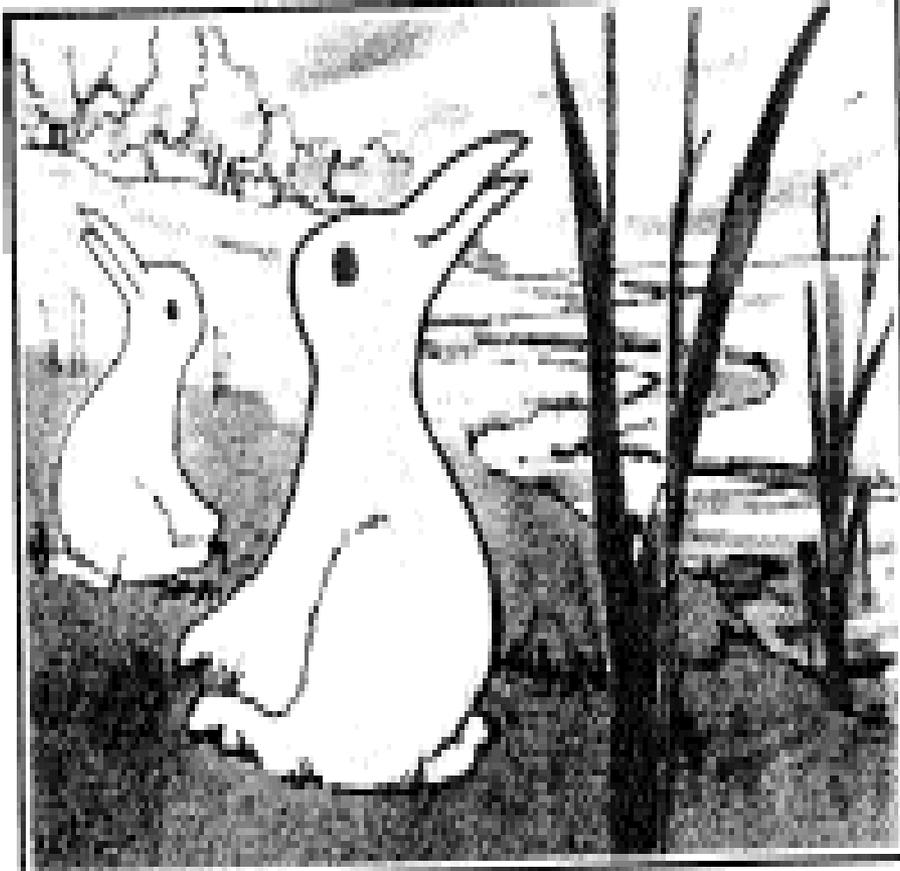
How is culture relevant?

- Culture is operating for all participants in the litigation
 - Internally
 - Preferences, stereotypes, assumptions and biases
 - Externally
 - Understanding context of abuse
 - How victim presents
 - How perpetrator presents
 - Incorporation of cultural considerations in parenting arrangements

Is this a duck? OR A rabbit?

