



# Understanding Domestic Violence

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# Objectives:

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- ▶ Explore beliefs, feelings, and judgments about common myths and facts pertaining to domestic violence.
- ▶ Understand the prevalence of domestic violence.
- ▶ Recognize abusive behavior.
- ▶ Recognize a survivor's risk analysis.
- ▶ Understand the importance of maintaining confidentiality.
- ▶ Understand the importance of community education, awareness and prevention activities.

# Myths and Facts About Domestic Violence

- ❁ **He's out of control** Batterer is actually in control. He decides who, when, where, parts of the body, severity, and length of the battery. It may go on for hours. He may remove his jewelry. He also may tell her he is “going to do something” and when.
- ❁ **Poor control of anger** Many batterers are not angry. They may create the anger and become angry if the victim does not respond the way he wants or expects. No behavior on her part will change his decision to hurt her.
- ❁ **Stress** He chooses to deal with stress violently. This is considered culturally approved behavior. He believes he has a right to control and get his way.
- ❁ **Poor communication skills** Batterers are excellent communicators. They demand that their needs be met before all others. For their safety, battered women learn to read even subtle, non-verbal communications well. This myth is grounded in the belief that the abuser wouldn't abuse if his needs were met – a form of victim blaming. However even when she meets his needs, he continues to abuse her.
- ❁ **He has a history of abuse from his childhood** True, many batterers were abused as children. Many men who were abused grow up and choose not to abuse. Men who batter are more likely to have witnessed their mother being abused as opposed to having actually been physically abused themselves, though both are big risk factors.
- ❁ **The battering is provoked or is enjoyed by victim** Battering and other accompanying abuses are degrading and humiliating; no behavior on part of the victim ever justifies battering; no behavior on victims part can change his decision to batter.
- ❁ **He has low self-esteem** Batters do not differ from non-battering men in their level of self-esteem. The difference is in the batterer's belief system about women and children.
- ❁ **Substance Abuse** Getting him sober and “working a program” does not stop the abuse or violence. He may use “recovering addict or alcoholic” as a way not to take responsibility for his behavior. It is another way for him to not be accountable for his behavior. Why are his targets always women? Getting sober is a first step in dealing with the underlying issues of power and control; he cannot enter a batterer intervention program until he is sober.

# Domestic Violence is Pervasive

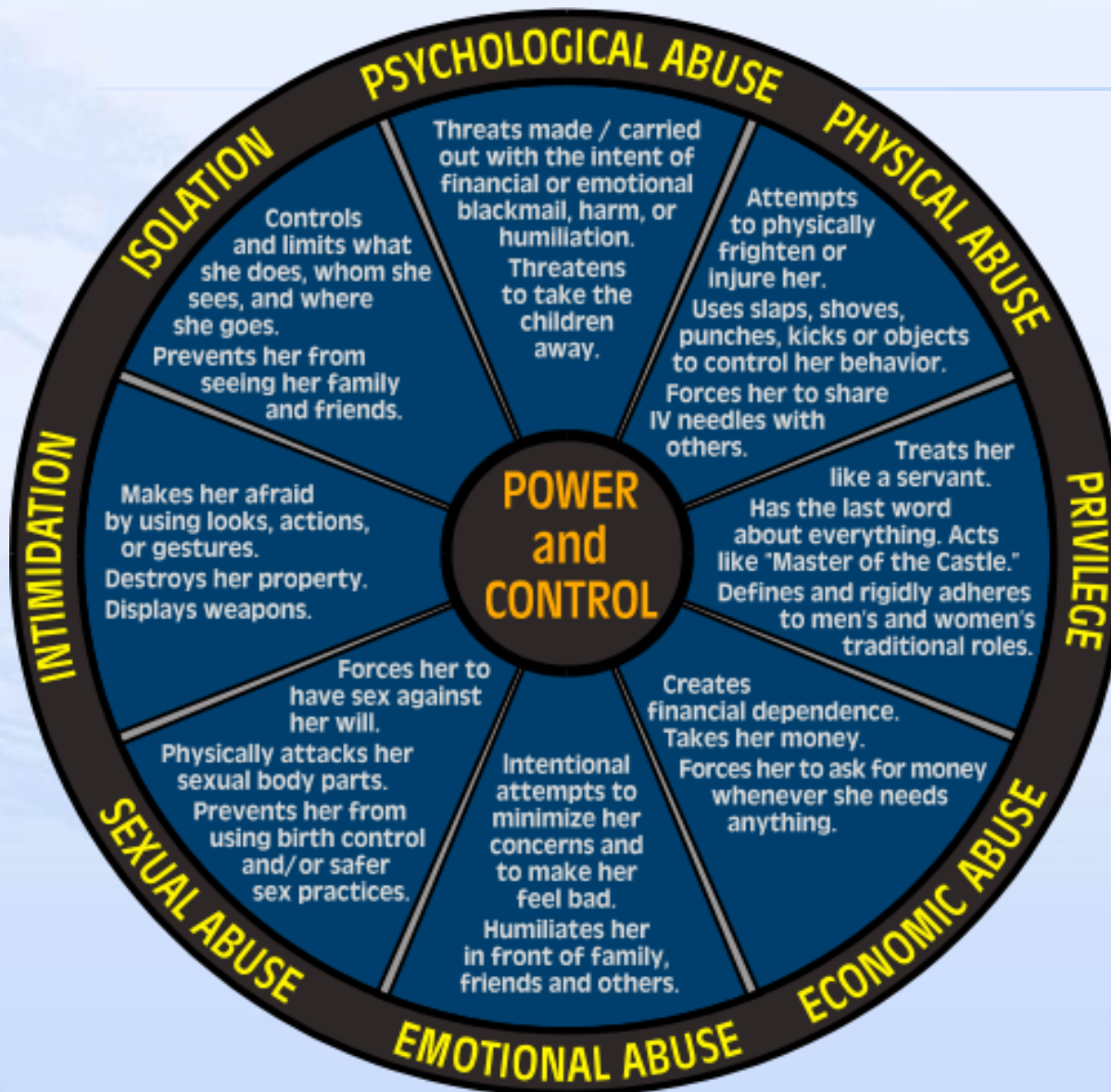
- Nationally, One in four women will be victimized
  - 1 in three among AI/AN Women
- 1.3 million women annually
- Women of all socioeconomic classes, races, ethnicities, geographic locations...
- Over the past decade, federal government studies have consistently shown that American Indian and Alaska Native women experience much higher levels of sexual violence than other women in the US.
- USDOJ data indicates that AI/AN women are more than 2.5 times likely to be raped or sexually assaulted.
- USDOJ reports concluded that 34.1 per cent of AI/AN women -- or more than one in three -- will be raped during their lifetime.

