

# Social work home visits

## A case study in domestic violence



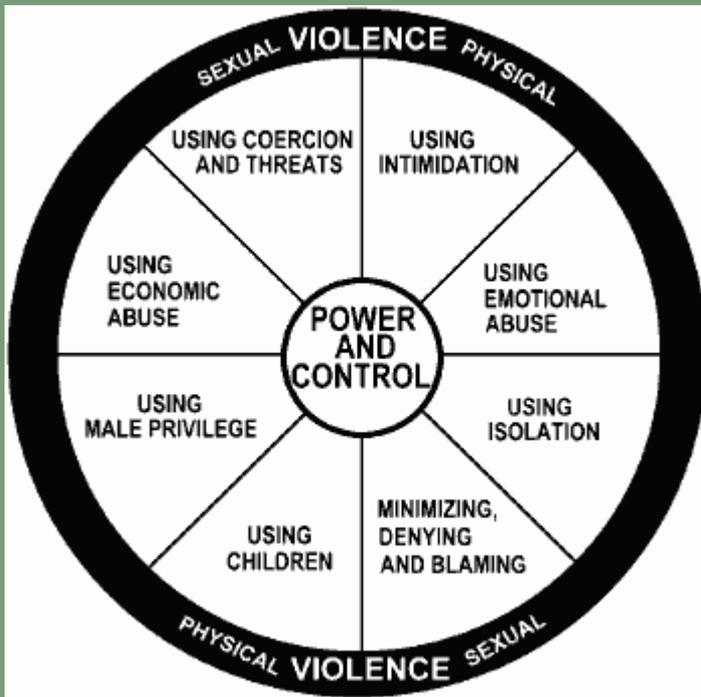
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Case Study  
from January 2011- May 2011



# Power and control

## intimate partner violence: the dynamics



### Definition:

**Domestic violence** - willful intimidation, assault, battery, other abusive behavior perpetrated by one family member against another household member or intimate partner against another.

National Center for Victims of Crime  
[Domestic Violence and the Law.](#)

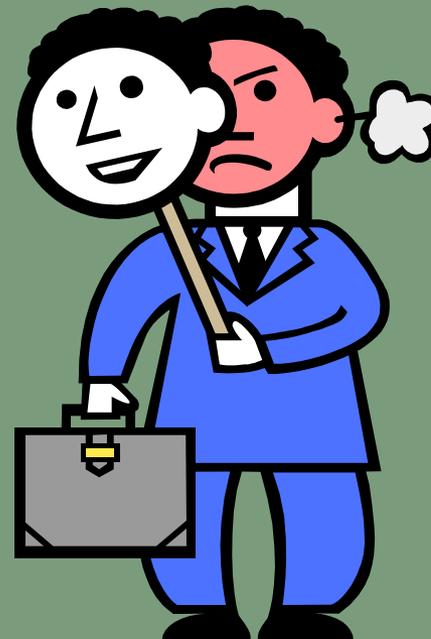
# How the abuser controls

## The abuser :

- ❑ Dominates the victim/survivor
- ❑ Tries to have all the power in the relationship
- ❑ Tries to control the finances
- ❑ Uses threat of violence or violence to establish and maintain authority and power.
- ❑ Is usually not sick or deranged, but has learned abusive, manipulative techniques and behaviors
- ❑ May cause the victim to feel worthless, ugly, stupid and crazy does not allow for a survivor's healthy self-perception.
- ❑ May try to isolate victim/survivor from family and friends.

**National Center for Victims of Crime**

[Domestic Violence and the Law](#)



# Domestic Violence

## the current reality in America

- ❑ **4 women a day are killed** by their husbands or boyfriends and women experience two million injuries from intimate partner violence each year.
- ❑ **3 children die** each day as a result of abuse
- ❑ **One in every four women** will experience domestic violence in her lifetime.
- ❑ **Domestic violence is the leading cause of injury** to women i
- ❑ **95%** of the victims of domestic violence are women.
- ❑ **A woman is beaten every 15 seconds**
- ❑ **35%** of all emergency room calls are a result of domestic violence.
- ❑ **Over 65%** of abusers also physically abuse the children.