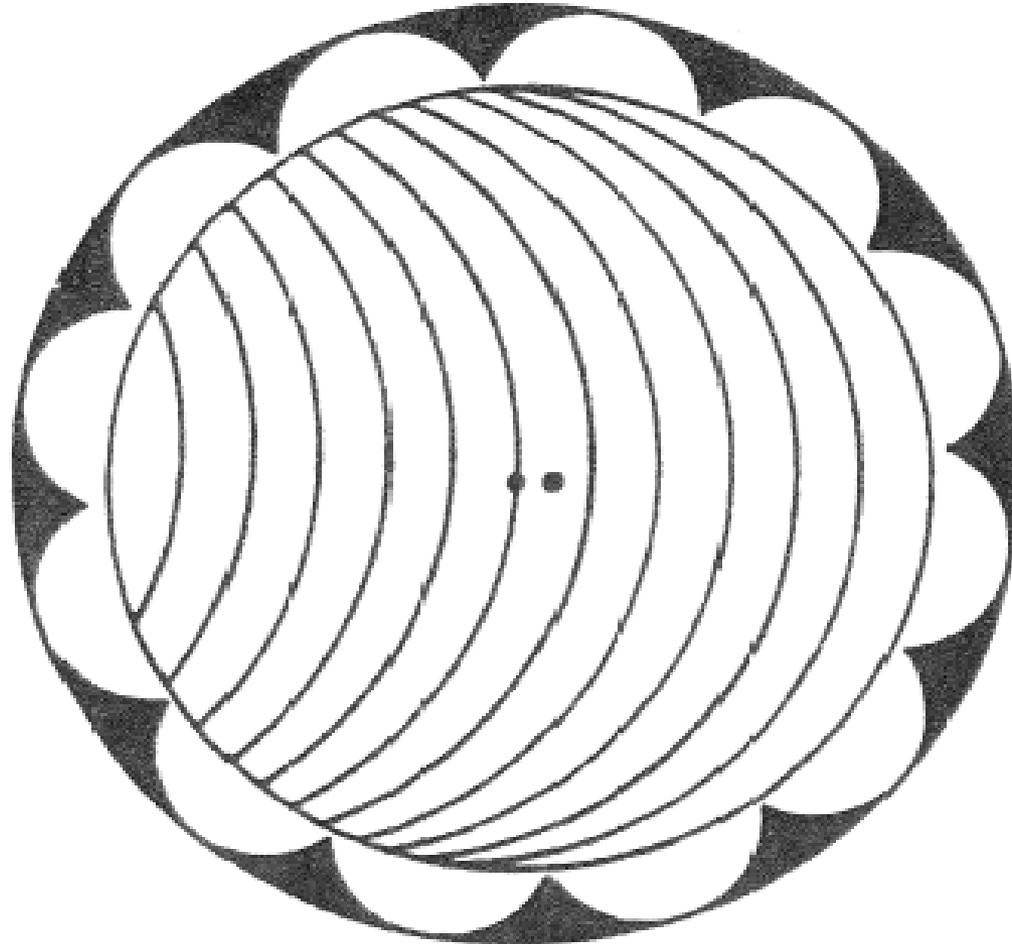


Are these birds?

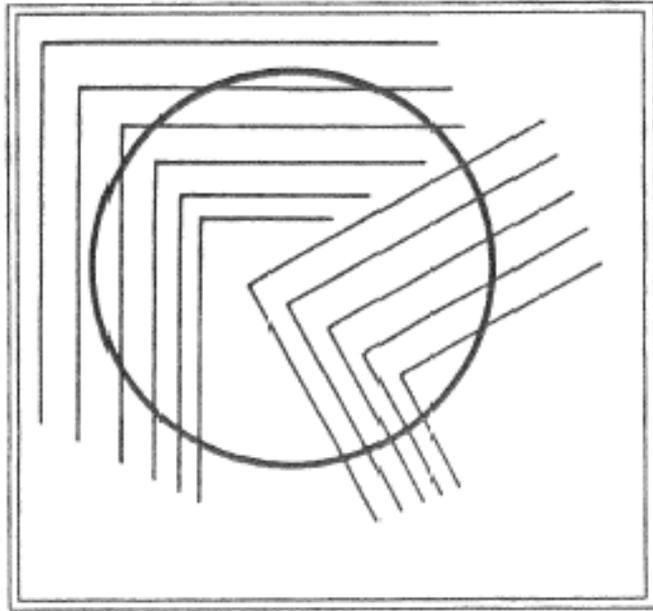


Or rabbits?

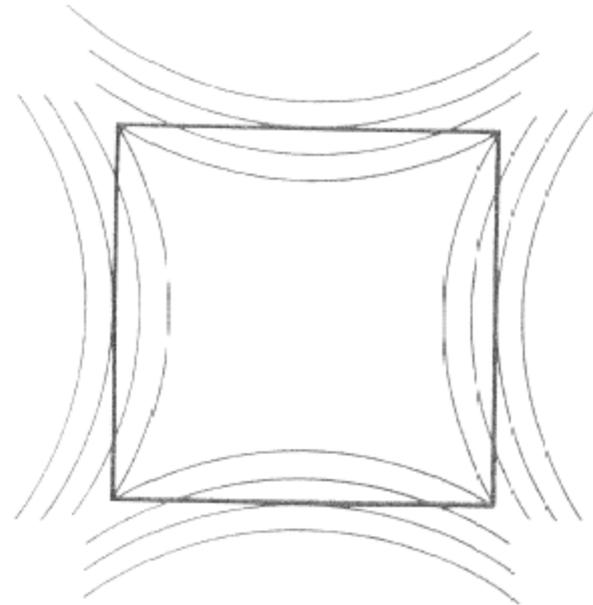
Which dot is at the center?



Is the circle perfectly round?



Is this a perfect square?



What's the point of this exercise?

- **Perspective matters**
- **Context matters**
- **Subtext matters**
- **Trust matters**
- **Simultaneous truths matter**
- **The stories matter**
- **The facts of a story matter less than the truth(s) of the story**
- **Decisions/ choices have to be made regardless**

CPS Intervention

- The government is held to a high standard when intervening in the family (U.S. Constitution, 4th and 14th Amendments)
- Domestic violence or abuse does not always support reporting or CPS intervention . . . but should always be considered in assessing family functioning and offering services

The problem with over-reporting

- Diverts valuable resources from cases of child abuse
 - Foster care panic: experience shows when reports to CPS go up after a high-profile fatality, more children die
- *Per se* reporting (i.e., reporting based solely on the fact that there is domestic violence in the home) deters women from seeking help and support

Consider

- ARE THESE CHILDREN SUFFERING OR AT SUBSTANTIAL RISK OF PHYSICAL HARM?
 - ARE THESE CHILDREN SUFFERING A DEFINABLE EMOTIONAL HARM, RISING TO THE LEVEL TO JUSTIFY GOVERNMENT INTERVENTION ?
- IF SO, WHO IS CAUSING THE HARM?