# Domestic Violence is a Pattern

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- ✿ Domestic Violence is an escalating pattern of behavior that is designed to intimidate and control an intimate partner.
- ✿ Physical violence is just one of the tactics used to enforce control.

# Power and Control



# Strategies of Abuse

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- **Emotional Abuse**
- **Economic Abuse**
- **Coercion and Threats**
- **Intimidation**
- **Psychological**
- **Isolation**
- **Use of Children**
- **Sexual Abuse**
- **Physical Abuse**
- **Privilege**

# Isolation

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- Keeping her from seeing family and friends
- Obsessive jealousy
- Moving her away from family
- Disabling the car and phone
- Going everywhere with her
- Not letting her answer the door or talk to anyone



# Intimidation

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- Throwing and smashing things
- Destroying things she cares about
- Displaying weapons
- Abusing animals in front of her and the children
- Threatening to hurt family members

# Use of Children

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- ✿ Committing violence in front of the children
- ✿ Telling children their mother is crazy and to blame for the violence
- ✿ Threatening to sue for custody if she leaves
- ✿ Abducting children
- ✿ Using children to send messages or threats
- ✿ Interrogating children about mothers daily life
- ✿ Killing children

# Economic Abuse

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- Preventing her from getting a job
- Making her account for all expenditures
- Taking all of her money
- Ruining her credit
- Not paying rent or other bills

# Physical Abuse

- Punching, kicking, throwing
- Burning with cigarettes
- Intentionally breaking bones
- Head butts
- Choking
- Forced overdose of medications or chemicals
- Shooting, stabbing – use of weapons/ objects

# Effects of Domestic Violence

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- **Lowered self esteem**
- **Isolation**
- **Chronic health problems**
- **Stress and trauma**
- **Fear of being stigmatized**
- **Shame**
- **Anger**
- **Self-blame**
- **Fear for safety**
- **Hypervigilance**

# Victims of Domestic Violence

## Come from Every:

- Age Group
- Religion
- Ethnic/racial group
- Socioeconomic status
- Educational background
- Sexual orientation



There is no typical victim

# Diverse Populations

- Prevalence among same-sex couples varies by gender of the couple and the perpetrator gender
- Persons with disabilities are at high risk for domestic violence
- Victims who face other barriers face additional challenges



# Barriers to Leaving

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- Fear
- Perpetrator behavior – current and past
- Overwhelmed by acute situation
- Lack of safe options
- Feelings of failure
- Promises of change, ambivalence, love



# Additional Barriers to Leaving

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- Health issues – victim and children
- Economic constraints (job, home, daycare)
- Concern for partner's welfare
- Family / community support and relationships
- Cultural and religious pressures

# Fear can be overwhelming

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- Afraid of losing the children
- Afraid he will kill her
- Afraid he will kill himself
- Afraid he will kill the children

# WHY DON'T THEY LEAVE?

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It is widely believed that abused women don't want help and won't take it when it is offered. **That is NOT true!**

As abuse toward a woman and her children gets worse, she will ask for more and more help. Women seek help, on average, from seven different sources at least three times – twenty-one requests! Often the helper they turn to are unable to provide the support necessary to enable women to leave.

