

DV 101:
Understanding Domestic
Violence

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The Ripple Effect



Domestic Violence: *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



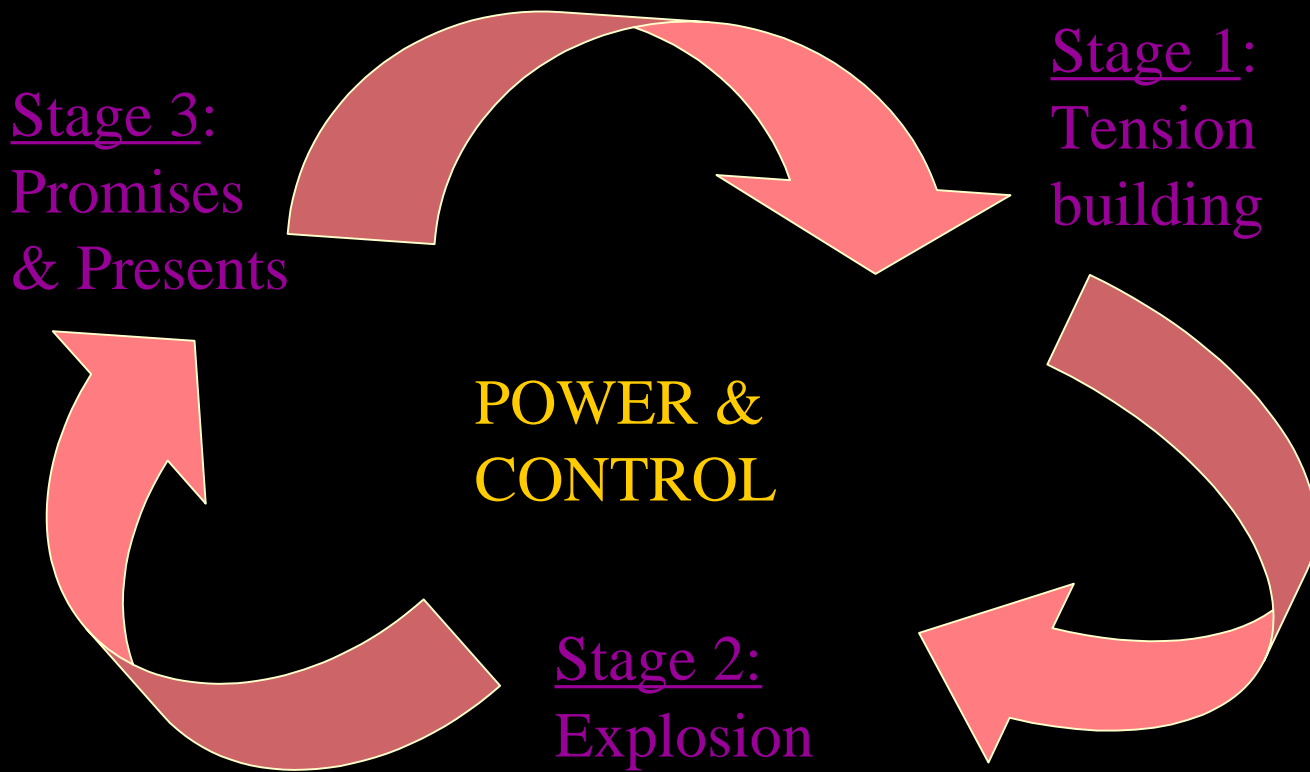
Domestic Violence: *Defining the problem*

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 the victim's religious beliefs 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
- In the gay/lesbian community:
 - they're just two boys fighting
 - it's just a cat fight (between women)



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