

## Initial scenario

## The 3 types of Domestic Violence

- “Intimate Terrorism”
- “Violent Resistance” or “Secondary Aggression”
- “Situational/Common Couples Violence”

(Johnson & Leone 2005, Johnson 2008)

## Impact of exposure to assault of a parent

- Overlien (2010)
  - Raised levels of aggression, depression, anger, anxiety
  - Increased risk of PTSD
  - Increased risk for behavioral issues: low social competence, bullying, victim of bullying, violence
- Lee, Kolomer, & Thomsen (2012)
  - More likely to have poor academic performance, language lags, eating disorders, PTSD, truancy
  - Witnessing more than once increases anxiety by 3.5x and dissociation by 6.8x

## Impact of exposure to assault of a parent

- Wood & Sommers (2012)
  - Kids who witness are more violent and more likely to have alcohol problems as adults
  - Higher exposure = more severe/long term consequences
- Wash, rinse, repeat!

## DV Risk Assessment

- Can incorporate actuarial measures IF there is a documented incident
  - ODARA & SARA are legitimate measures
  - DVI is NOT an actuarial measure - is based on self report!
- Often is a listing of associated risk factors and how they can be effectively managed
  - Especially if individual being assessed is not still with alleged victim
- “Level of risk” is often difficult to assess - often more effective to think about managing risk factors present

## Other questions

- Did DHS do initial interviews and if so, did Donny take accountability for his “anger” or physical abuse of Ellen?
- How do you make sense of Ellen’s statements that Donny is a “great father.”
  - Does she understand the impact of IT?
  - Does she conceptualize herself as a victim of IT?
- Does Ellen exhibit or express any signs of fear of Donny?

## Additional Information

DV history emerges

## Counter-intuitive victim behavior?

- Victims of IT will often refuse to participate - this may be a trauma/survival mechanism, not an indication of an inability to protect her children
  - A psychological evaluation by an expert in the field of DV can help make this determination
  - The biggest issue is whether there is the presence of a personality disorder/attachment issues
- Couples counseling is not indicated (and can reinforce myths of victim responsibility) in cases involving IT

## Pretrial Conference

## The dynamics of domestic violence

- Victims do not expose their children to a “domestic violence relationship” unless the DV is situational couples violence. If it is not:
  - Did she have the support to leave?
  - If yes, has she attempted to leave?
  - If yes, but she returned, did the support break down? Does she have a personality disorder/attachment issues as barriers?
- Victims of intimate terrorism often appear just as Mother did - perpetrators often appear just as Father did.

## Father's denial... The DV evaluation

- One option is for the court to order a Domestic Violence evaluation by a qualified expert who will NOT refer to self/own agency - conflict of interest.
- DV evaluations are not psychological evaluations - there is no test that will tell you whether someone has engaged in a pattern of controlling and abusive behavior. It is a behavioral analysis.
- No DV evaluation should depend on self-report and any self-report should be tempered by/compared to the record.

## The DV Evaluation (cont.)

- Referral questions should be limited to:
  - Presence of IT, secondary aggression or situation couples violence and related dynamics
  - Presence/absence of risk/protective factors
  - Recommendations for managing risk factors
  - Presence/absence of accountability, awareness of impact of behavior on victims & children
  - Specific questions about appropriateness of certain method of intervention

## Adjudication of Remaining Allegations

## Contact between Donny & Toby

- Even if the relationship between the perpetrator and victim is over, the threat remains due to:
  - Likelihood of him finding a new partner
  - Co-occurrence of IT and child abuse (30-60%) (Graham-Bermann & Howell, 2011)
- Presence of intimate terrorism suggests potential for issues with attachment between Father and Toby
  - Supervision is needed prior to Father being accountable - risk for blaming mother/taking victim stance in front of Toby puts Toby in the middle of the conflict between Father and DHS/Mother.
  - If Father does not express awareness of impact of IT on Toby, suggests he may not be capable of being protective parent.

## Additional questions?

- Did Donny have a psych eval?
  - Was he diagnosed with a personality disorder?
  - Was there the presence of anti-social features?
  - These are both risk factors for future IT, as well as indications that he will present formidable challenges in treatment and may not benefit from treatment.

## Additional Questions

### Does Domestic Violence Treatment work?

Gondolf (2004)

- N=840 abusive men and their female partners
- **4 year follow-up!** (not 3 mos, not 6 mos)
- At the four year follow up N=618
- All participants were court mandated
- 60% of female partners participated at 4-year follow-up
- **At the 30 month follow-up, less than 20% of men had re-assaulted their partner in the previous year. At 48 month follow-up, 10% re-assaulted in the previous year.**

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## Additional Questions

### Does Domestic Violence Treatment work?

Gondolf (2004)

- To compare treatment to “arrest and court appearance only” they looked at men who dropped out at two months:
  - Treatment completers re-assault rate was 36%
  - “Arrest and court appearance” re-assault rate was 55%
  - **When they controlled for men still living with their partners, treatment reduced re-assault by 67%**
  - **At the four year follow-up, 85% of the women**

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## References and suggested reading

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# References and suggested reading

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