

Keeping Women and Children Safe

Joan Zorza © 2007

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Evolving Family Violence Prevention Policy,
Locally and Nationally

joan@zorza.net

Abbreviations Used:

BIP = Batterer Intervention Program

CA = Child Abuse

CSA = Child Sexual Abuse

DV = Domestic Violence

IP = Intimate Partner

IPV = Intimate Partner Violence

OP = Order of Protection (Injunction, Restraining Order, Abuse Prevention Order, Protection from Abuse Order, etc.)

NIJ = National Institute of Justice (part of the Department of Defense)

What is Family Violence?

Abuse against:

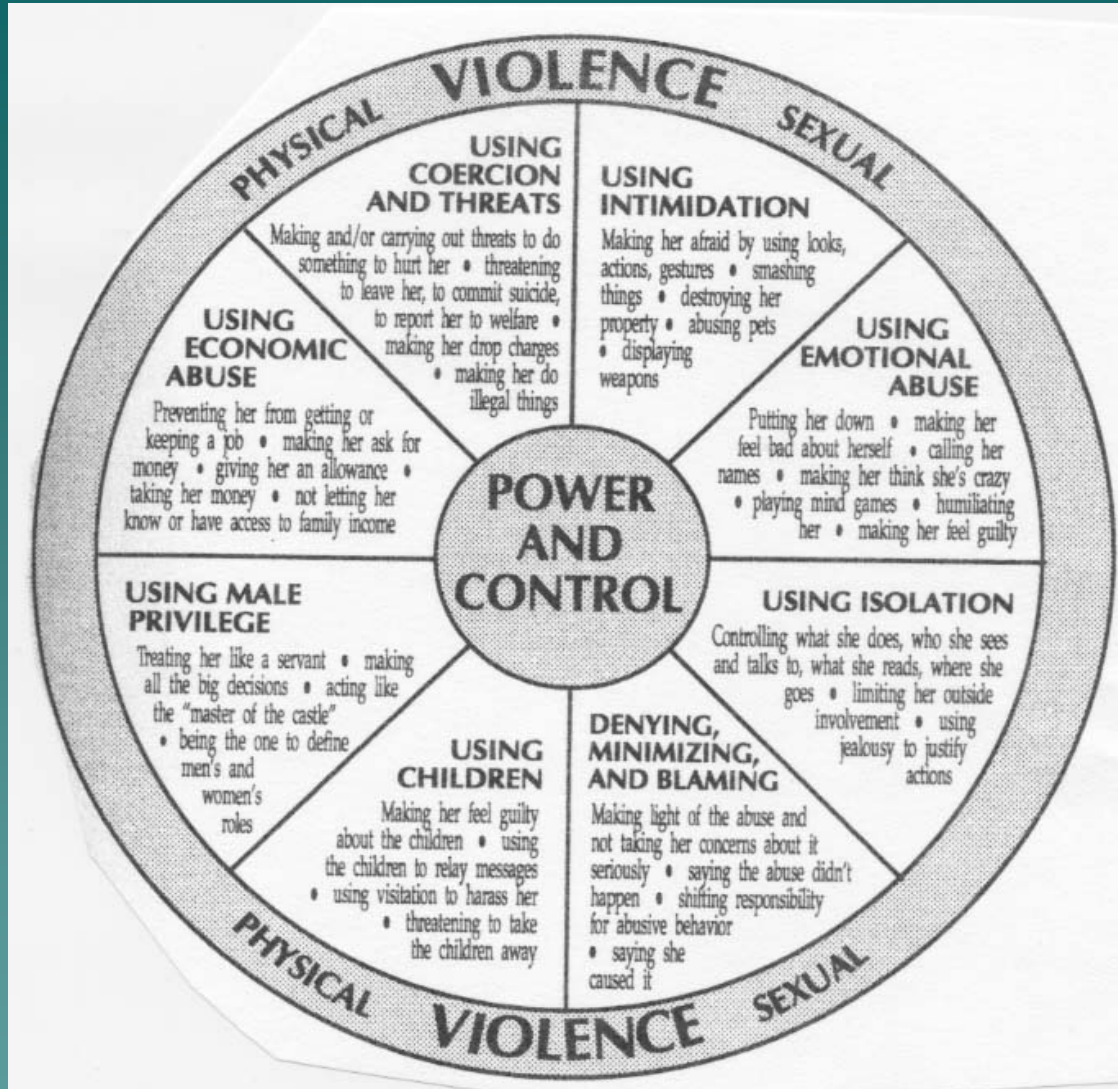
- ◆ Intimate Partner (past or present)
- ◆ Child - by Another Household Member
 - Includes sibling abuse
- ◆ Parent (overlaps w/ elder abuse)
- ◆ Other family member in home
- ◆ Depending on state law (& how recent or close): Same-sex IP, dating partner, household member, any relative