Behaviors

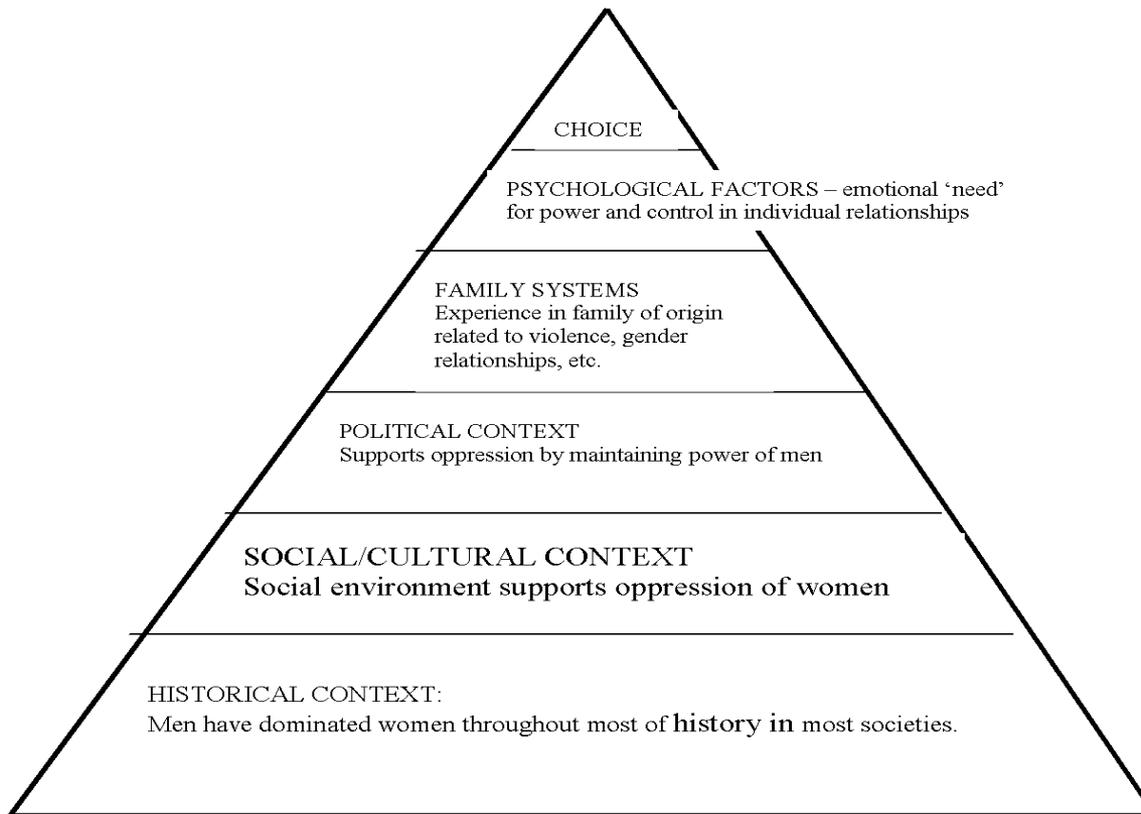
As a result of this segment, you should be better able to ...

- Better assess the abusive partner as a parent
- Assess the possible impact of the domestic violence on victim and children
- Incorporate considerations of trauma and attachment into interactions and interventions with victim and child

Behaviors Of Abusive Partners

Understanding the abusive partner's behavior

- Factors contributing to abusive behavior
 - Entitlement
 - Learned behavior
 - Trauma history
 - Insecure attachment
 - Substance abuse
 - Mental illness
- Readiness to change?



His fundamental rules

- I make the rules
- I am entitled to YOU, your obedience, your services (domestic, financial, sexual), your affection, your loyalty and your attention
- You cannot leave without my permission
- You cannot tell anyone about the abuse

Why does he stay?

- Male privilege – “It’s my house”
- Exploitation of victim for work, money, etc.
- Dependency/attachment
- Does not want to be alone
- Ownership – “Children are mine”
- Few consequences for putting his needs first
- Religious and cultural expectations
- Love

Abusive partner as parent

- Rigid, Authoritarian, Bullying
- Engenders Fear
- Lack of Empathy – child's needs not recognized
- Sense of Entitlement
- Lack of Respect {lack of boundaries}
- Control over child, parent & family relationships – even after separation
- Child as pawn or vehicle to control/ punish/ communicate

Abusive partner as parent (cont'd)

- Three types of battering behavior harmful to children
 - Abuse of mother in presence of children
 - Use of children as tools/pawns to control or hurt mother
 - Direct abuse of children or putting them in harm's way
- All types:
 - Set bad example of conflict resolution
 - Reflect negative attitudes toward women
 - Emphasize use of power to get one's own needs met at expense of someone else
 - May place child in fear for their own safety

Victim Behavior

Understanding the victim

When you meet her, the victim may be:

- Suffering physical and/or emotional pain
- Panicked and regretful that her report of abuse to the police/ doctor/counselor resulted in CPS involvement in the family

Understanding the victim (cont'd)

- At a point where her parenting is being compromised by abuse, coercive control, fear, financial strain
- Overwhelmed with guilt and shame: “To imagine that one could have done better may be more tolerable than to face the reality of utter helplessness”

Victim as parent

- Being a domestic violence victim does not mean a woman is a bad mother
- On the contrary, research suggests that the vast majority of domestic violence victims are nurturing and attentive mothers in the face of obstacles and barriers .

