Interpersonal Violence; Risk Assessment and Meaningful Safety Planning:
David Obergfell, MAFP, MSW, LCSW, BCD, DAAETS, CA, CDMHRS, CCM

(Who am I?:
LCSW, Masters in Forensic Psychology, Board Certified Diplomate American Board of Examiners in Clinical Social Work, Diplomate American Academy of Experts in Traumatic Stress, National Organization for Victim Assistance (NOVA) Credentialed Advocate... Blah Blah Blah , Experience: County Victim Witness Leadership, Rape Crisis Center Coordinator, DV/IPV and Sexual Violence Advocate, Crisis Therapist working with victims of crime and suicide prevention, Forensic Social Work in State Hospital, Offender Treatment Program development and implementation, and Family Advocacy Officer, you know stuff or work or something)
Most important.....

- I am someone who works, and hopes, wants, and am willing to work and join with others to make things better!

Oh and....Disclaimer:
- The views and opinions expressed by in this presentation are those of the presenter and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of any agency of the U.S. government or Tribal Government
What do we “think” about violence...please rate

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Situations of Violence</th>
<th>Your Rating</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. An 18 year old boy assaults an older woman, ties her to a chair and gags her.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. A husband threatens to hit his wife if she refuses sexual contact.</td>
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<td>3. A man verbally abuses his wife every day, calling her names like stupid pig and bitch.</td>
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<td>4. A husband kicks his six-months pregnant wife in the belly.</td>
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<td>5. A father kicks his whining dog and beats his two children seriously.</td>
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<td>6. A man holds his wife over the stairs and threatens to push her down.</td>
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<td>7. A man throws acid in his wife's face after he has found out she has slept with another man.</td>
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<td>8. A man hits his wife in the face with his fists because he doesn't like the food she has cooked.</td>
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<td>9. A man locks his wife in a closet during the day because she looks at other men too often.</td>
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<tr>
<td>10. A young boy calls a girl his age “bitch/cow” and pushes her out of the way.</td>
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<tr>
<td>11. Five young men have violent sex with a prostitute.</td>
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</table>
Any violence represents a risk for more violence

• Gravities:
  • Violent - but incidental/not severe/not punishable
  • Violent – possibly punishable
  • Violent – very severe/punishable

• Thoughts on punishment vs. re-education or treatment?
Victimology

• Victimology
  Key take away: History of traumatic events/violence creates potential vulnerability and heightened risk for future victimization

• Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES) Study
  • https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/acestudy/index.html
ACES

Mechanism by Which Adverse Childhood Experiences Influence Health and Well-being Throughout the Lifespan
Childhood Trauma is Common

The Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) Study

- 18,000 middle class, middle aged members of an HMO
  - 11% emotionally abused
  - 28% physically abused
  - 24% sexually abused
  - 27% grew up in households with alcohol and/or drug abuse
  - 19% grew up with a mentally ill or institutionalized member
  - 13% grew up in households with a battered mother

- 52% had experienced more than one ACE
- 12% had experienced four or more ACEs

CDC study called the Adverse Childhood Experiences Study [http://www.acestudy.org/]
Risk Factors for Perpetration (Lots)

- **Individual Risk Factors**
- Alcohol and drug use
- Delinquency
- Empathic deficits
- General aggressiveness and acceptance of violence
- Early sexual initiation
- Coercive sexual fantasies
- Preference for impersonal sex and sexual-risk taking
- Exposure to sexually explicit media
- Hostility towards women
- Adherence to traditional gender role norms
- Hyper-masculinity
- Suicidal behavior
- Prior sexual victimization or perpetration
Risk Factors

- **Relationship Factors**
  - Family environment characterized by physical violence and conflict
  - Childhood history of physical, sexual, or emotional abuse
  - Emotionally unsupportive family environment
  - Poor parent-child relationships, particularly with fathers
  - Association with sexually aggressive, hypermasculine, and delinquent peers
  - Involvement in a violent or abusive intimate relationship
Risk Factors

- **Community Factors**
  - Poverty
  - Lack of employment opportunities
  - Lack of institutional support from police and judicial system
  - General tolerance of sexual violence within the community
  - Weak community sanctions against sexual violence perpetrators
- **Societal Factors**
  - Societal norms that support sexual violence
  - Societal norms that support male superiority and sexual entitlement
  - Societal norms that maintain women’s inferiority and sexual submissiveness
  - Weak laws and policies related to sexual violence and gender equity
  - High levels of crime and other forms of violence
Protective Factors

• Protective factors may lessen the likelihood of sexual violence victimization or perpetration by buffering against risk. These factors can exist at individual, relational, community, and societal levels. Research in this area is ongoing. The few protective factors identified by researchers to date are listed below.

