

## **Children and Domestic Violence**

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## **Agenda Overview**

- BATTERERS' Impact on Children
- BATTERERS' Manipulation of Professionals
- BATTERER Accountability
- Safe & Effective Practices
- Fostering Resiliency in Children

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## **What do we know?**

- Domestic violence is primarily abuse and violence against women.
- In 2001, women accounted for 85% of victims of domestic violence.
- Violence against women is a societal issue rooted throughout history.

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## Domestic Violence

- Domestic violence (battering) is a pattern of abusive and coercive behavior used to gain and/or maintain power and control over an *intimate partner or former intimate partner*.
- Domestic violence may take the form of:
  - Physical Violence
  - Sexual Violence
  - Emotional Abuse and/or Psychological Abuse
    - Verbal Abuse
  - Economic Abuse

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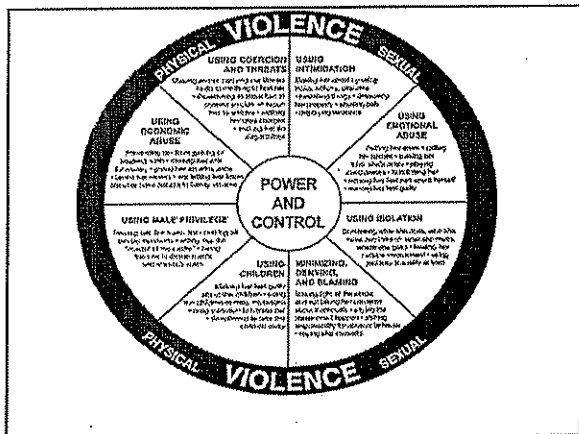
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## Batterer's Impact on Children

- Directly  
The children, too, may be physically, emotionally, verbally, or sexually abused &/or neglected.
- Indirectly  
Their self-esteem, self-worth, and ability to trust are affected by the lack of predictability in the home.

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### **Batterers' Impact on Children**

- Intentional undermining of the mother/child relationship
- Batterers and their violence can teach children to have a negative and disrespectful outlook on their mother
- Batterers' lack of responsibility
- Batterers can shape belief systems

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### **Batterers' Impact on Children**

- Batterers manipulate children into believing their mother is the source of the violence.
- When batterers are not held accountable for their violent behavior, children learn that there are no consequences for violent behavior.
- Children learn that the use of violence is justified to get one's way or to resolve conflict.

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### **Batterers' Manipulation of Professionals**

"The Story of Rachel"

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### **Manipulation of Systems and Professionals**

- Batterer may manipulate in ways the professional may not be aware:
  - Takes control over conversations
  - Answers questions without *really* answering the question
  - Makes attempts to side with the professional
  - Tries to triangulate professionals involved
  - Portrays self as victim

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### **Why is Batterer Accountability Important?**

- Batterers can harm children
- Improved identification of DV and its risks without concurrent increase in capacity to intervene with batterers has resulted in:
  - Missed opportunities to reduce risk to children
  - Missed opportunities to develop alliances with non-offending parent
  - Unnecessary removals of children
  - Failure to address the whole family

*David Mandel, MA (2007)*  
*Safe and Together: Working with Batterers in the Context of Child Protection*

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### **Batterer Accountability**

- Includes:
- Changing abusive behavior
  - Modeling constructive behavior
  - Stopping the denial, blaming & justifications
  - Accepting all responsibility & consequences for one's behavior

*Family Violence Prevention Fund*  
*"Breaking the Cycle: Fathering After Violence"*

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## **Batterer Accountability**

Includes:

- Acknowledging damage & impact
- Not forcing the process or trying to “turn the page”
- Listening & validating
- Supporting & respecting mother’s parenting

*Family Violence Prevention Fund*

*“Breaking the Cycle: Fathering After Violence”*

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## **Safe & Effective Practices**

- Assisting in enhancing the safety of the survivor is an opportunity to reduce risk to children.
- Assume the male and female caretakers have an equal responsibility for the emotional and physical well-being of the children.
- Understanding the batterer’s abusive and coercive tactics toward the survivor and children can improve the safety and well-being of the children.
- Batterers can be helped to play a more positive role in the lives of their children.
- Send appropriate messages of responsibility for the abuse.

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## **Safe & Effective Practices**

- Do not share information provided by the survivor or the children with the batterer.
- Be prepared to discuss safety options with the survivor.
- Seek to understand the survivor’s experience of domestic violence and what the survivor believes are challenges and barriers.
- Keep in mind that the survivor is the expert on her life and may feel that it is safest to stay in the relationship.
- The survivor’s safety risk will likely be impacted when she is seeking independence from the batterer. This may happen when she is preparing to leave, when she is leaving, or for many months or years after leaving.

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### **Fostering Resiliency in Children**

- Resiliency – a person’s ability to survive adverse circumstances
- Why foster resiliency?

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### **Protective and Healing Aspects**

- We can not assume that domestic violence has the same impact on every child.
- Children respond to trauma & crisis in resilient ways that are often overlooked.
- Supporting a child’s resiliencies can have positive impacts in the aftermath of violence.

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### **Children’s Resiliencies:**

#### **Contributing factors**

- The presence of a protective parent
- The fostering of the relationship with the protective parent
- Development of talents and interests (such as athletic, scholastic or artistic)
- Access to close relationships with trustworthy adults
- Ability to escape self-blame
- Good peer relationships
- Safe environments that include structure, limits, and predictability

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"The emotional recovery of children who have been exposed to domestic violence appears to depend on the quality of their relationship with the non-battering parent more than on any other single factor."

- Lundy Bancroft

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### 10 Tips to Foster Resiliency in Children

1. Treat them with respect
2. Accept them for who they are
3. Focus on strengths
4. Teach & practice empathy
5. Show flexibility

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### 10 Tips to Foster Resiliency in Children

6. Make time for undivided attention
7. Turn mistakes into learning experiences
8. Teach them to problem solve & make decisions
9. Use discipline to teach
10. Let them help

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## 5 Things to Say

- I believe you.
- I am concerned for your safety.
- You don't deserve to be abused.
- It is not your fault.
- I am here to help.

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## Resources

- KCSDV
  - [www.kcsdv.org](http://www.kcsdv.org)
- Kansas Crisis Hotline
  - 1-888-END ABUSE (1-888-363-2287)
- National Teen Dating Abuse Hotline
  - 1-866-331-9474; [www.loveisrespect.org](http://www.loveisrespect.org)

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## Contact Information

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