(E.g., Sullivan, 2000)

Victim as parent (cont'd)

- Victim's parenting should be viewed
 - in the context of the domestic violence
 - with a strengths-based perspective: not “what didn't she do that we think she should have done?” but “what did she do?”

Some ways that victims protect their children

- By sending them to another room/neighbor/ family member or by keeping them in sight at all times
- By talking to them/not talking to them about the violence
- By attempting to leave/by not attempting to leave
- By going back/by not going back
- By disclosing the abuse to family, teachers, faith leaders/by keeping the secret

- By resisting the violence or control/by submitting to the violence or control (especially sexual violence)
- By trying to control *when* the violence happens
- By taking charge of the children, so he won't
- By comforting them and assuring that they have supports

Trauma

- Be mindful that a victim may be experiencing trauma symptoms and you may need to view her behavior through that prism
- Trauma symptoms are “a normal response to abnormal events.”

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder

- A person has experienced, witnessed or been confronted with events involving actual or threatened death, serious injury, or threat to physical integrity of self or others
- Response involved intense fear, helplessness or horror

Behavioral impact of trauma on victim

- Trauma stories may be told in a way that seems contradictory, fragmented, non-linear, either highly emotional or lacking in emotion, which may undermines the survivor's credibility to the listener
- Due to guilt and shame, victim may seem to minimize: To imagine that it was not that bad or that she could have done better may be more tolerable than to speak the reality of utter helplessness

Children and Domestic Violence

Type of Exposure

Children may experience domestic violence, including coercive control through:

- Direct involvement
- Indirect involvement
- Effects of aftermath
- Awareness of cycle

BUT, no *per se* harm of witnessing

- No one seriously disputes that exposure to domestic violence is not good for children
- HOWEVER, research shows:
 - Correlation is not causation
 - There is a **great deal of variability** in both children's experiences and the impact of the experiences on children (Edleson 2004)

Context Factors

- Type of violence, conflict or distress
- Frequency and context of exposure
- Child's awareness or exposure
- Age / gender of child
- Individual child's coping skills (personality)
- Other stressors (e.g., concurrent child abuse)
- Buffers (e.g., maternal comfort , community)
- Nature of any intervention or resolution

Resiliency Factors

- Close relationship with non-abusive parent
- Good relationships with siblings and peers
- Connection to other community supports (church, school)
- Close relationships with other trustworthy adults
- Opportunity to talk about events and feelings
- Maintenance of attachment with primary caregiver

Coping

Consider the child's ...

- Relationship with victim-parent
- Physical health
- Sleep patterns
- Degree of / quality of child's involvement with community, friends activities
- School performance
- School behavior (bullying?)
- Use – or non-use – of alcohol or substance
- Criminal justice involvement – or non-involvement

Caution: correlation of symptoms does not equal causation ...

- If a child displays some trauma symptoms, it does not necessarily mean that they are a result of domestic violence exposure . As just one example:

Children exposed to community violence exhibit lowered self-esteem, depressed mood, traumatic stress, post-traumatic stress disorder, intrusive thinking, anxiety, somatization, suicidality, increased aggression, weapon-carrying, and substance abuse

Caporino et al, *The Impact of Different Traumatic Experiences in Childhood and Adolescence*, 3 Report on Emotional and Behavioral Disorders in Youth 64 (2003)

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Children and Removal

Removal and emotional harm

“The attachment between parent and child forms the basis of who we are as humans and the continuity of that attachment is essential to a child’s development. There is little doubt that such a breaking or weakening of the familial bond will be detrimental to the child’s well-being.”

Nicholson. Williams,
203 F.Supp.2d at 198

For children exposed to domestic violence, separation can be even more traumatic than for other children. The child may:

- View the removal as punishment
- Be terrified that the mother is injured, is dead, is in jail
- Be worried about what will happen to the victim-parent if the child is not there to protect her
- Be isolated from home, school, extended family

Removal and emotional harm

The disruptions between the parent-child relationship may provoke fear and anxiety in a child and diminish his or her sense of stability and self. The child may, “fall into a sense of despair, though still hypervigilant, looking, waiting, and hoping for her return.”

(Testimony of Peter Wolf, Ph.D
Nicholson v. Williams)

Isolation instead of support in the aftermath of trauma may heighten a child's symptoms and *decrease* the child's capacity for healing and resilience

Removal and physical safety

- Placement in foster care is not “erring on the side of safety”
 - Foster homes are rarely screened for the presence of domestic violence, especially by non-resident boyfriends
 - Children in foster care may not receive adequate or consistent medical care

Abuse in foster care

- Baltimore study found rate of substantiated child sexual abuse to be 4x higher in foster care (Benedict & Zuravin 1992)
- Study of foster children in Oregon and Washington found that 1/3 reported some form of abuse by foster parent or other adult in the home (Pecora, 2005)
- Other studies in New Jersey, Georgia, Florida, Illinois and Indiana show similar rates of *reported* abuse

Part II

ASSESSMENTS

Assessing the case before you

As a result of this segment you will be better able to ...