• Parental use of reasoning to resolve family conflict
• Emotional health and connectedness
• Academic achievement
• Empathy and concern for how one’s actions affect others
Abuse Dichotomy

• Internal conflict (victim)

• Enables violence to continue and progress as victim sees self as responsible, not blaming offender.

• Ex: Child ‘My mother tells me she loves me and would never do anything to hurt me (the world re-enforces this message too). My mother hurt me, therefore, because she wouldn’t, it must be me that caused it...”
Offender

- Intimate Partner Violence

Control, and the “power” to maintain it.....

Rooted in developed belief system

“I was first beaten on my Honeymoon....when I cried and protested, he said, I married you, so I own you.”
Women Offenders

Battered Women’s Violence

- Resistive: Substantial numbers of victims use force against their abuser
- May not qualify legally as self-defense
- Victim’s violence usually different intent, effect
- Gains less sympathy from practitioners

Slide adapted from: Barnes, G; Domestic Abuse Intervention Project [PDF document]. Retrieved from author.
Coercive control

• All about leverage and re-enforcement
• The center of the **wheel** is labelled ‘**power** and **control**’ which is the goal, or effect, of all the abusive tactics. Patterns of tactics are depicted in each spoke of the **wheel** and the rim, representing physical and sexual abuse, is what gives it strength and holds it together.
• Don't Overlook STALKING!!!!
  
  • It's Not Romance

What sort of flowers say, “I promise to obey the restraining order”?
Risk Assessment

Keys:

  Effectively gather information
  Provided analysis and interpretation of that information back to those affected....

  Clear expression of risk!
Several risk factors have been associated with increased risk of homicides (murders) of women and men in violent relationships. We cannot predict what will happen in your case, but we would like you to be aware of the danger of homicide in situations of abuse and for you to see how many of the risk factors apply to your situation.

Using the calendar, please mark the approximate dates during the past year when you were abused by your partner or ex-partner. Write on that date how bad the incident was according to the following scale:

1. Slapping, pushing; no injuries and/or lasting pain
2. Punching, kicking; bruises, cuts, and/or continuing pain
3. "Beating up"; severe contusions, burns, broken bones
4. Threat to use weapon; head injury, internal injury, permanent injury
5. Use of weapon; wounds from weapon

(If any of the descriptions for the higher number apply, use the higher number.)

Mark Yes or No for each of the following. ("He" refers to your husband, partner, ex-husband, ex-partner, or whoever is currently physically hurting you.)

1. Has the physical violence increased in severity or frequency over the past year?
2. Does he own a gun?
3. Have you left him after living together during the past year?
3a. (If have never lived with him, check here:___)
4. Is he unemployed?
5. Has he ever used a weapon against you or threatened you with a lethal weapon?

(If yes, was the weapon a gun? ___)

6. Does he threaten to kill you?
7. Has he avoided being arrested for domestic violence?
8. Do you have a child that is not his?
9. Has he ever forced you to have sex when you did not wish to do so?
10. Does he ever try to choke you?
11. Does he use illegal drugs? By drugs I mean "uppers" or amphetamines, "meth", speed, angel dust, cocaine, "crack", street drugs or mixtures.
12. Is he an alcoholic or problem drinker?
13. Does he control most or all of your daily activities? For instance: does he tell you who you can be friends with, when you can see your family, how much money you can use, or when you can take the car? (If he tries, but you do not let him, check here:___)
14. Is he violently and constantly abusive of you? (For instance, does he say "If I can't have you, no one can.")
15. Have you ever been beaten by him while you were pregnant? (If you have never been pregnant by him, check here:___)
16. Has he ever threatened or tried to commit suicide?
17. Does he threaten to harm your children?
18. Do you believe he is capable of killing you?
19. Does he follow or spy on you, leave threatening notes or messages, destroy your property, or call you when you don't want him to?
20. Have you ever threatened or tried to commit suicide?

