

Domestic Violence: Impact on Families

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Overview

- ◉ DV in our Community
- ◉ Identifying Domestic Violence
- ◉ Impact on Children
- ◉ Investigating
- ◉ Focus on Safety of Victim
- ◉ Community Resources
- ◉ Questions and Discussion

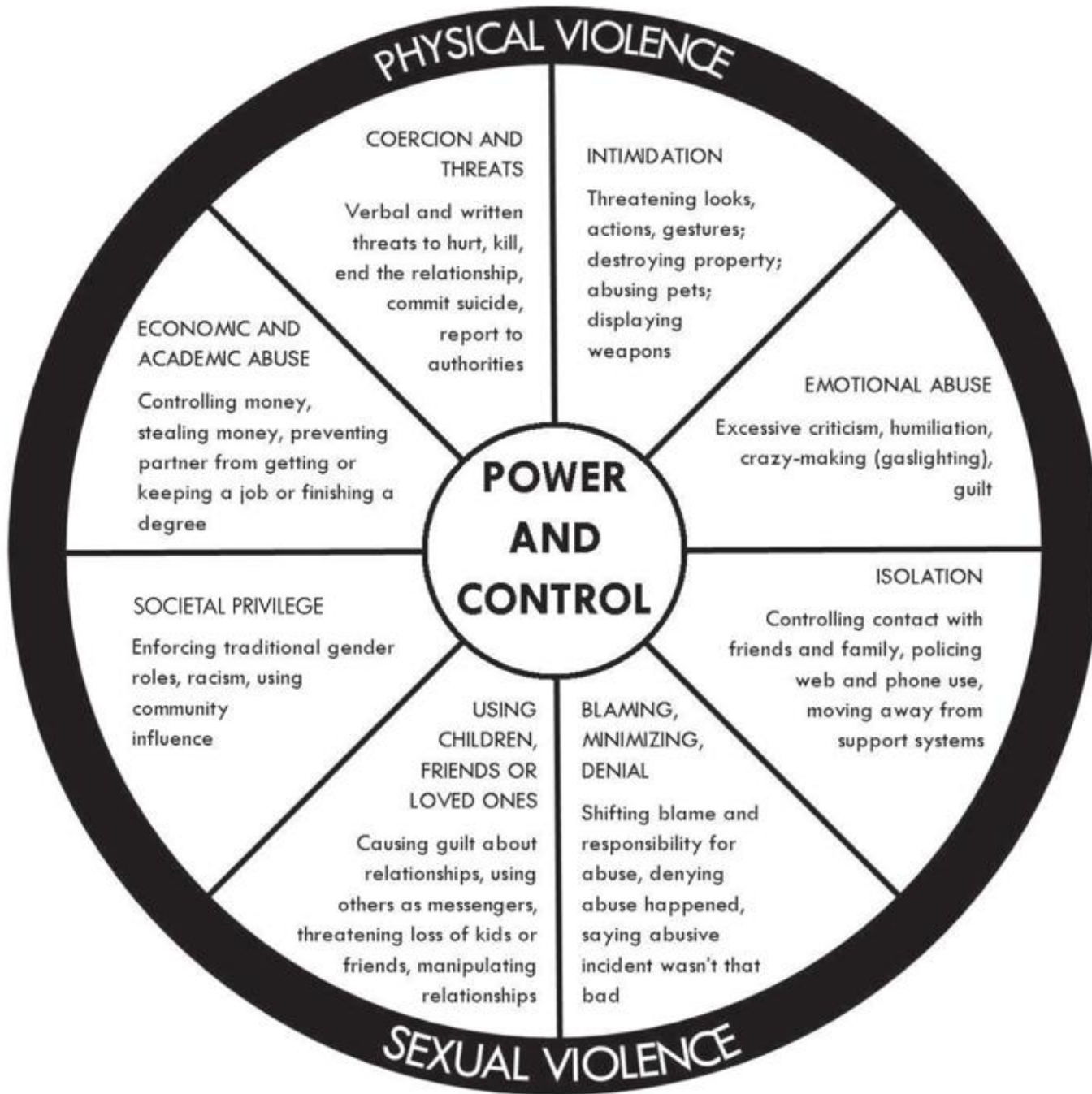
DV in Our Community

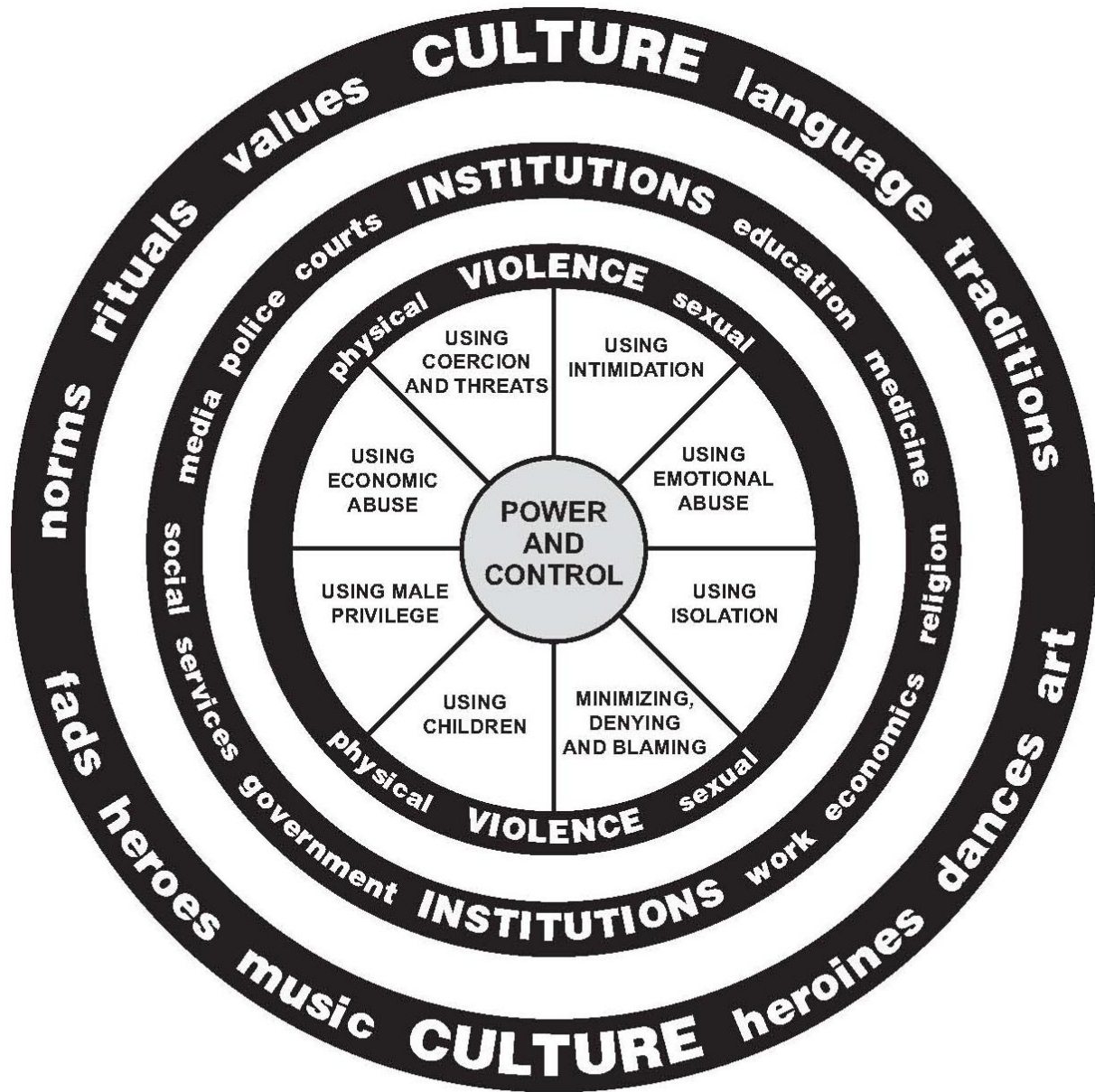
Susan Still Video

- <http://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=Susan+Still+20+20&&view=detail&mid=AF C81DF88CF71F44E1C1AFC81DF88CF71F4 4E1C1&FORM=VRD GAR>

What is Domestic Violence?

- ⦿ **Domestic violence is purposeful behavior.**
- ⦿ **The abuse is directed at achieving compliance from the victim**
- ⦿ **Tactics that work to control the victim are selectively chosen by the abuser.**
- ⦿ **This power and control permeate many aspects of a victim's life.**





Common Myths

- ◉ Drinking and/or drug use causes abuse.
- ◉ Domestic violence only effects the adults in the household.
- ◉ A survivor can just leave.
- ◉ Couples counseling is the solution for DV.
- ◉ Battering is a momentary loss of temper.
- ◉ Abusers are violent in all their relationships.

“Why didn’t she leave?”

“That would never happen to me”
MUST REFRAME.

- Fear
- Love
- Children
- “Succeeding” in your relationship
- Relentless behavior of abuser
- Isolation
- Lack of support
- Pets
- Finances
- Conflicts with religious beliefs
- Disability
- Cultural norms
- Language access
- Immigration status
- Embarrassment

Can abusers manipulate the
judicial system?