(Report to the nation on Crime and Justice. Washington DC Office of Justice Program, US Dept. of Justice. Oct 2003)



# Domestic Violence

## The current reality in America

- ❑ **15.5 million** children (41 million total kids; almost half of all children) live in families in which domestic violence occurred at least once in the past year.
- ❑ **Seven million** children live in families where severe partner violence has occurred.
- ❑ **Two thirds** of nonfatal partner violence towards women occurs at home.
- ❑ Children are residents of homes in **43% percent** of cases of domestic violence against women
- ❑ In a single day in 2007, **13,485 children** were living in a domestic violence shelter.
- ❑ **Another 5,526** sought services at a non-residential program
- ❑ The UN Secretary-General's Study on Violence Against Children conservatively estimates that **275 million children worldwide are exposed to violence in the home.**

(Family Violence prevention fund,2006)

[www.endabuse.org](http://www.endabuse.org)



# Dr. Wagner at Shands Sleep Lab alerted the social worker (me) to this case

Dr. Wagner had noticed that this 5 year old boy:

- Had lost 6 pounds in the last couple of months
- Was not sleeping well
- Had restlessness in his legs
- Bullying at school and hectic home life was thought to be the problem



# What the social worker discovered

## Problems at home

- ❑ crowded home (8 people total)
- ❑ Mom had depression, exhaustion and chronic pain
- ❑ Mom working nights
- ❑ Problems between mom and sister-in-law re: parenting
- ❑ DCF had determined physical abuse by Dad
- ❑ Mom had to quit job
- ❑ The youngest boy having violent behavior in school
- ❑ 3 kids were having problems with sister-in-law
- ❑ Stress from harassment from soon to be ex-husband.
- ❑ The children's teachers and were compounding the behavior problems



# What the social worker Discovered

## The Strengths

- Free housing for mom and kids
- Mom got her own car
- Childcare and transportation
- Mom was diligent in children's healthcare
- Offered moral support and safety
- moving forward with divorce and custody proceedings.
- Mom and sister-in-law were cooperative
- All 5 children were delightful
- Mom clearly understood her need to protect the children
- Mom realized that children needed to be in a new school
- Mom was actively searching for a day job
- Mom communicated in an age appropriate manner with kids



# During the home visits

## What the family and social worker did together

- Lethality and danger assessments with mom
- Gave mom info for legal advocacy for divorce
- Outlined a safety plan and went over power wheel with mom
- Weekly art and movement therapy with all three boys
- Gave mom phone numbers for abuse hotlines and domestic violence shelter
- Gave mom contact info for Camelot Community Care
- Weekly one on one counseling with the mom
- The Camelot counselor diagnosed all three children with PTSD
- Called the guidance counselor and principle at the new school and the old one
- Interviewed Sister-in-law three times.



# Art therapy

Built rapport with the children

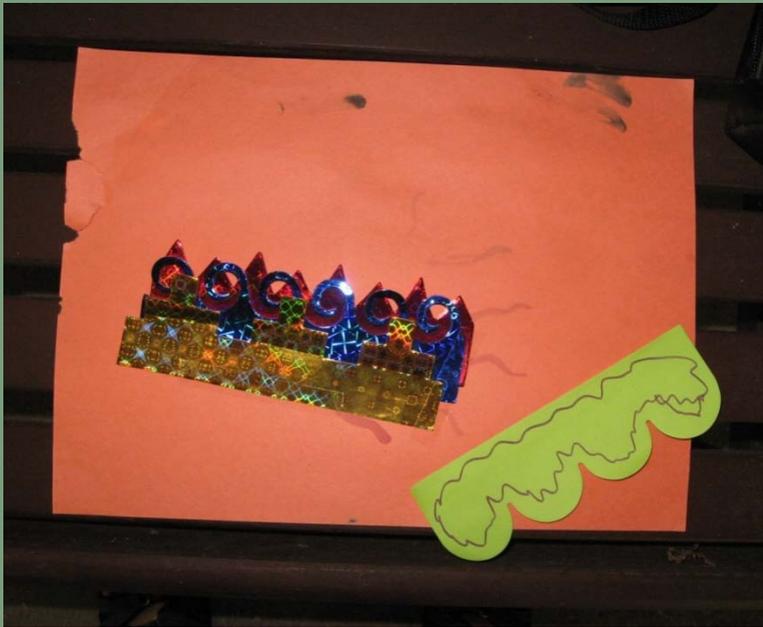
They would share things on their own accord