Promises

Fear

Hope

Guilt



Children

Love

Isolation

Religion



# Battered Woman's Risk Analysis

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- \* Brainstorm risks of staying in an abusive relationship

## STAY

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.
- 11.
- 12.
- 13.
- 14.
- 15.
- 16.
- 17.
- 18.
- 19.
- 20.

## LEAVE

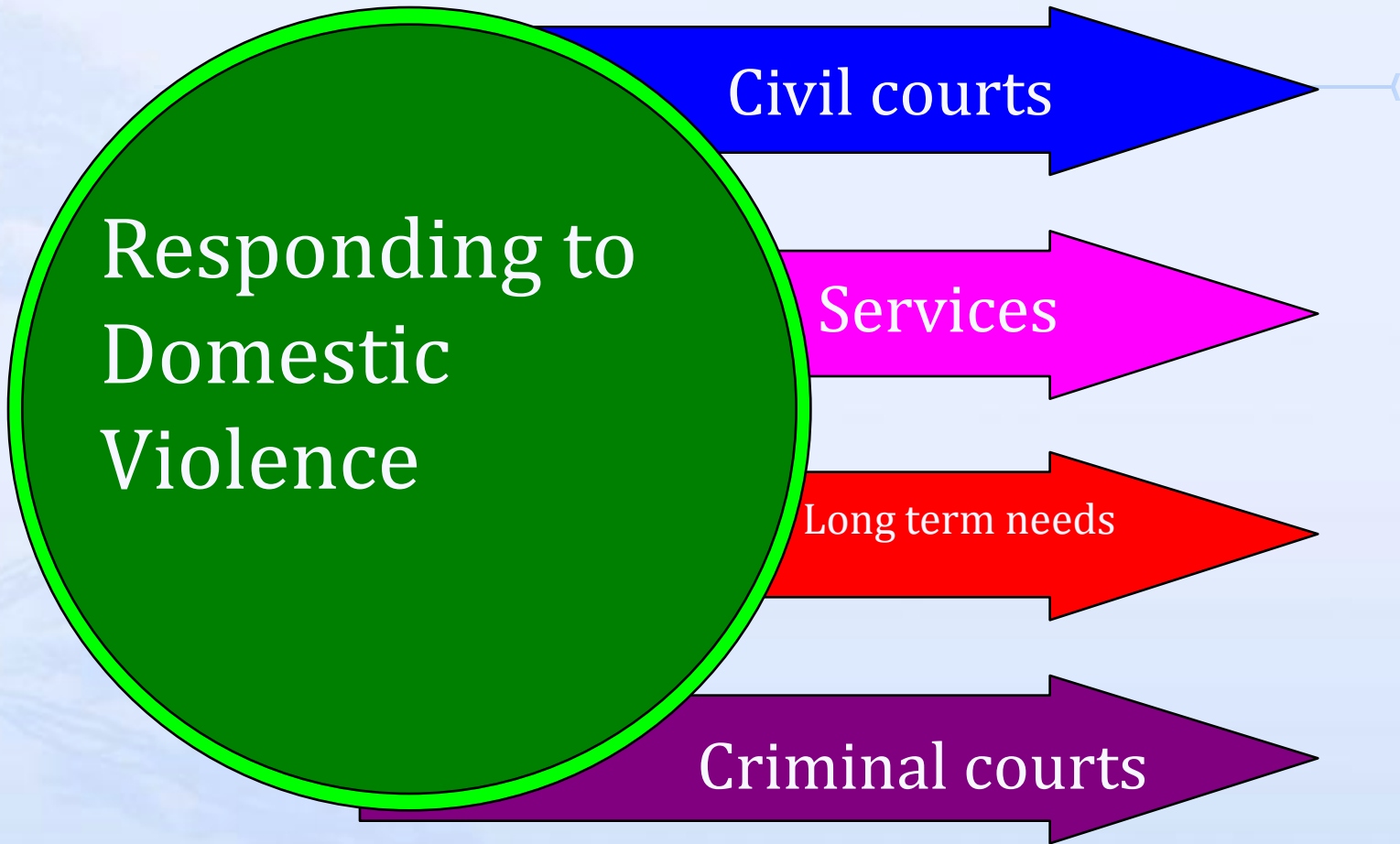
## STAY

1. Injury
2. Lose Children
3. Home
4. Family
5. Friends
6. Job
7. Poor
8. Fear
9. Shame
10. Loss of Self
11. Mental Health
12. Die