- Maintain awareness of how assumptions and biases may impede effective intervention
- Gather information about the existence, type and context of domestic violence in a family
- Identify victim and family strengths (including those of abusive partner)
- Assess danger and risk of harm

Assumptions and Stereotypes

Why didn't she just ...

Why didn't she just ...

- Get him arrested?
 - “She” doesn’t have the power to arrest; not every complaint results in arrest
 - Calling the police does not guarantee arrest
 - Possibility of retaliatory charges against her
 - Arrested or not - he’s going to be mad
 - Unless he committed a felony, he will get out.
 - He may lose his job/get deported
 - Cultural taboo/betrayal of community

Why didn't she just ...

- Get a protection from abuse order?
 - It's just a piece of paper, after all
 - Not everyone who applies for one gets one (at least from her perspective)
 - How will she have it served? (especially if they live together)
 - Fear of him seeking custody or making abuse charges in retaliation
 - May lead to an arrest
 - Distrust of systems
 - Fear that she will trigger a CPS investigation

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Why didn't she just ...

- Get a divorce ?
 - It ain't cheap
 - Shortage of pro bono or sliding scale attorneys for low and middle income women
 - Worried about custody
 - Worried about child support & property
 - Reliance on his family for, e.g., child care
 - Religion
 - Societal pressure to remain married

Why didn't she just

- Leave? (all of the above and ...)
 - Separation does not equal safety
 - Nowhere to go
 - Uprooting children
 - Inability to support self and children
 - Immigration issues
 - Hope that he will change / abuse will end
 - Love
 - The good times outweigh the bad

Challenging “failure to protect”

- A victim’s perceived inaction may be logical and protective
- Leaving is a process but returning is *not* a given
- Most victims are psychologically intact
- Circumstances change: support and intervention may have created an environment that permits safe interaction, particularly around custody/visitation

Assumptions about abuser partners

- Are all the same
- Are dangerous all the time
- Don't love their children/partners
- Can only ever have supervised visitation
- Will always violate orders of protection
- Will never respond to consequences
- Can never change their behavior
- Behavior is culturally based

Nicholson v. Williams:

The lessons

- Domestic violence is complex; education, training and collaboration are imperative
- Assess, assess, assess: a cookie cutter approach may endanger victims and children
- Avoid practice pitfalls such as victim-blaming, mandated services, mandated shelter, etc.
- “Remove the harm,” not the child

The lessons (cont'd)

- Not all children are affected by domestic violence in the same way; you must assess *this* child in *this* case
- Balance the certain harm to the child of removal against the potential harm of exposure
- Be mindful of the law and the rights of families, victims and children

Why we screen for domestic violence

- It works
- Other child welfare issues (mental health, substance abuse, inadequate supervision of children) may be related to or exacerbated by domestic violence
- Bad assessments = bad interventions = bad results

Interviewing the mother / possible victim

- Prepare
- Use / review tools
- Listen
- Suspend judgment
- Don't tell her what to do: ask her what she needs
- Tell her what will happen next

Interviewing the father / possible perpetrator

- Prepare: consider safety issues for yourself, the victim and the children
- Prepare: consider what the victim and collaterals have identified as ways in which he may try to assert power and control
- Use / review tools
- Connection \leftrightarrow respect

Interviewing the father (cont'd)

- Listen, while maintaining an unyielding, firm message that abuse is not okay or justified
- Be alert to opportunities to provide educational information and messages about impact of exposure to domestic violence on children
- Recognize his love of his children; identify any positive ideals, and cultural models and strengths
- **Do NOT confront him with statements by the victim or children**

Developing a positive relationship

- Be clear (explain procedures & rights)
- Respect (willingness to listen)
- Avoid debates and arguments
- Accept his anger, listen to what he wants (you don't have to agree), try to understand what he wants (empathy), *but don't give energy to victim-blaming*
- Set limits respectfully

Cautions -- Pitfalls

- Don't argue
- Don't collude
- Don't demonize or confront aggressively
- Avoid labels

MONITOR YOUR FEELINGS...

ANGER? FEAR? DISGUST?

Learning about the children

- Ask the parents about their behavior, school performance, development
- Try to determine where the children were during any violent episodes
- Review collateral records where available (medical, school)
- If they are old enough, interview with care
 - Use / review tools
 - Alleged abuser should not be in the next room

Collateral sources of information

- Ask victim if she wants you to talk to any family members, friends, religious leaders
- Prior court or CPS records
- Identify whether there are police reports, medical records, social service providers, school records that you can review
 - BUT be mindful and respectful of desire for – and in some cases, right to – confidentiality

Dealing with retaliatory & cross-complaints

- Did *anything* happen? Look at the timing, logic, collateral information about what cross-complainant alleges
- When it is clear that *something* happened, what was it?
Consider:
 - Primary aggressor Immediate self-defense
 - Delayed self-defense
 - Anticipatory violence
 - Retaliatory violence
- Look at context: are there any other indicia of domestic violence, particularly coercive control, by one against the other?