Types of IP Abuse

- ◆ **Physical abuse**
 - Strangulation is at least attempted homicide
 - Pattern of injuries different than accidents
- ◆ **Sexual abuse**
 - Forcing sex; forcing abhorrent sexual practices; refusing to give her money if she won't have sex; prostituting her; sabotaging birth control; forcing her to abort/ or not letting her; bringing home other women; making her watch/ replicate pornography
- ◆ **Emotional/ Psychological abuse**
 - Isolating; demeaning; monitoring; stalking; blaming; threatening to harm her/commit suicide; denying/ minimizing abuse; treating her like a servant; falsely accusing her; making her think she is crazy

Types of IP Abuse - 2

- ◆ **Using children**
 - Making kids spy on her/ carry messages; threats to harm/ abduct kids; telling kids their mother is stupid/ don't obey her; seeking custody to deprive her of it/ for financial gain
- ◆ **Financial abuse**
 - Controlling all the money; refusal to let her go to work/ school/ job training; throwing away books/ homework; having her fired (hiding alarm clock/ car keys; calling repeatedly at work; failing to do child care as promised)
- ◆ **Spiritual abuse**
 - Shaming partner before religious community; forcing her to do acts that her violate religious principles; refusing to let partner practice her religion
- ◆ **Exploiting other vulnerabilities**
 - Immigration; abusing pets/ farm animals; forcing her into crime/ threatening to turn her in; outing someone gay or lesbian; removing her wheelchair; denying medication, food, or overmedicating her



Who Perpetrates IPV?

- ◆ Men perpetrate the vast majority, & blame her
 - CTS flawed, is both over- and under-inclusive, doesn't measure context (e.g., self-defense)
 - Men minimize/ deny their abuse, over-count hers; Women minimize his abuse, over-count their own
- ◆ Men perpetrate the more severe abuse
 - *Abuse & kill after breakup*
- ◆ Done for the purpose of power and control; to terrorize her (&/or kids); or for sadistic enjoyment
- ◆ Done because it works – for men
 - Little accountability; Few/ no repercussions
 - Abuser wins every argument
- ◆ *Not done because of anger/ stress*
- ◆ *Premeditated, controlled*
- ◆ Abuser's apologies: culturally dependent; only early on

How IPV Affects Women

- ◆ No profile – *before* she is abused
- ◆ Her only risk factors: **HIM**; CSA; growing up witnessing abuse (a very weak factor)
- ◆ **Physically**: injuries, miscarriages, STDs, pregnancies, pain/ self-medicating
- ◆ **Psychologically**: fear, anxiety, lack of trust/ intimacy, depression, anger, shame, trouble sleeping/nightmares, memory problems, confusion, low self-esteem, hypervigilant, suicidal, addictions, PTSD
- ◆ Many say the secrecy, silencing is worst
 - Also the sexual & psychological abuse

Why Women Don't Leave?

- ◆ Many do! The wrong Q. **Ask instead:**
 - What can I do to help you be safer?
[Why don't we ask, "Why does he do it?"]
- ◆ Accepts blame: *"It's your [my] fault."*
- ◆ "I love him." *[Who is asking?]*
 - Ends the conversation; she knows this.
- ◆ No money. Nowhere to go.
- ◆ No family/ friends/ support system.
- ◆ No self-confidence.
- ◆ "Nobody will ever believe me."

Why Women Don't Leave - 2

- ◆ **FEAR:** Threats to kill her/ take the children
 - “Nobody will ever believe you.” [“me”]
- ◆ **Half of Moms stay for the sake of their children:**
 - Children need a father; Divorce hurts children; No \$\$\$
 - The children don't know about the abuse. (*Unlikely*)
 - The abuse isn't that bad/ Maybe he will change. (*Ditto*)
 - He's not that bad a father [or, He's a good father].
 - He'll get custody/ I need to stay to protect the kids.

30-70% of batterers beat their children.

Batterers are 6-19 times as likely to sexually molest their daughters as other fathers.

So, tell her: Kids probably know about it; IPV hurts kids; Few male abusers stop, even if treated.

HELP HER TO KEEP (OR GET) CUSTODY.



How IPV Affects Children

Many children are hurt:

- ◆ **Physically:**

- deliberately, whether to hurt them &/or their mothers
- while trying to protect their mothers, or
- inadvertently because of dad's reckless disregard for their safety

- ◆ **Sexually:** Batterers molest daughters 6-19 times more than other dads; Revealed after separation

- ◆ **Emotionally:** Same problems as Mom; Hardest - secrecy/silencing/denial; Developmental delays; Need to protect Mom/ siblings; Acting out in school/trouble staying awake/concentrating, or being an A+ student; Substance abuse; Fights/Aggression; Sexually acting out, Running away

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Maximizing Child's Resilience

- ◆ Innate factors – a matter of luck
- ◆ Increasing the child's bond with a supportive person:
 - Protective person
 - Long-term relationship
 - Stable relationship

USUALLY THE MOTHER!!!!!!!