We had the opportunity to build a therapeutic relationship



# Art project

Here the idea was to express feelings in the art and then discuss the feelings



# Art project

## Anger rules book



1. I will not hurt others
2. I will not hurt myself
3. I will not hurt or destroy property
4. I will talk about it



# Art project

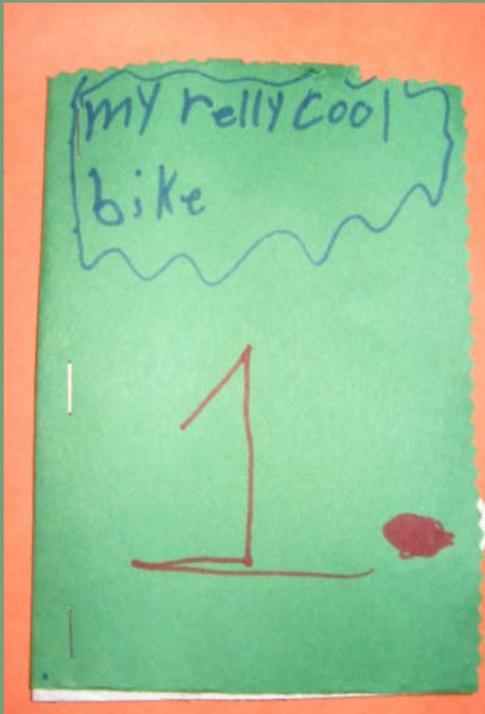
## Glitter Globes for Anger Management

We would shake the globe and then watch the glitter settle while allowing angry feelings to settle



# Art projects

## Gratitude book



The boys decorated  
gratitude books



# Art project

They painted pictures of the best thing that happened all week



# Movement

## for anger management

In this exercise the children roared like a lion and then relaxed after like a lamb.



# Movement

## for anger management

Gentle punching  
exercises



# Another project

the boys took pictures with disposable cameras



# Pictures the boys took



# Pictures the boys took



# Towards the end of my time with this family

- ❑ The boys were ***much*** happier in their new school
- ❑ Mom and the boys had more coping tools, communication skills, and supports in place
- ❑ Behavior problems at school and home had significantly decreased
- ❑ The 8 family members were getting along better



# The effects of domestic violence on children

- ❑ Children who have been exposed to family violence suffer symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder, such as bed-wetting or nightmares, and are at greater risk than their peers of having allergies, asthma, gastrointestinal problems, headaches and flu.
- ❑ Children who experience childhood trauma, including witnessing violence, are at a greater risk of having serious adult health problems including smoking, substance abuse, obesity, cancer, heart disease, depression and a higher risk for unintended pregnancy.
- ❑ Physical abuse during childhood increases the risk of future victimization among women and the risk of future perpetration of abuse by men more than two-fold.

Family Violence Prevention Fund [www.endabuse.org](http://www.endabuse.org)



# What helps children exposed to violence

- ❑ **Psychotherapy** can increase the quality of parenting and increase positive outcomes for children.
- ❑ **Home visitation** programs have been used for some 30 years to improve maternal and child health and family safety
- ❑ Research has shown that the non-abusing parent is often the strongest protective factor in the lives of children
- ❑ Many abusive men are motivated to stop using violence if they understand the devastating effects on their children.
- ❑ When properly identified and addressed, the effects of domestic violence on children can be mitigated.
- ❑ A safe, stable and nurturing relationship with a caring adult

(Family Violence prevention fund, 2006)

[Realizing the Promise of Home Visitation: Addressing Domestic Violence and Child Maltreatment](#)



# Hope for change

President Obama signed legislation to prevent child abuse & fund Domestic violence services December 20, 2010

- ❑ The *Family Violence Prevention and Services Act (FVPSA)* funds domestic violence shelters and services that provide lifesaving help to women and children. It also supports domestic violence prevention programs and includes new language to help children exposed to violence
- ❑ The *Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA)* is the nation's preeminent program for preventing child abuse. It will improve services to victims of child abuse, and support programs so they can do more to help families that are experiencing both domestic violence and child maltreatment.

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/blog/2010/12/20/president-obama-signs-critical-legislation-prevent-child-abuse-and-domestic-violence>



# Local Support for Domestic Violence



## ☐ Peaceful Paths

<http://www.peacefulpaths.org/>

800-3937233

Shelter

Hotline

Counseling

Therapy groups

Children's programs

## ☐ The Source Program

352-273-0805

Legal assistance

Hotline

Counseling

Medical attention



# References

- ❑ Family Violence Prevention Fund, 2008

[www.endabuse.org](http://www.endabuse.org)

- ❑ Realizing the promise of home visitations- A guide for policy makers 2011.

[http://endabuse.org/userfiles/file/Children\\_and\\_Families/Realizing%20the%20Promise%20of%20Home%20Visitation%202-10.pdf](http://endabuse.org/userfiles/file/Children_and_Families/Realizing%20the%20Promise%20of%20Home%20Visitation%202-10.pdf)

- ❑ Report to the nation on Crime and Justice. US Dept. of Justice. Oct 2003.

[http://www.domesticpeace.com/ed\\_national\\_stats.html](http://www.domesticpeace.com/ed_national_stats.html)

- ❑ The White House Council on Women and Girls, Dec. 2010

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/blog/2010/12/20/president-obama-signs-critical-legislation-prevent-child-abuse-and-domestic-violence>

