Batterers As Partners, Batterers as Parents

Recognizing Batterer’s Tactics and How They Affect the Family
Credits

• This presentation is based on “The Batterer as Parent: Addressing the Impact of Domestic Violence on Family Dynamics,” by Lundy Bancroft and Jay Silverman, Sage Publications, Thousand Oaks, CA, 2002

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The Batterer: In Adult Relationship

- Uses a pattern of multiple coercive and controlling behaviors
- To gain power and control over the adult victim

- May include:
  - Verbal abuse
  - Emotional control
  - Medical neglect
  - Economic control
  - Legal intimidation
  - Stalking/monitoring/isolation

- Punctuated by:
  - Credible psychological threats and intimidation
  - Sexual assault
  - Physical violence
Entitlement: Rights without Responsibilities

• Feels justified using any means to protect “special” status

• Expectation: “When I say ‘jump…’”

• Reversal of “abuse” and “self-defense”
Controlling

- Escalates when intimate partner resists
- Resistance = “evidence” of
  - Victim’s “mental instability”
  - Victim’s “volatility”
  - Victim’s “desire to control”
- All family functions/ tasks are arenas to demonstrate control
Self-Centeredness

- Batterer’s needs take precedence
- Lack of emotional support for family
- Expectation: “King of the Castle”
Superiority

- Partner is inferior
- Possibly hostile to women in general
- Dehumanizes or objectifies partner
Possessiveness

• Partner is an OWNED OBJECT

• Partner does not have right to resist
Manipulative

- Seeks to change family’s reality
- Public vs. Private persona
Confuses “Love” and “Abuse”

• Sees abuse as “proof” of love
Contradicts:
“Do As I Say, Not As I Do”

• Behavior contradicts statements

• Different standards for: “man vs woman” “strong vs weak” “adult vs child”
Externalizes Responsibility: “Not me!”

- Justifies actions and makes excuses
- Shifts blame to partner or other causes
- Shifts responsibility for effects of abuse
Denies, Minimizes: “No, not really…”

- Will not acknowledge extent of abuse
  - Reports less violence
  - Minimizes threatening behavior

- Denies the effects of abuse on family

- Aggressive violence mischaracterized
The Batterer: In Parent/Child Relationships

- Uses a pattern of multiple coercive and controlling behaviors
- To gain power and control over all relationships in the home

Characterized by:
- Authoritarian parenting
- Under involved, neglectful or irresponsible parenting
- Self-centeredness
- Manipulation
- Undermining adult victim’s authority/parenting
- Ability to perform in public/under observation

Punctuated by:
- Credible psychological threats and intimidation
- Physical violence
- (Possibly sexual assault)
Authoritarian

- Rigid, uncompromising
- Expects unquestioned obedience
- Intolerant of resistance
- Inflexible
- “Power-assertive” in conflicts with children
Under-involved, Neglectful, Irresponsible

- Children are batterer’s “domain” but partner’s responsibility
- Children viewed as hindrance or annoyance
- Avoids parenting responsibilities
- Unwilling to make sacrifices for children
- Limited knowledge of children or their needs
- Fails to keep promises, except during litigation
Self-Centered

- Unwilling to modify life to fit children’s needs
- Insensitive to children’s feelings/experiences
- Intolerant of infant distress
- Role reversal
- Retaliates against children if they “slight” him
- Makes children responsible for his well-being
Undermines Adult Victim’s Parenting

- Ridicules victim in front of children
- Physically abuses victim in front of children
- Denies victim’s ability to make or enforce rules
- Prevents victim from meeting children’s needs
- Blames victim for inability to spend on children ("If I didn’t have to pay child support…")
Ability to Perform under Observation

- Batterers typically have great ability to “charm” (think *manipulate*)
- Batterers know how to modify behaviors under observation
- Supervised visits do not challenge a batterer’s parenting skills
• **Most batterers cannot provide a healing environment for children:**
  – Children do not feel safe
  – Children feel responsible for batterer
  – Continual undermining of parent/child bond
  – Lack of limits/rules (to gain favor)
  – Lack of parenting experience

• **Close monitoring of contact is REQUIRED**
Join us next time for...

Children Living Domestic Violence

Understanding the Harm Done to Children Who Witness Coercive Control