

Formerly Family Violence Prevention Fund

KEY STRATEGIES TO FOSTERING SAFETY FOR FAMILIES EXPERIENCING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

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Child Exposure to Domestic Violence What the Research Tells Us

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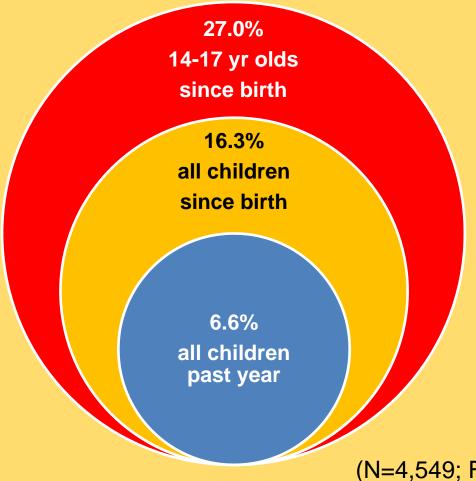
Overview

- 1. What is exposure?
- 2. How many children are exposed?
- 3. What are the impacts of exposure?
- 4. How do we interpret these findings?

Defining DV Exposure



Child exposure



(N=4,549; Finkelhor, et al, 2009)



Why Exposure is Important

- Children are frequently involved in violent events
- Exposure to violence affects child development
- High co-occurrence of child abuse and adult domestic violence

Children are involved (2)

- 36% of the children frequently or very frequently yelled to stop violent conflicts,
- 11.7% frequently or very frequently called someone for help during a violent event,
- 10.8% frequently or very frequently physically intervened to stop the violence.

Edleson et al. (2003)

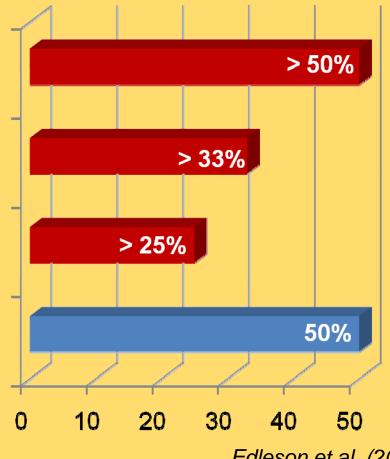
Child are involved (3)



Child accidentally injured

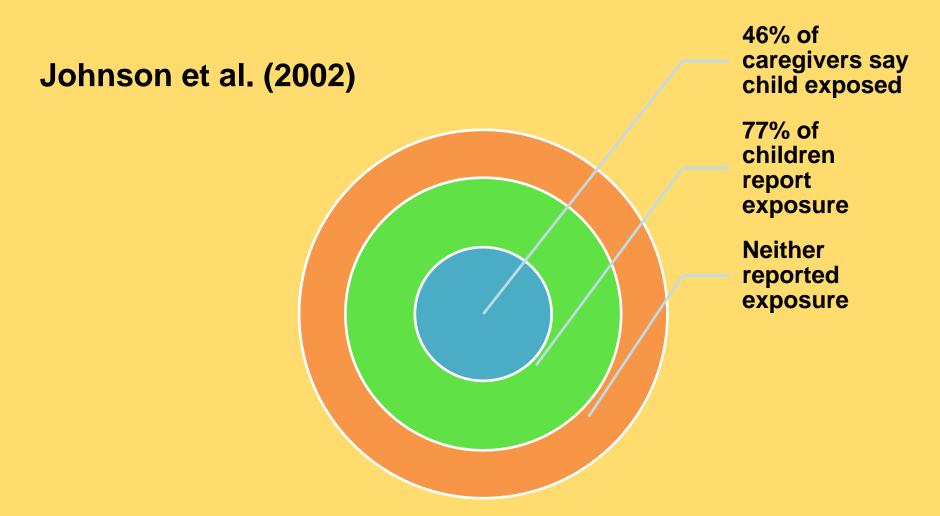
Child intentionally injured

Mother abused stopping child abuse



Edleson et al. (2003)