Total "Yes" Answers

Thank you. Please talk to your nurse, advocate or counselor about what the Danger Assessment means in terms of your situation.
Providing information to ALL parties involved?

Yes, about risk...
With clear intent to Victim and Offender

Some considerations of risk assessment and education toward safety planning:
  Information helps to reduce the anxiety of the unknown
  Providing information about risk can help support accountability and adherence to safety planning for victims and offenders
  Sharing risk does not mean sharing details of the victim's safety plan with the offender, but it probably details of the offender safety plan with the victim.

And in certain cases, considerations of offender pathology...
Considerations of offender pathology...

DSM 5 (often the exception)

• Paraphilia(s)

• ASPD (high Narcissism)

• Empathy Development
  • Mirror Neurons

• **Mirror neuron**
  A mirror neuron is a neuron that fires both when an animal acts and when the animal observes the same action performed by another. Thus, the neuron "mirrors" the behavior of the other, as though the observer were itself acting. Such neurons have been directly observed in primate species.
  
  • Prefrontal Cortex Development
  • High Need for Stimulation

• Psychopath.......Sociopath?
Risk Assessment
The Intimate Partner Physical Risk Assessment Tool (IPPI-RAT), The IPPI-RAT is DoD-sanctioned.

- Gain Collateral information (i.e command, LE, etc)
- Interviews with both Victim and Alleged Offender
- Discussion regarding risk with all connected to case (CCRT implications?)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Offender</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Don’t Know</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Caused minor injury (not requiring medical care) in incident.</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Notes:</em></td>
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<td>2. Ever choked or strangled partner.</td>
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<td><em>Notes:</em></td>
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<td>3. Denies incident occurred.</td>
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<td><em>Notes:</em></td>
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<td>4. Increased frequency or severity of violence toward partner.</td>
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<td><em>Notes:</em></td>
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<td>5. Blames others for incident.</td>
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<td><em>Notes:</em></td>
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<td>6. Attempts to control partner’s access to friends/family/resources.</td>
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<td><em>Notes:</em></td>
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<td>7. Physically aggressive toward partner prior to incident.</td>
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<td><em>Notes:</em></td>
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<td>8. Feels desperate about relationship.</td>
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<td><em>Notes:</em></td>
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</table>
| 9. | Emotionally abusive towards partner.  
   Notes: |   |   |
| 10. | Ever used or threatened to use weapons against partner.  
   Notes: |   |   |
| 11. | Expresses ideas or opinions that justify violence towards partner.  
   Notes: |   |   |
| 12. | Holds unrealistic expectations of partner.  
   Notes: |   |   |
| 13. | Dissatisfied with military lifestyle.  
   Notes: |   |   |
   Notes: |   |   |
| 15. | Fears for self or children or pets.  
   Notes: |   |   |

**Victim**

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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Don't Know</th>
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**TOTAL SCORE (NUMBER OF ITEMS MARKED “YES”) =**

**LEVEL OF RISK:**  
- Low-to-Moderate (0-1)  
- High (2-7)  
- Very High (8 or more)

*If both partners are alleged offenders, complete this form again (one per each offender).*

**WHO WAS INTERVIEWED?**

- Alleged offender  
- Victim  
- Child(ren) in Home  

*Mark others that were also interviewed: Command | Friend/Neighbor | Medical Personnel | Law Enforcement | Witness*
Safety Planning

• Aim, enhance safety for all parties involved
• Shift areas of control, mitigating previous “power” influence
What Are Pros & Cons of Current Dangerousness Assessment & Safety Planning?

