

## **Dynamics of Domestic Violence**

**La'Tricia Bryant**  
**Alabama Coalition Against Domestic Violence**

### **Statistics**

- Domestic violence cuts across all racial, ethnic, religious, and economic groups.
- Approximately 97% of domestic violence victims are women.
- An estimated 2- 4 million women are beaten every year by their partner.
- Battering is the single greatest cause of injury to women--more than auto accidents, muggings and rapes combined.

### **Statistics**

- Research indicates that women are at a 75% greater risk of being seriously injured or killed by their partner after they leave the relationship.
- Children living in a violent home have a 1,500% greater chance of being abused than children from homes with no violence.
- 70% of hostage situations are domestic violence related.
- 50% of all homeless women & children are fleeing domestic violence.

### **Statistics**

- Each year approximately 4,000 women are killed by an abusive partner.
- Domestic violence costs employers 3-5 billion dollars in losses due to absenteeism.
- Total health care cost of family violence is estimated at 44 billion dollars annually.
- Currently there are about 2,000 women serving prison time for defending themselves against their abuser.

## **What Is Domestic Violence?**

- A pattern of violent and coercive tactics.
- A pattern of controlling behavior.
- A learned pattern of behavior.
- The control of thoughts, beliefs and conduct of the partner.
- Caused by a need to have power and control over an intimate partner.
- Caused only by batterers NOT victims

## **Prevalence of Domestic Violence**

- Domestic violence victims are primarily women
- Domestic Violence perpetrated by women is frequently in self defense
- Domestic violence is occurring in significant proportions in America

- **Domestic violence is occurring and has been increasing in dating relationships**
- **Domestic violence impacts the work place**
- **Domestic violence is damaging physically and emotionally**
- **Domestic violence frequently becomes more dangerous - more frequent and more violent - over time**

- **Domestic violence occurs in all race, age and socio-economic backgrounds and types of relationships**
- **Domestic violence can and does lead to fatalities**

### **Victim Mythology**

- **No profile for victims other than most are female**
- **Assessing if person is in a relationship with a batterer not character flaws**
- **Victim behaviors are reactions to trauma and to the batterer's behavior**
- **No specific character or personality trait**

### **Victim Reactions**

- **Reaction to trauma not provocation**
- **Self-Preservation is Primary**
- **May see intervention as a threat to her safety**
- **Needs to show an "alliance" with batterer for her own protection (begging police to let him go, providing bail or attacking police)**

### **Victim Reactions**

- **Place victim responses/behaviors in context of domestic violence and survivor strategies. (do not judge from your perspective)**
- **Assist victim in identifying more effective or appropriate responses without jeopardizing her safety.**

### **Escaping Domestic Violence**

- **Victims do not leave the violence they escape it**
- **Need comprehensive plan to overcome identified barriers**
- **Personal Protection Plans must be long-term**

## Barriers to Escaping Domestic Violence

- Presence of violence
- Threats of retaliation, harm to children and homicide or suicide by batterer
- Lack of support from community, family, faith, friends, employer, or other systems
- System failures (not holding batterer accountable)

## Barriers Cont.

- Immigration status unknown or manipulated by batterer
- Lack of information or resources to access necessary services
- On-going manipulation, coercion, and violence by batterer
- Fear of the unknown

## Barriers To Leaving

- Attachment (love) & investment (history)
- Hope
- Religious beliefs:
  - Divorce
  - Wife should be submissive
- Children: 'A bad father is better than no father.'
- Intimidation
- Economic factors
  - Financial dependence

## Barriers To Leaving

- False beliefs that...
  - Alcohol/drug use or abuse caused domestic violence.
  - Domestic violence is a temporary thing.
  - Her behavior can change his behavior.
  - All men act like this.
- Fear of increased violence and survival
- Misunderstanding the law.
  - "I won't give you a divorce."
  - "No one will believe you."

## Effects of Domestic Violence on Victims

- Perception of hopelessness
- Anger outbursts
- Fluctuations in mood
- Multiple fears
- Multiple anxieties

## Effects of Domestic Violence on Victims

- Second guessing
- Self-blaming
- Internalizing offender's view

## Effects of Domestic Violence on Victims

Changes self-view

- Diminished sense of self-efficacy
- Lowered self-esteem
- Perception of helplessness

## Power and Control Behaviors

- Using Intimidation
  - Making her afraid by using looks, gestures, and actions
  - Smashing things
  - Destroying her property
  - Abusing the family pet
  - Displaying weapons
- Using Emotional Abuse
  - Putting her down
  - Making her feel bad about herself
  - Calling her names
  - Making her think she is crazy
  - Humiliating her
  - Making her feel guilty

## Power and Control Behaviors Cont.

- Using Isolation
  - Controlling what she does, who she sees, what she reads, where she goes, etc.
  - Limiting her outside involvement
  - Forbidding her to contact friends/family
  - Using jealousy to justify actions
- Denying, Blaming and Minimizing
  - Making light of the abuse
  - Saying the abuse didn't happen
  - Shifting responsibility
  - Saying she caused it