What children know



"Effects" of Exposure

- Over 100 studies available
- About 1/3 separated abused from witnesses
- Generally show:
 - Behavioral and emotional problems
 - Cognitive functioning problems
 - Longer-term problems

http://www.mincava.umn.edu

Longitudinal studies

- Yates et al. (2003): 155 children over 25 years
 - Preschool exposure linked to externalized problems for boys and internalized problems for girls in adolescence and teen years
- Ehrensaft et al. (2003): 543 children, prospective over 20 years
 - Exposure to DV in childhood was a key predictor of both perpetrating and receiving as adult.
- Whitehead et al. (2003) ACE study: 8,629 adults, retrospective
 - Exposure doubled likelihood of perpetration and victimization as adult
- Paradis et al. (2009): 346 children, prospective over 25 years
 - Family arguments and violence exposure during childhood correlated to poorer health, mental health and occupational achievement at age 30.

Overlap of CAN & DV

- Most studies found 30% to 60% overlap, 41% was median (Edleson, 1999; Appel & Holden, 1998)
- High rates of overlap found in:
 - Child fatality reviews (41% 43%)
 - Abused child studies
 - Battered mother studies
- First national survey: (Hamby et al., 2010)
 - More than 1/3 (33.9%) of exposed had also
 been maltreated in the past year vs. 8.6% of non-exposed
- For lifetime data, more than half (56.8%) of CEDV youth had also been maltreated

Double-Whammy

- Combined contributions of abuse and exposure on child:
 - Hughes et al. (1989) "double-whammy"
 - Other studies confirmed:
 - Felliti (1998); Edwards et al. (2003); Graham-Bermann & Seng (2005)
 - Cunningham (2003)
 - Increased risk of perpetration of abuse as an adult if both child abuse and domestic violence

DV in CPS

- 44.8% lifetime prevalence and 29% past year among 5,504 children in 96 CPS systems (Hazen et al., 2005)
- Co-occurring DV and CM had high cumulative risks; families with highest cumulative risk were 10 times more likely to be placed into foster care (Kohl et al., 2005)
- DV were consistently rated at higher risk (45% vs. 26%), more often opened for service (22.6% vs. 10.4%) and more likely substantiated as "disregard for child safety" (46.4% vs. 24.1%) (Edleson et al., 2001)



Between vs. within group

- On average children exposed show more problems than those not so exposed
- Within the exposed group, many children show no greater problems than comparison children

Variation in families

- Frequency, severity and chronicity of the violence
- Child's exposure to the violence
- Child's own internal capacity
- Protective and risk factors in a child's environment

Take Home Message

- Children's exposure varies
- The impact of exposure varies based on protective and risk factors
- Varied responses are required



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Assessing Risk and Safety

- Approach
- Gathering and Understanding information
- Safety Planning

Approach

- Safe place to talk
- Conversation about what and why you need to talk to her abuser
- Convey concern about her and her children
- Ask her how you can help
- Be a partner in safety

Gathering Information

Dangerousness	Impact on Children
Mothers Help seeking and	Community and Family
Barriers	Support

Dangerousness

- Past history of violence and injury
- Bizarre acts of violence including sexual
- Threats to Kill
- Threats of Suicide
- Mental Illness
- Stalking
- Woman trying to leave or has left the relationship
- Use and access to weapons

Impact on Children/Teens

- 24
- Age of children
- Attachment to caregivers
- Level and frequency of exposure
- Direct physical or sexual abuse
- Behavioral problems
- Threats of abduction
- Cognitive issues
- Running away
- Sibling violence
- Psychological problems

Mother's Helping Seeking? Barriers to Help Seeking

- How has she tried to stop violence?
- Who has she told?
- What has worked in the past?
- What hasn't worked in the past?
- Are there barriers to help seeking?
- How has she tried to help her children?
- What protective measures has she taken?
- What is in the way? Trauma, substance abuse, depression, poverty, other forms of oppression

Community & Family Support

- What has been her families response to her?
- Friends? Community agencies?
- Court? Police? CPS?
- Who is in her support system?
- What have been the consequences of her help seeking? Positive? Negative?

