

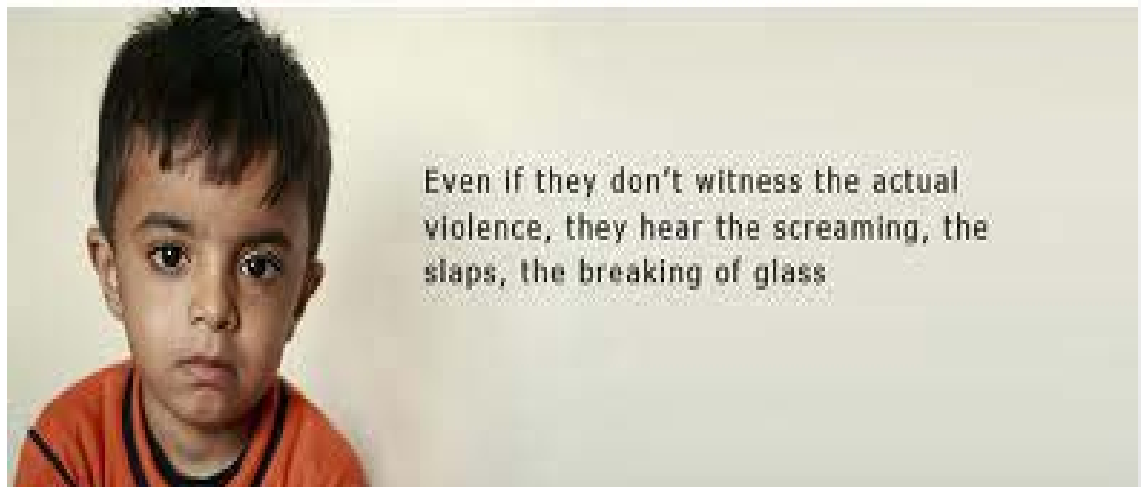
Risk Assessment and Risk Management in Child Welfare

Shannon Brothers, MSW, RSW

Chantel Cassidy, MSW, RSW

Ministry Standards

- **STANDARD #1.RECEIPT OF A REPORT: COLLABORATING WITH THE COMMUNITY-** all reports are universally screened for the presence of domestic violence
- **STANDARD #6. RISK ASSESSMENT –** an assessment of risk of future child maltreatment.



Even if they don't witness the actual violence, they hear the screaming, the slaps, the breaking of glass

What We Need to First Consider

- 30-60% families where woman abuse or child maltreatment identified likely both forms exist (Edelson 1999)
- Presence of woman abuse increases likelihood child maltreatment (Jaffe, Crooks & Bala, 2005)
- Estimate 40% of c.p. agency caseload related to IPV

Six Risk Factors Associated with Dangerousness and Lethality

1. Pending or imminent separation
2. Prior history of domestic violence
3. Obsessive behaviour by the perpetrator
4. Depression in the perpetrator
5. Escalation of violence in a relationship
6. Prior history of threats to kill the victim

(Office of the Chief Coroner,
2008)



What are the benefits of working with men who abuse women?

“When standard case management does not include engaging with these men, the tendency is to focus on the [abused] woman and place all responsibility for creating safety and ending the abuse on her. This often sets off an escalating spiral of demands and pressure on [women], which culminates in declaring her a case of ‘failure to protect’”

(Mederos, 2004, p.44)



Benefits of Working with Men

- By engaging men, we hold them accountable for their abusive behaviour
- Engagement requires contact. This helps us assess risk and plan interventions that increase safety.
- Abusive men are not a uniform group; need to identify individual patterns and actions to allow for a differential assessment
- Increase their motivation to seek help and change their behaviour

Benefits of Working with Men (cont'd)

- Many men who abuse have good fatherhood potential
- Addressing fatherhood is a motivator for change for many men who abuse
- If we choose not to attempt to engage abusive men, we overlook a significant opportunity to improve life for many families

Three Considerations When Assessing an Abusive Man's Parenting Capacity

1. The extent to which the abusive man poses a threat to the child's safety
2. Parenting style
3. Psychological functioning and implications for parenting



(Mederos, 2004)

Assessing Change in Abusive Men

1. Has he made full disclosure of his history of physical and psychological abuse?
2. Has he recognized that abusive behaviour is unacceptable?
3. Has he recognized that abusive behaviour is a choice?
4. Does he show empathy for the effects of his actions on his partner and children?

(Bancroft & Silverman, 2002a)

Assessing Change in Abusive Men (Cont'd)

5. Can he identify what his pattern of controlling behaviours and entitled attitudes has been?
6. Has he replaced abuse with respectful behaviours and attitudes?
7. Is he willing to make amends in a meaningful way?
8. Does he accept the consequences of his actions?

(Bancroft & Silverman, 2002a)

Promising Collaborations

- Presently seeing beginning improvements as a result of our Community Safety Planning Conferences
- Shared understanding of risk will help to enhance the safety planning and service coordination that are goal of conferences



Challenges for Service Providers

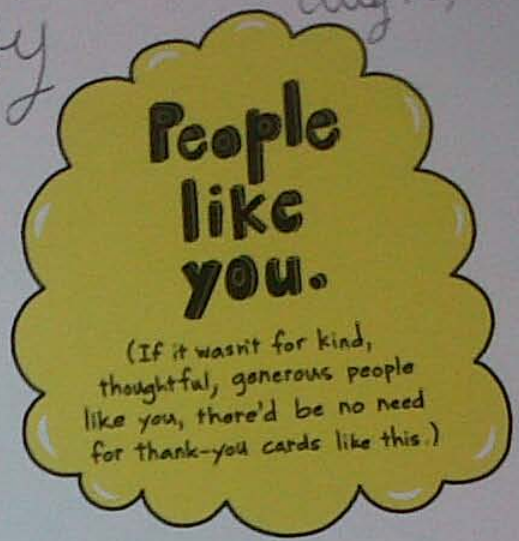
- Implementing common cross agency risk assessment processes
- Managing the volume of service demand and prioritizing services to most risky situations
- Developing a potpourri of services that align to the needs of each family- one size fits all just doesn't work



Aug 10, 2011

Coby

Thank you so much for being there for us and being as helpful and caring as you were. It takes good people like you to make the world a better place. On the tough days when your job gets hard because of the flip side of it remember people like Bruce and I and how helpful and ^{how} much it changed our lives. Thank you again.



Coby,

I'm not sure how to phrase this but because of the work you have done, it has left me with a good sense of security. without you he may well have been still abusing us. I just want ~~to~~ thank you