Following 26 slides From: Safety Planning for Domestic Violence: Using the VIGOR for a more Holistic, Strengths-Based Approach: Sherry Hamby, Ph.D.
Life Paths Research Program &
Department of Psychology,
University of the South Presented at the Connecting for Children’s Justice Conference,
Nashville, TN
November 26, 2013
sherry.hamby@sewanee.edu
Pros of Current Strategies

• Comprehensive lists of risks of perpetrator danger (recommend Campbell’s Dangerousness Assessment for this).

• Many safety planning suggestions accumulated from advocates’ experiences

• Formatted list-Easy to use

From: Safety Planning for Domestic Violence: Using the VIGOR for a more Holistic, Strengths-Based Approach: Sherry Hamby, Ph.D.
Life Paths Research Program & Department of Psychology, University of the South
Presented at the Connecting for Children’s Justice Conference, Nashville, TN
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sherry.hamby@sewanee.edu
In an ideal world, no one would sustain violence, especially by an intimate partner. Reality much more grim for many women.

The dangers of staying with a violent partner may be less than the dangers of living on the streets.

The pain of an occasional beating may be less than the pain of losing custody of one’s children to a violent man.

Assuming that leaving is always better has led to unhelpful interventions and has contributed to victim blaming.

Unfortunately, in many studies on coping, leaving and steps directly tied to leaving are the only positive coping strategies measured.
Cons: An Overly Narrow Definition of Risk  --Ask Only About Factors Related to Physical Harm

• The most frequent topics covered by popular dangerousness/lethality assessment tools are (Laing, 2004; Websdale, 2000):
  • prior victimization;
  • batterer’s drug & alcohol problems;
  • batterer’s obsessiveness & jealousy;
  • batterer’s threats to kill the victim or her children;
  • batterer access to & familiarity with weapons;
  • batterer’s violence outside the home;
  • stalking;
  • batterer’s suicidal ideation & behavior;
  • partners are separated, or victim is fleeing.
A Typical Safety Plan—

- If you are still in the relationship:
  - Think of a safe place to go if an argument occurs - avoid rooms with no exits (bathroom), or rooms with weapons (kitchen).
  - Think about and make a list of safe people to contact.
  - Keep change with you at all times.
  - Memorize all important numbers.
  - Establish a "code word" or "sign" so that family, friends, teachers or co-workers know when to call for help.
  - Think about what you will say to your partner if he/she becomes violent.
  - Remember, you have the right to live without fear and violence.
Focuses on leaving & physical safety

- **If you have left the relationship:**
  - Change your phone number.
  - Screen calls.
  - Save and document all contacts, messages, injuries or other incidents involving the batterer.
  - Change locks, if the batterer has a key.
  - Avoid staying alone.
  - Plan how to get away if confronted by an abusive partner.
  - If you have to meet your partner, do it in a public place.
  - Vary your routine.
  - Notify school and work contacts.
  - Call a shelter for battered women.
- If you leave the relationship or are thinking of leaving, you should take important papers and documents with you to enable you to apply for benefits or take legal action.
Cons for the Current State of Safety Planning

• Too much focus on physical risk just from perpetrator (ignores violent neighborhoods, homelessness, etc).

• Little guidance on dealing with the financial, legal, and social risks faced by virtually all battered women.

• Generic lists—not personalized

• Doesn’t reflect the complexities that providers see every day. Leaves advocates to figure out how to do this on their own, one at a time, over and over again.
A Deficit-Focused Paradigm & A Limited Research Base

• We ask women over and over about trauma symptoms, substance use, and their own perpetration, but almost never ask about resources & strengths.

• We teach the cycle of violence even though it is based on a single qualitative study more than 30 years old.

• Safety planning is an almost universal service, but almost no safety planning-based research exists, either to map typical safety planning steps or the effectiveness of formal safety plans.
A Holistic Understanding of Risk Assessment & Risk Management: Multiple Criteria Decision Making

(Safety Planning is a Process of Decision Making)
Multiple Criteria Decision Making

Example

Note-start with the Goal
Criteria: Incorporate Physical Risks Posed to Others

• Concern for others can constrain coping:
  • Children
  • Family members
  • Friends—especially those who offer shelter
  • Pets
  • Others, such as coworkers, advocates, etc.
Criteria: Financial Risks

• Financial dependence is often the most commonly mentioned reason for staying (e.g., Cruz, 2003).