Understanding Risk & Safety

- Each time you try this, you should have a unique picture of the families situation
- It should tell you what you know and what you don't know about
- It should tell you where you need to put your energy for intervention, safety planning and service delivery

Trying it out

Dangerousness •Access to weapons •Threats of homicide •David is unemployed •Previous meth user	Impact on Children •New infant in the home •Diane abruptly stopped breast feeding month 2
Mothers Help seeking and Barriers •Diane has reached out to local family services center but didn't get the help she requested •Diane met with local advocate but was afraid to get a restraining order	Community and Family Support Good relationship with her mother and sister Member of local church group Best friend lives up the street

Trying it out

Dangerousness

- Partner is very controlling and emotionally abusive (name calling)
- Partner controls the money
- Partner is jealous
- •Lucia discloses that her partner pushed her against the wall and spit on her

Impact on Children

- •Ages, 3, 8 and 12
- •Current partner is father of 3 year old only
- •Oldest child saw the partner push mother and threw something at him to divert him
- •Children are connected to mother
- •3 year is attached to father but not the other two
- •Middle child is having a hard time in school with behavior problems, has been getting in fights with peers

Mothers Help seeking and Barriers

- •Lucia hasn't reached out for professional help but has told her friends and family
- She says she can handle it
- •Lucia seems depressed

Community and Family Support

- •Family lives in another state
- •Friends don't like her current partner
- •Stay at home mom of three children, doesn't have her own transportation

Safety Planning

- Fluid process done in full partnership with women
- Should not be documented like a service plan
- Think outside of the box and base rationale for ideas on what you learned from the assessment
- Should look different for every woman and child
- Older children can benefit from safety planning as well (age appropriate)

Free Resources

- These resources are available for download or order at the Futures Without Violence website: www.futureswithoutviolence.org
- Steps Toward Safety: Improving Systems and Community Based Responses to Domestic Violence
- Realizing the Promise of Home Visitation: Addressing Domestic Violence and Child Maltreatment
- Breaking the Cycle: Fathering After Violence
- Child and Family Service Review Outcomes: Strategies to Improve Domestic Violence Responses in CFSR Program Improvement Plans
- Team Decision Making and Domestic Violence: Trainer's Guide and Guidelines for Facilitators
- Bringing the Greenbook to Life: A Resource Guide for Communities
- Building Capacity in Child Welfare Systems: DV Specialized Positions
- Advocacy Beyond Leaving: Helping Battered Women in Contact with Current or Former Partners
- Reproductive Health Safety Card, Pregnancy Wheel, and Posters
- Advocacy Matters: Helping Mothers and Their Children Involved with the Child Protection System
- Confidentiality and Information Sharing Issues
- Family Team Conferences in Domestic Violence cases: Guidelines for Practice
- Connect: Helping Caregivers Talk to Kids About Violence Against Women
- Accountability and Connection with Abusive Men: A New Child Protection Response to Increasing Family Safety
- Supervised Visitation: Information for Mothers Who Have Been Abused
- Fathering After Violence: Working with Abusive Fathers in Supervised Visitation
- Beyond Observation: Considerations for Advancing Domestic Violence Practice In Supervised Visitation

Resources

- The Greenbook Initiative: www.thegreenbook.info
- Futures Without Violence, formerly Family Violence Prevention
 Fund: www.futureswithoutviolence.org
- Child Welfare League of America: www.cwla.org
- Praxis International: www.praxisinternational.org
- MINCAVA Electronic Clearinghouse: <u>www.mincava.umn.edu</u>
- Special site on Child Witnessing: www.mincava.umn.edu/link
- USDOJ VAWO site: <u>www.usdoj.gov/ovw</u>
- VAWnet Online Library: www.vawnet.org
- Susan Schechter Fellowship: www.schechterfellowship.org
- Sharwline Nicholson's website: www.balancingtheharms.com

More Resources

- National Latino Alliance for the Elimination of Domestic Violence: www.dvalianza.org
- Asian and Pacific Islander Institute on Domestic Violence:
 www.apiahf.org
- Institute on Domestic Violence in the African-American Community:
 www.dvinstitute.org
- National Network to End Violence Against Immigrant Women:
 <u>www.immigrantwomennetwork.org</u>
- Women of Color Network: www.womenofcolornetwork.org