## LEAVE

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SAFETY PLANNING





# Elements of Response

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- ✿ Civil courts provide immediate remedies and enhance safety
- ✿ Family Violence shelters and programs help meet immediate needs for safety, crisis intervention
- ✿ Criminal justice system hold perpetrators accountable
- ✿ Communities develop long term resources to help battered women rebuild their lives- housing, health care, child care, economic opportunity

# Economic Stability

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- ✿ There can't be safety without economic stability
- ✿ Food, housing, income, childcare and other tangible supports are keys to safety
- ✿ Only when the basics are taken care of can women plan for the future

# Economic Barriers

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- Poor credit history
- Lack of affordable housing
- Costs of quality childcare
- Transportation
- Legal and other costs related to the abuse

# Economic Barriers for Affluent Women

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- Diminished standard of living
- Abuser moving and hiding assets
- Using assets as a form of control
- Continuing abuse through the courts
- Pursuing and getting sole custody of children

# Rebuilding

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- ✿ Emergency assistance
- ✿ Transitional housing
- ✿ Permanent housing
- ✿ Job training and education
- ✿ Supportive employers
- ✿ Quality legal representation for dissolution and custody
- ✿ Ongoing safety needs

# Safety Planning

## \* *What is safety?*

- \* *Safety is not simply having a place to go where the batterer cannot find her, although that may be part of a larger safety plan. In reality, safety involves many things that most of us take for granted. Examples:*
  - ★ Having a place to live (long term)
  - ★ Having enough food
  - ★ Having enough money to maintain housing, healthcare, food and transportation
  - ★ Being free of scrutiny (being watched in the course of daily life)
  - ★ Having the right to establish a routine – going to the same grocery store every week or taking a walk on your lunch hour
  - ★ Living without fear
  - ★ Sharing hopes, concerns, and pleasure with friends and family
  - ★ Sleeping soundly

# Levels of Safety Planning

- ✿ Safety during a violent incident
  - \* *Where can you go to be safe in your home? Whom can you call? If there anyone who could call the police for you? If you have to leave your home, where could you get to quickly? Where could you hide a set of car keys? Do you have the phone number of the DV advocate?*
- ✿ Safety when preparing to leave: What kinds of things can you do ahead of time to ease the transition?
  - \* *Where can you store important items? Open a bank account? Apply for housing? Get a post office box? Attend a support group? Get a prepaid phone card?*
- ✿ Safety in separate residence: What things will make my new home as secure as possible?
  - \* *Quality locks and doors? Smoke detectors? Good outside lighting? Making a plan with neighbors to call police? Unlisted phone number? Getting a third party to help exchange the kids for visitation*

# Interventions that Work

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- Nonjudgmental support
- Confidentiality
- Practical assistance
- Safety planning
- Shelter and related services
- Protective orders
- Perpetrator arrest and consequences
- Economic assistance

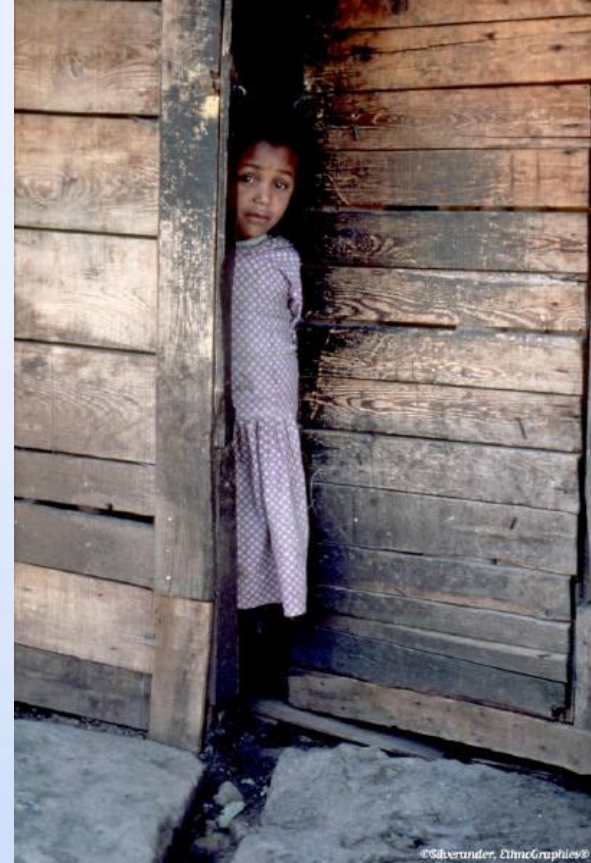


# Interventions that Don't Work

- Couples counseling
- Coercive treatment of the victim
- Mediation
- Traditional psychotherapy
- Pastoral counseling by an untrained clergy
- Breaking her confidentiality

# Children are the silent victims !

- Witnessing the two most important people in their life hurting and being hurt damages the core of the child's emotional being.



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