DV and custody case on the national level:

Abusers are less likely than non-abusive parents to seek sole custody. *True or false?*

False

When abusers seek specific custody, they are successful more times than not. *True or false?*

True

Children are in less danger from an abuser/parent once the parents separate. *True or false?*

False

Abuser Advantages

- ⦿ Economic resources
- ⦿ Not traumatized so presents better in court or in interviews
- ⦿ Able to manipulate children's statements
- ⦿ Charming and persuasive
 - > "Friendly parent"
- ⦿ Batterers use litigation to harass and control
- ⦿ Present as the victim
 - Use of a new partner as character reference
 - Minimize, deny, blame others for, or excuse inappropriate behavior

Mutual aggression v. DV

- Often admits to milder acts of violence
- Cross allegations of abuse – mutual violence
- Primary or dominant aggressor
 - Who inflicted more harm?
 - Was it a part of a pattern of coercive control?
 - Was the response or reaction to violence?
 - Was it out of fear of other parent?

Common Victim Challenges

- May be extremely anxious and unfocused
- May have difficulty presenting evidence for any number of reasons, such as cognitive impairments resulting from abuse, fear, or a conviction that she or he will not be believed
- Endured years of abuse—unable to provide timeline
- May not appear to be a “real victim”
 - > May be aggressive or angry when being interviewed or testifying

- Courts may misinterpret survivor's protective efforts by labeling the parent:
 - > Uncooperative;
 - > Paranoid;
 - > Prone to fabrication; and/or
 - > Alienating the other parent (PAS).

Court strategies to counter abuser manipulation

- Require abusers to pay for supervised visitation, children's therapy and survivor's legal fees
- Hinder abusers' ability to use frequent court dates for continued abuse.
- GAL Comprehensive Investigation of all circumstances—find out what's really going on.

Impact on Children

- Behavioral problems, aggression, phobias, insomnia, self-esteem issues, depression
- May have poor academic performance and problem-solving skills and low levels of empathy
- Symptoms of PTSD: numbness, avoidance, difficulty concentrating

- Children in homes where domestic violence occurs are physically abused or seriously neglected at a rate 1500% higher than the national average. National Woman Abuse Prevention Project, Washington, D.C.
- Boys who witness family violence are more likely to batter their female partners as adults, and girls who witness their mother's abuse have a higher rate of being battered as adults.

What do children learn?

- Violence solves problems and is justified.
- No consequences to abusers
- Intimidation gets results.
- The victim is at fault.
- Controlling and manipulating others is satisfying.
- DV is normal and/or Love=abuse.
- Stereotypes about women

Best Practices for Investigation

- Detailed History
- Lethality assessment
- Extensive collection of evidence
 - > School records
 - > Law enforcement and medical reports
 - > Witnesses
- Child protective records
- Written and oral communications

- Has there been a history of abuse to children?
 - > Emotional
 - > Physical
 - > Sexual
- Has there been a history of placing children at risk while abusing partner?
- Substance abuse or mental health issues?

- Is there a history of level of control, entitlement, psychological and emotional cruelty to partner?
 - > Refer to the Power and Control Wheel

- ◎ Is the abuser presenting as the victim?
 - > Is the abuser blaming the survivor?
 - > Is abuser still using coercive control?
- ◎ Try to find out abuser's motives for wanting custody. Is it retaliatory, to maintain control, etc.

Parenting issues:

- > How authoritarian is abuser's parenting?
- > How involved is abuser with the parenting?
- > Who has been the primary caretaker?
- > Has the abuser undermined the other parent's authority and/or the relationship with the children?

Look beyond the surface.

Victim leaving = most lethal time

- Hostage taking
- Sexual assault
- Strangulation
- Access to weapons
- Partner Violence during pregnancy
- Risks during exchanges
- Stalking
- Recent unemployment
- Threats to harm/kill self, children, survivor
- Violently jealous
- Separation violence
- Ongoing damage to survivor/child relationship
- Cruelty to children/animals

Resources

- The Victim's Center
 - > 24-hour crisis hotline with advocates to talk on the phone or meet at the hospital or police department.
 - > Free counseling for adults of children
 - > 417-864-7233 (SAFE).
- Harmony House
 - > DV Shelter
 - > 417-837-7700
 - > myharmonyhouse.org.
 - > The shelter is located at 3404 E. Ridgeview St.
- Legal Services of Southern Missouri
 - > **809 North Campbell**
Springfield, MO 65802
 - > **Phone** (417) 881-1397
 - > <http://www.lsosm.org/contact/>

QUESTIONS?

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