• Many areas of potential loss:
  • Lower standard of living
  • Loss of savings
  • *Cannot afford neighborhoods with low crime or good schools*
  • Would have to drop out of own schooling
  • Job loss
  • Loss of health insurance
  • Loss of car/transportation
  • Doesn’t have security deposit, rent, furniture for even a terrible apartment in a terrible neighborhood.
Criteria: Legal Risks

• Dual arrests are on the rise (Hirschel & Buzawa, 2002)
• Arrest of batterer unlikely to lead to jail time—will be back home & madder than ever
• If disclose abuse to authorities, may be reported to CPS for “exposing” children to dv
• D-I-V-O-R-C-E risks
• Risks losing custody of children
• Risks unfair divorce settlement
Criteria: Social Risks

• Stigma—Almost all of the social statuses associated with leaving a violent relationship are stigmatized:
  • “victim”
  • “divorced”
  • “single mother”
• Loss of friendships, extended family, support of minister/congregants
• Children’s loss of friends, schools, sports
• May stigmatize entire family in many communities
Other risks

• Personal & psychological risks
  • Loneliness
  • Sense of failure
  • Perceived loss of fealty to religious values

• Deportation

• Victims with disabilities and elderly victims may lose needed assistance with self-care, health care

• Members of oppressed minority groups may not receive equal treatment by law enforcement or human service providers.
“Derivative losses”

• In the broader world of risk management, these types of risks are known as “derivative losses” (Jiang & Haimes, 2004) and are common after many types of catastrophic events, such as terrorist attack, war, or natural disaster.

• Can have a cascading effect, “which may be far greater than the initial loss inflicted by the direct disturbance” (Jiang & Haimes, 2004, p 1215).
Battered women’s protective strategies: stronger than you know by Sherry Hanby
Immediate Situational Strategies/Planning

• **Escaping the scene**: Leave the house, Run to another room, Lock oneself in a room, Get into (or out of) a car, Walk away calmly

• **Luring away from dangerous parts of the house**: Keep perpetrator away from gun cabinets, kitchens, etc.

• **Calling for help**: Signal a neighbor or child, Teach children who to get help, Get a pay-as-you-go phone, Keep a landline telephone, Scream, Pass a note or leave a message in a public place

• **Defusing strategies**: Distract with other activities such as making tea, Hold hand/cuddle with perpetrator, even if do not feel affectionate, Keep things quiet, Talk batterer out of abuse

• **Protecting children or others from the attacker**

• **Self-defensive actions**: Use force to stop perpetrator’s assault, Protect one’s body, Stop perpetrator from destroying objects around house
Strategies/Planning  Protecting Children, Family & Pets

• **Immediate protective strategies focused on children and loved ones:** Physically insert themselves between batterer and others, Try to get batterer to focus on them, Create code words and safety plans with children or others, Send children to their rooms or other safer location, Turn up stereo so children cannot hear violence

• **Longer term strategies for protecting children:** Send children to stay with relatives, Seek full legal custody, Help children process experience, Volunteer at school, Delay leaving to protect children

• **Protecting pets:** Delay leaving to protect pets from batterer’s threats, Enroll pets in “doggy day care” or place in kennel

• **Protecting other family members, friends, and co-workers:** Quit job, Stay away from family and friends, Create separate email account that batterer does not know
Strategies/Planning Reaching Out for Social Support

- Obtain emotional support
- Stay with family or friends
- Get financial or practical help with moving
- Ask family or friend to accompany women to court or agencies
- Ask for help filling out legal forms and other paperwork
- Get help with child care
- Get help with transportation
- Ask family or friends to store belongings or extra keys
- Ask family or friends to hold bank accounts or other assets in their name
- Ask family to help negotiate a plan for reconciliation
- Ask boss or co-workers to re-arrange schedules
- Ask for security plan at the workplace
Strategies/Planning