Red flags

Some predictors of risk of serious harm or death ...

- Access to firearms
- Prior use of, or threat to use, weapon
- Prior attempts to strangle
- Threats to kill her or self
- Forced sex
- Attempt to control daily activities
- Jealousy or obsession
- Prior history of arrests, protection orders

Caution

Identification of risk factors should not result in automatic removal ; it should result in heightened engagement with the victim to improve safety

Barriers to thorough assessment

- Time
- Resources
- Caseloads
- Caseworker's safety concerns
- Staff lack of experience or training
- Not taking advantage of / lack of access to screening tools

Barriers (cont'd)

- Feeling overwhelmed by “another” problem, especially where domestic violence was not identified in the initial report
- Don’t ask, don’t tell: “If there is domestic violence, I might have to remove the child”
- Difficult of assessment: “She won’t tell the truth anyway”
- Vicarious or secondary trauma to caseworker

Part III

SUPPORTS AND ACCOUNTABILITY

So now what?

As a result of this segment, you will be better able to ...

- Determine whether and to what degree CPS intervention is called for or permitted by law
- Develop service plans based on case-by-case assessment and families' needs
- Offer appropriate support to victims and families in all investigations where domestic violence is identified
- Improve safety and promote accountability

Best practices in cases involving domestic violence

- Victim safety = children safety
 - Improving safety of non-offending parent will necessarily improve the safety of the child
- Removal of a child from a non-offending parent should be the last resort, not the first
 - Seek ways to remove the batterer *before* considering removal of the child

Best practices (cont'd)

- Assessments, referrals and service plans must be case specific and timely
- Successful intervention joins safety with empowerment and self-determination
 - Identify and build on strengths
 - Explore and offer options to the victim; avoid mandating the victim to shelter or services

Best practices (cont'd)

- Offer support and develop an individual case plan that considers the degree and type of domestic violence and coercive control and its effect on the family
 - Consider context
- Engage and support the non-offending parent as an expert on the batterer

Keep the focus where it belongs

. . . . On the perpetrator's actions (instead of the victim's perceived inactions)

The perpetrator's service plan should be longer than the victim's!

Some realities of case planning

- Barriers of time, resources, caseloads etc.
- Successful support requires trust and trust takes time, which you may not always have
- Successful support requires resources and community partnerships, which may be scarce, underfunded or unreliable
- “Safety” is never certain
 - CPS will likely be blamed if something goes wrong

Realities of case planning (cont'd)

- General mandate that CPS duty is to the child first, and the parent/victim second
- General mandate that families should be reunified (including batterers with their children)
- Legal mandates regarding case planning, court action and termination of parental rights

WHY WORK WITH ABUSIVE PARTNERS?

IF WE DON'T ...

- We end up making mothers responsible for everything—this may increase risk
- We overlook a significant opportunity to increase safety for children
- We overlook a potential reparative resource for many children

Caseworker's objectives in working with the abusive partner

- Develop relationship
- Identify strengths
- Encourage and motivate parent to get help
- Offer options for getting help
- Assess risk
- Make decisions about engagement and safety

Talking to the abusive partner

- Use a flexible engagement approach: work with abusive partners in different ways depending upon their strengths and levels of risk
- Use a strength-based approach to encourage self-reflection, awareness of impact of his behavior on children, and “getting help”

Strengths-based approach

- Find inner strengths/visions (of fatherhood/manhood/partnership)
- Find positive culturally based ideals/role models
- Help find contradiction between behavior and inner visions
- Build from within—help person move toward something they know and love

Things to say . . .

- Some comments that may be appropriate:
 - “You really matter to your kids: they will carry what you do forever”
 - “When you hurt or disrespect their mother, you also hurt your children”
 - “If you don’t change, the children may feel you turned your back on them”
 - “What can you do to be respected? To be seen as a responsible man? A man who gives a good example? A good parent?”

Service planning with the abusive partner

- Set clear expectations with specific mandates
 - E.g., Instead of “no further law enforcement involvement...”; agree that he “will not commit acts of abuse” or “will not violate the protection from abuse order...”
- Document specific behaviors and how those behaviors have impact children
- Consider: what is the level of his motivation to change?