## Power and Control Behaviors Cont.

- Using Children
  - Making her feel guilty about the children
  - Using the children to relay messages
  - Using visitation to harass the victim
  - Threatening to take children away
- Using Male Privilege
  - Treating her like a servant
  - Making all the big decisions for the family
  - Acting like the "man of the castle"
  - Being the one to define the roles of men and women

## Power and Control Behaviors Cont.

- Using Economic Abuse
  - Preventing her from getting or keeping a job
  - Making her ask for money
  - Giving her an allowance
  - Taking her money
  - Not letting her know or have access to family finances
- Using Coercion and Threats
  - Making and/or carrying out threats to hurt her
  - Threatening to commit suicide
  - Threatening to contact DHR, INS, etc.
  - Making her drop charges
  - Forcing her to do illegal things

## Where Do Perpetrators Learn This Behavior?

- Families
- External Victimization
- Popular Culture
- Societal Examples

### Assessing Lethality

- Threats of homicide or suicide
- Fantasies of homicide or suicide
- Weapons
- Ownership of the partner
- Centrality of the partner
- Separation violence

### Review

- Caused by a need to have power and control over an intimate partner.
- Caused only by batterers NOT victims
- No profile for victims other than most are female
- Victims do not leave the violence they escape it

### Why We Should Be Concerned

Domestic Violence in Alabama 2013

- 24 -homicides
- 1,991 - aggravated assaults
- 32,587 - simple assaults
- 50% of cases included firearms

### Context is critical

Failing to distinguish one kind of domestic abuser from another can:

- Endanger victims of ongoing violence
- Encourage perpetrators of ongoing violence

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### Context

In determining the context of an abusive incident it is vital to assess the following:

- The intent or purpose of the abusive act.
- The meaning of the abusive act to the victim.
- The effect of the abusive act on the victim.
- The existence of pattern of prior forms of abuse
- The risk of future harm to the victim
- The existence of lethality factors

### Assessment for Type of Violence

- Battering – existence of a pattern of coercive abusive acts, fear by victim of perpetrator, ongoing risk of future harm, intent to control.
- Situational – incident based- isolated- external trigger only- out of character for defendant, lack of risk for future harm and lack of ongoing fear by victim
- Reactionary- in response to abuse- intent to stop the abuse or violence, possible -trauma reaction

## What Domestic Violence Is Not...

It is Not:

- ✓ a bad relationship
- ✓ a result of lack of communication
- ✓ bad behavior during a divorce/custody dispute
- ✓ an anger or alcohol/drug problem
- ✓ a result of provocation to survivor behavior

## What Domestic Is...

It is:

- ✓ a pattern of specifically targeted violence
- ✓ a chosen behavior to achieve power
- ✓ learned from home, peers, society
- ✓ caused only by batterers NOT survivors

## Victim Mythology

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## Batterers Cause Domestic Violence

- Battering is based on a belief system that relationships are about power and control.
- Batterers feel entitled to gain and maintain absolute power in a relationship.
- This belief system is learned, reinforced, and is the catalyst for illegal and abusive behavior.

## RED FLAGS FOR A POTENTIAL BATTERER

- ✓ Quick involvement
- ✓ Suggestions for the victim's appearance
- ✓ Pop-ins/ Check ins
- ✓ Isolation - encouraging more time on the batterers terms and dissuading involvement with other people or activities
- ✓ Centrality – extreme jealousy and wanting to be with the victim at all times
- ✓ Information gathering – about all aspects of the victims daily routine and life

## Proof of Control

- A batterer's belief system requires constant evidence that the batterer is in absolute control.
- Evidence of Control = victim compliance
- Victim compliance achieved through use of abusive tactics
- Abusive tactics escalate as batterer feels the entitlement to power/control is challenged
- Batterers restrict all rights and freedoms of victims

### **Proof of Belief System**

Batterer's justify abusive behaviors by:

- ✓Rule making authority
- ✓Enforcing rule compliance
- ✓Excusing behaviors
- ✓Restrict all freedoms and rights of victims
- ✓Manipulating intervention systems

### **Barriers to Escaping Abusive Partners**

- For sake of children
- Fear
- Love & hope for change
- Self-blame, Embarrassment
- Isolation/Entrapment
- Poverty
- Religious/cultural beliefs
- Lack of predictable, effective system response

### **Response to Women Who Return**

- Belittle
- Minimize violence
- Coerce with court orders
- Charge with false allegations
- Initiate "Failure to Protect" investigations
- Blame her for the violence
- Withdraw support

### **References**

- ❖<http://www.ncadv.org>
- ❖<https://ncadv.org/statistics>
- ❖<https://nnedv.org/about-dv/what-is-dv>
- ❖<https://praxisinternational.org/rural-technical-assistance>

### **Alabama Coalition Against Domestic Violence**

La'Tricia Bryant  
Project Director  
(334) 832-4842  
[latricia@acadv.org](mailto:latricia@acadv.org)  
[info@acadv.org](mailto:info@acadv.org)