Turning to Religious & Spiritual Resources

• Strength and perseverance from prayer & faith in God/higher power
• Comfort from inspirational stories in religious texts
• Hope for the future
• Social support from clergy, other members of the congregation
• Pastoral counseling from clergy
• Free social activities
• Help paying utility bills, home repair, transportation
• Support during illness or following birth of child
• Donations of food, clothing, furniture, and other necessities
• Help with immigration status
• Literacy and English as a second language classes
• School supplies, winter coats, and free activities for children
Formal Helpseeking

• Contrary to stereotypes of passivity:
• Helpseeking for DV is similar to helpseeking for psychological problems:
  • 28% in Canadian survey (Bland et al, 1997)
  • 26% in Europe (ESEMeD MHEDEA, 2004)
  • 41% in U.S. (Wang et al, 2005), but most of this not specialized help
    • Psychiatrists 12%
    • Other mental health providers 16%

• 66% of DV victims had sought formal services in one Canadian survey (Barrett & Lapierre, 2010)
Types of Formal Helpseeking

• Going to a Domestic Violence Shelter
• Other Domestic Violence Program Services
  • Info, referral, transportation, court accompaniment, etc
• Calling the Police
• Seeking Help from Victim Assistance Programs
• Obtaining a Restraining Order/Order of Protection
• Mental Health Services
• Health Care
• 12-step programs such as Al-Anon
• Other Social Services
• Support groups
Invisible Strategies

• Money, money, money
• Arranging affairs
• Wellness
• Returning to batterer—yes, sometimes this is safest, best option from a range of really rotten choices
• Activism
Victim Inventory of Goals Options Resources

www.thevigor.org
Opportunities: CCR (T?)

- Coordinated Community Response...
  - Team?

- Realities, who is on your team now?

- How does what we practice, and model for each other truly promote safety and responsibility.
- Does everyone on the team have the shared belief that change is possible and we are all responsible in some way, in addressing and stopping abuse
  - Working towards something, in addition to just responding to...
CCRTTeam

- Team members—who to include:
  - **Victims**
  - Probation
  - **Judges, courts**
  - Police
  - Advocates
  - Victim treatment/counseling programs
  - Graduates of a Batterer’s Intervention Program
  - BIP staff
  - Mental health Professionals
  - Hospital Administration, staff, Nurse, Doctor
  - Government: Council, Mayor...
  - Public Defender
  - Prosecutor
  - Citizen participation
  - Fatality Review
  - What about your SARC/SARP?

- Public Safety Officer
- Public Works/Utilities
- Teachers/Schools
- Clergy
- Impacted Families
- Fire Dept/EMT
- Chamber of commerce
- Shelter
- Post office
- College/University Admin, faculty, student organizations
- Child Protective Services
- Substance abuse treatment services
- 911/Dispatch
- Others...
Opportunities:

TRIBAL DOMESTIC VIOLENCE COURTS AND TRIBAL DOMESTIC VIOLENCE DOCKETS

*Tribal Domestic Violence Courts* are vital in exercising tribal judicial authority in a manner that focuses on victim safety, batterer accountability and healthy families. *Tribal Domestic Violence Courts* provide continuity for victims and are distinguished by designated domestic violence-trained court personnel and a community approach to victim services and a commitment to batterer accountability. These specialized tribal courts units may serve as a platform for exercising enhanced tribal court sentencing authority pursuant to TLOA and criminal jurisdiction over non-Indians committing certain Domestic Violence-related crimes in Indian country pursuant to section 904 of VAWA 2013.

*Tribal Domestic Violence Docket Days* are characterized by setting aside specific days of the tribal court’s docket to address cases involving domestic violence. Devoting certain days of the docket to domestic violence cases may allow continuity for the victim, and allows the tribal court to address related civil and criminal matters on the same day. It also allows the court to offer enhanced security, advocacy services, and child care for domestic violence victims. Research demonstrates that both DV Courts and DV Dockets can increase victim safety, reduce recidivism, and improve offender compliance with post-conviction supervision requirements.

Read, work, change............

• & Thank you!

• Read:
  • Dr. Neil Websdale
  • Dr. Jaquelin Campbell
  • Dr. Ellen Pence
    (CCRT/Duluth/Turning Points)
  • David Adams (EMERGE)
  • Dr. Sherry Hamby (VIGOR)
  • Many more