Service planning with the abusive partner (cont'd)

- Reality: what is available?
- Batterer's intervention programs (BIPS)
 - Must include oversight and accountability
- Mental health treatment
 - Is the therapist trained in domestic violence?
 - Does the therapist understand coercive control?
 - Family sessions with father and children when safe and indicated

Service planning with the abusive partner (cont'd)

- Drug or alcohol treatment
- Remove weapons or guns
- Where appropriate, require continued financial support of children
- Programs that are part of a coordinated community response or integrated court system tend to produce better results

Service planning with the abusive partner (cont'd)

- Visitation arrangements: must take into account not only the safety of the child, but access to and safety of the non-offending parent
- Typically not appropriate
 - Anger management
 - Couples counseling

Supporting and planning with the non-offending parent

- Acknowledge and reinforce her strengths as a parent
- Support restoration of power and control in every interaction
 - Understand impact that child welfare system involvement may have had in enforcing her feeling of powerlessness
 - Ask “What do you need?” rather than telling her what she needs

Supporting and planning with the non-offending parent (cont'd)

- Encourage her to take initiative
 - Allow decisions to be made by the victim, with discussion of risks and benefits
- Help her identify and connect / re-connect with support systems and to reduce any prior isolation
- Reassure her that all feelings are OK and normal
- Help her identify activities that offer her opportunities to experience mastery and self-esteem

Supporting and planning with the non-offending parent (cont'd)

- Recognize the time and expense of “services” v. the value (i.e., parenting classes)
- Failure or inability to participate in services does not equal neglect
- Domestic violence counseling and related services should not be mandated
 - Therapy does not operate on a timeline
 - Recovery is not on demand
 - Confidential, voluntary counseling will be more effective; seeking help as an act of courage & strength

Supporting and planning with the non-offending parent (cont'd)

- Planning for the future:
 - Safety planning
 - Need for a safety plan does not equal need for removal
 - Practical: referrals and support in the areas of
 - Financial / Employment
 - Housing
 - Child care
 - Immigration
 - Legal (divorce, custody, visitation, support)
 - Custody and parenting arrangements

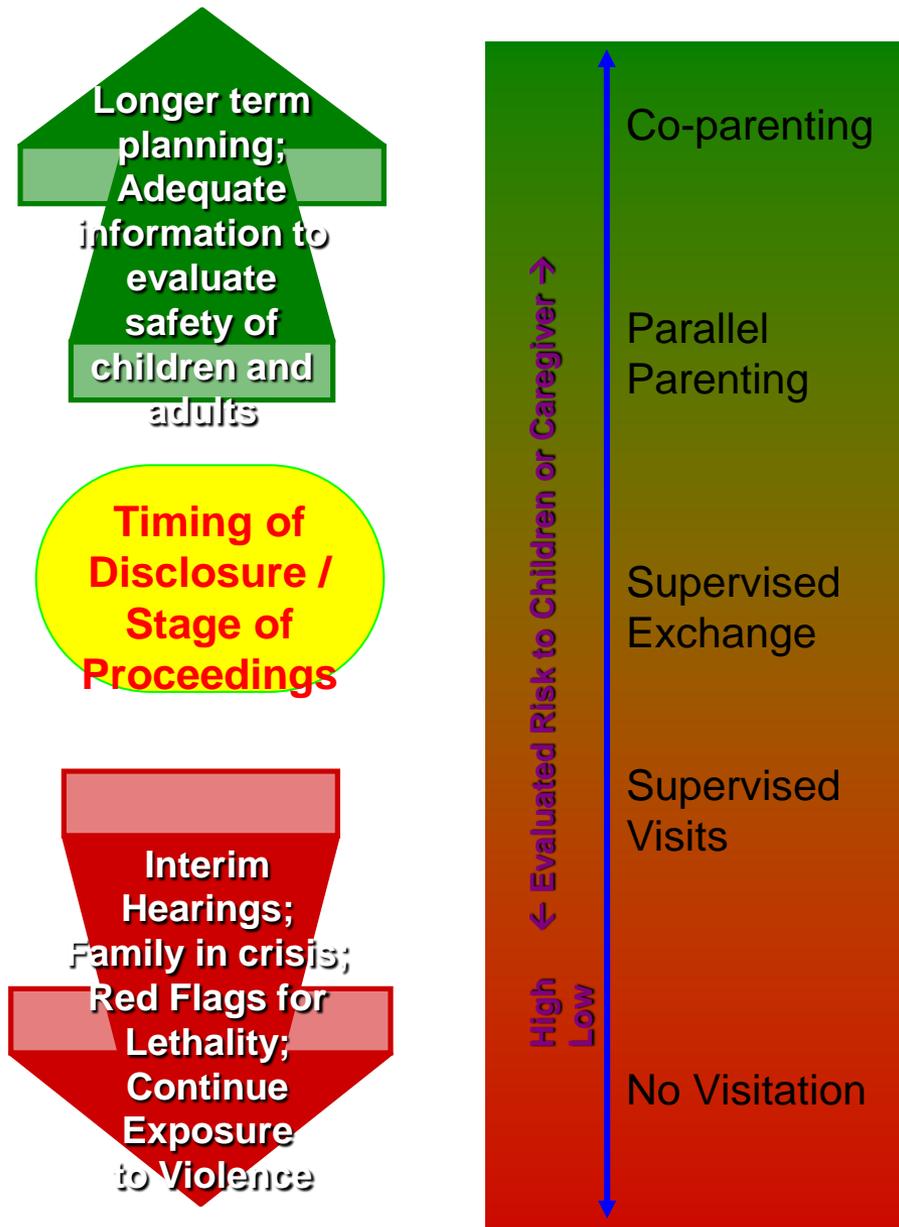
Support and planning for the child

- The emotional recovery of children who have been exposed to domestic violence appears to depend on **the quality of their relationship with the non-offending parent** more than any other single factor (Bancroft and Silverman)
- Assist mother with identifying and securing any appropriate counseling, educational, medical, extracurricular and recreational resources and activities for the child