- ◆ Sexually abused children recover best when Mom believes & supports them.
- ◆ Anger only ends when names abuse, understands it's his fault, stops blaming herself.

Don't silence mom/kids. No gag orders.

Maximizing Safety/ Resilience

- ◆ No mediation – it increases danger
- ◆ No couples counseling
- ◆ Sole custody to Mother
 - Both sole physical & sole legal custody
 - Myths about joint custody w/ DV/CA/CSA
 - Supervised (but not by family) or no visitation
 - As long as needed; At no cost to victim
- ◆ Parental alienation theory is junk science
- ◆ Batterer intervention program & other treatment as needed (esp. substance abuse)
 - **But know that it isn't very effective; & that contrition isn't enough to indicate cure**

Maximizing Safety/ Resilience

- ◆ Orders of protection generally protect, but no guarantee
 - Effective in every state/territory/reservation
 - *Tend* to stop the worst violence
 - But often increase stalking, monitoring behaviors, & petty abuse
 - A few abusers retaliate; can be deadly
 - **Trust her instinct**
- ◆ But no mutual orders of protection
 - **More dangerous than no order**

NO Mutual Protection Orders

Mutual protective orders are worse than no order:

- Increase the danger
- Give him more tools to use against her – that the abuse was her fault & not his; that nobody believed her, that she is violating the order
- Police don't know how to enforce mutual orders, so don't – or arrest both parties
- Prosecutors & courts also don't know how to respond
- Chill her from calling police/ enforcing her order
- Reinforce myth that abuse is mutual
- Deny her the custody advantage legislature intended
- Encourage lazy courts that don't make decisions

NO Mutual Orders - 2

- ◆ Mutual Orders are Not Therapeutic!
 - Blame her at least equally for the abuse.
 - He never has to acknowledge his abuse, or his responsibility for it.
 - Let him focus on what she did wrong to provoke him (she is easier to change).
 - Confuse children as to who is at fault, so they may blame Mom, identify with Dad.
 - Reinforces the myth that DV is a family or communication or mutual abuse problem.

Referrals for DV Victims & Kids

- ◆ To DV program, shelter. **1-800-799-SAFE**
 - ◆ Medical referrals/ therapist, *if she wants*.
 - ◆ Danger assessment: www.dangerassessment.org
 - ◆ Legal programs best help battered women: Likely needs:
 - Money (e.g., welfare/ child support/ job)
 - Safe housing: vacate/stay away order; fight eviction; public housing voucher
 - Order of protection
 - Divorce/custody, permission to relocate with children
 - Protection from his getting her fired
 - Enforcement of her OP/ criminal case(s)
 - If undocumented, help legitimating her & kids' status
 - Special education needs for children
- Refer her to DV program/ shelter/ legal services program.

Do Batterer Programs Work?

- ◆ No program type works better than others
 - Completers do better than noncompleters
 - NIJ studies: no type works well – at best make a 5% difference in reducing abuse
 - No success with stalkers
 - No basis for assuming successful completion of BIP program means he's cured, safe or fit for custody
- ◆ More promising (but not perfect): Vigilant monitoring of probation terms (OP + BIP + *if needed* substance abuse treatment) with swift enforcement & escalating sanctions by probation &/or judge for noncompliance with treatment program's terms or violating OP.

Facts about DV/ CA/ Incest

- ◆ Incest happens as often in rich families as poor.
- ◆ Incest allegations are no less true in custody disputes – *if impartially investigated* (but usually aren't investigated – & courts may not know this).
- ◆ Most (but not all) batterers have involvement with criminal courts, and often against others.
- ◆ The average psychologist/ social worker still knows little about DV/ CA; even less about incest.
- ◆ Men deliberately make false incest allegations 16 times as often as women. Women seldom do.
- ◆ Family supervised visitation is as dangerous to abused mothers as unsupervised visitation.

Facts about DV/ Incest/ Divorce

- ◆ No psychological tests can show that someone is (or is not) a batterer, or a sex offender, or incest perpetrator.
- ◆ MMPI-2 gives misleading results with battered women, suggesting incorrectly that they have serious psychological problems. Show batterers to be very normal. *Nancy S. Erickson, Use of the MMPI-2 in Child Custody Evaluations Involving Battered Women: What Does Psychological Research Tell US?, 39 Fam. L. Q. 87 (2005).*
- ◆ Angry moms are angry at world; angry dads are angry just at their former partners. This confuses the system into thinking he must be objective & credible since his anger is only at his ex.

You Know You Have Succeeded:

- ◆ **WHEN YOU HAVE EMPOWERED THE ABUSED VICTIM. 😊**
- ◆ **AND/OR THE CHILDREN . 😊**