

*DV 101:
Understanding Domestic
Violence*

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The Ripple Effect

Domestic Violence (DV): An Epidemic of Terror

A recent global study by Johns Hopkins School of Public Health found:

- 1 in every 3 women worldwide has been beaten, raped, or otherwise physically abused
- between 10% and 50% of women report having been physically assaulted by an intimate male partner at some point in their lives (1999).
- These are not isolated events, however: 60% of the women sampled had been repeatedly abused.
- physical violence was often combined with psychological and sexual abuse in 1/3 to over 1/2 of the cases.

SOURCE: Heise, Ellsberg & Goettemoeller, “Ending Violence Against Women.” *Population Reports*, (1999).

Domestic Violence:

The local picture

In Santa Clara County in the year 2000:

- 3076 criminal DV cases were prosecuted. Children were present at the time of the abuse in 749 of these cases (24%).
- 51% of EPROs issued involved children in the home.
(SOURCE: SCC DV Council Annual Data Report, 2001)
- Roughly 50% of homeless women and children had become homeless when fleeing abuse
(Burstein & Woodsmall, 1987).

Domestic Violence: A Definition

“Domestic violence is an ongoing process of physical, emotional and psychological destruction.”

--Peggie Reyna, Board of Directors

Statewide California Coalition for Battered Women

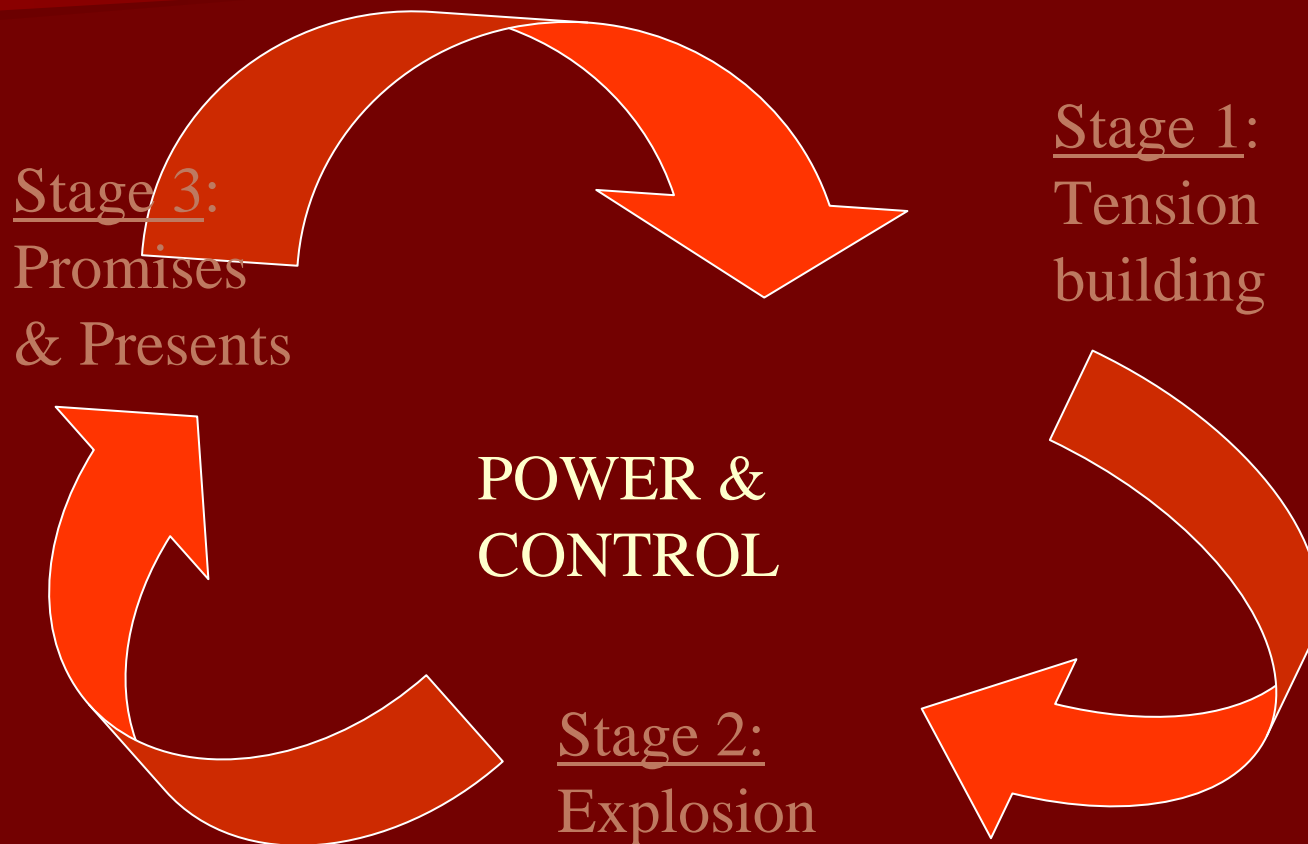
Domestic Violence: Defining the problem

DV is characterized by patterned, repetitive acts of dominance and coercion

- both the act and the intention must be taken into account (Ptacek, 1999).
- physical aggression alone does not necessarily constitute battering, if it occurs only once, and in the absence of psychological abuse or coercive behavior (Ganley, 1989; Hamberger & Barnett, 1995; Bograd & Mederos, 1999).

DV is steeped in historic patriarchal traditions of power and property (Koss, et. al, 1994).

Dynamics of Domestic Violence: The Cycle of Violence



The cycle escalates over time, increasing both the frequency & the severity of the violence

Domestic Violence: Types of Abuse

- physical abuse (pushing, choking, hitting, kicking, burning, etc).
- verbal/emotional abuse (name calling, denigration, humiliation)
- psychological abuse (destruction of property, animal abuse, mind games)
- financial abuse (withholding or squandering household finances, deliberately destroying the partner's credit rating)