Planning for visitation

- Consider the safety of not only the child, but also of the adult victim
- Consider appropriate third-party supervisors if no visitation programs are available
- Where appropriate, implement staggered pick up and drop off times
- Where appropriate, third party and/or public pick up and drop off (e.g., precinct, bookstore children's section)

Parenting Arrangements after Violence

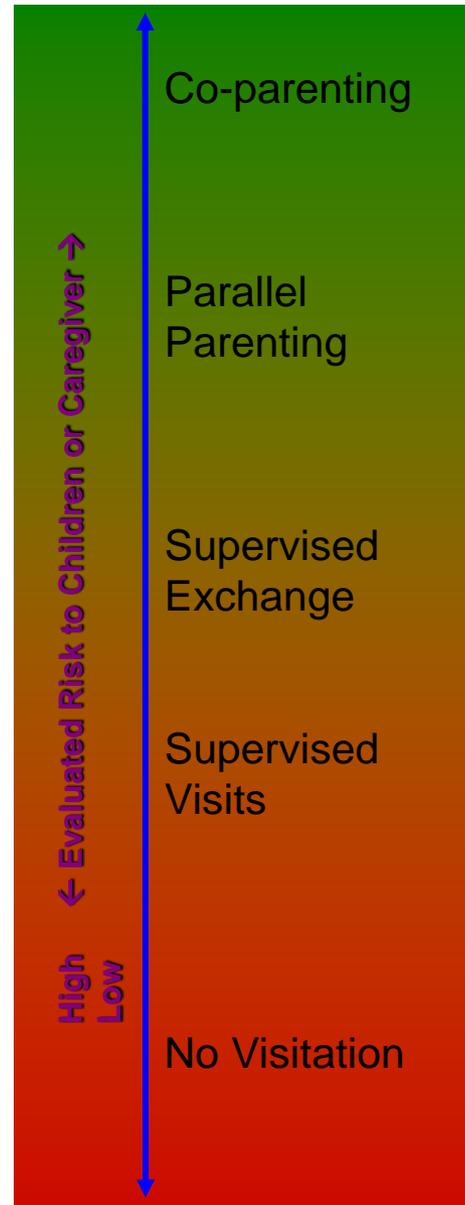


Parenting Arrangements after Violence



**Nature,
Frequency &
Severity of
Family Violence**

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Working with domestic violence service providers

- Historical relationship
 - Tension / distrust
- Evolution of collaboration
 - Pilot projects
 - Greenbook
 - Nicholson
 - Funding / VAWA

Challenges of collaboration

- Different mandates
- Different missions
- Different resources
- Different confidentiality
- Maintaining funding

Benefits of collaboration

- Shown to reduce placement of children
- Easier to hold perpetrator accountable
- Allows cross-support of agencies' missions; unified support for family
- Increases staff skill and cross-training opportunities
- May create more reliably available services
- Allows agencies to develop new perspectives
- Builds lasting networks and individual relationships which survive beyond the collaboration
- Reduces administrative and service duplication

Parents who want to stay together or reunite

- It does not mean that the mother is neglectful if she wants to reconcile
- Assessing:
 - No “new” violence
 - Perpetrator acknowledges and accepts responsibility for his behavior
 - Perpetrator has taken steps to address aggravating issues such as substance or alcohol abuse
 - Children’s reaction

Parents who want to stay together or reunite (cont'd)

- Assessing
 - Victim can identify cues to violence or escalation
 - Mechanisms in place for ongoing safety and well-being
 - Safety plan
 - Limited protective order where appropriate
 - Removal or amelioration of any prior barriers to mother's isolation
- Considerations for joint planning

Putting it into practice . . .

Case scenarios

The Jones Family: Assessment

Report comes in from child care provider.

“Father of 4 year old Michael Jones hit mother in the face in the presence of child. Mother and child both disclosed the assault.”

- What is your plan for investigating?
- What other information do you need and how will you get it?

What do you want to do?

- Review tools / literature / remind self
- Check family history with CPS
- Call reporter (day care)
- Interview mom
- Interview dad
- Interview child and any other children in home
- Check criminal systems / registries
- Interview any other collaterals
- Determine how caregiver is functioning (ongoing)

What do you want to know?

History with agency / outcome of previous

- ✓ Call to reporter
- ✓ Preliminary safety assessment of mother and child
- ✓ Regressions of child – biting, bedwetting
- ✓ Context of event
- ✓ Context of disclosure
- ✓ History of DV
- ✓ How often
- ✓ Assess for other issues (mental health, substance abuse)
- ✓ Amendable to change

Service Plan

- Given all of the information you now know, what type of service plan would you recommend?

3 Months Later

- When mother tells the caseworker that she wants to move home, how should the caseworker respond and what she do?

➤ When the caseworker learns that the parents reconciled, what should she do?

THANK YOU, NEBRASKA!