- sexual abuse (marital rape, incest, force sex after beatings)
- spiritual abuse (using religious dogma or twisting scripture as justification for the abuse)

Domestic Violence: The Cumulative Effect of Abuse

“Battering is the sum of all past acts of violence, and the promise of future violence, that achieves enhanced power for the batterer.”

--Barbara Hart

Pennsylvania Coalition Against Domestic Violence

Domestic Violence: Abuser's Methods of Choice

- minimizing, denying & blaming
- using children
- exercising gender-based privilege
- isolation
- economic abuse
- intimidation
- verbal abuse
- coercion & threats

Domestic Violence: Persistent Myths

- Battered women must really like it, or they'd just leave
- Battered women always return to their abusers (or always get into another abusive relationship)
- Battered women are bad mothers
- Battered women are helpless and weak
- The abuse ends when she leaves
- Men can't be battered
- It would never happen to me
- Christians can't be abused/abusive

Domestic Violence: Common Misperceptions

- **the belief that domestic violence is caused by:**
 - anger
 - stress
 - alcohol/drugs
 - mental illness
 - unemployment
 - lack of impulse control
- **the belief that domestic violence is more prevalent**
 - among certain races/cultures/ethnic groups
 - in families of lower socio-economic status

Domestic Violence: A major public health problem

Mortality

- **Homicides are the fourth leading cause of death of injury among females of childbearing age**
- **Half of all female homicides are battering-related.**

SOURCE: Dannenberg, et al. "Intentional and Unintentional Injuries in Women: An Overview." *Annals of Epidemiology*, March 1994.

Morbidity

- **Over 1.5 million women seek medical care each year for injuries related to domestic violence.**
- **20% of female patient ER visits for injury are caused by DV.**

SOURCE: Flitcraft, "Physicians and Domestic Violence: Challenges for Prevention." *Health Affairs*, Winter 1993.

Battering During Pregnancy

- **Between 4-8% women seek are battered at least one time during pregnancy.**
- **¼ of pregnant women who were beaten were struck in the abdomen.**
- **Women assaulted during pregnancy are twice as likely to experience preterm labor, miscarriage or birth defects.**

SOURCE: Berenson, et al. "Perinatal Morbidity Associated with Violence Experienced by Pregnant Women." *American Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology*, June 1994, Volume 170, No. 6.