



# Family Violence Prevention Fund

**Creating Futures Without Violence : Responding to  
Lifetime Exposure to Domestic Violence in Home  
Visitation**

# National Health Resource Center on Domestic Violence

The National Health Resource Center on Domestic Violence provides specialized materials and tools including:

- **(Coming Soon) Home Visitation Train the Trainer Curriculum**
- Consensus Guidelines on Routine Assessment for D.V.
- Multilingual Public Education Materials
- Training DVDs
- Multi-disciplinary policies and procedures
- Cultural competency information and materials specific to many communities
- Technical Assistance and Training—Provider and patient tools

Visit [www.endabuse.org/health](http://www.endabuse.org/health) for more information

# **Who is on the call?**

**A. Home visitors**

**B. Managers/Program supervisor**

**C. Perinatal case manager**

**D. Other? Please type in the chat box**

# Quick Review: How did we get here?

- 10 years. Many extraordinary learning opportunities & partnerships—Safe Start, Healthy Start, Dove, NFP, Healthy Families...
- Domestic Violence as a Benchmark for Home Visitation as part of health care reform
- Project Connect



# Big Picture Learning Objectives

1. List four examples of how exposure to domestic violence can impact children's physical and/or mental health
2. Describe how a parent's childhood exposure to violence can also impact her/his parenting
3. Explain how the Safety Card can be used for universal education to discuss the impact of violence on parenting and relationships and supportive referrals

**Question: How many hours of training have you had on Domestic and Sexual Violence through your Home Visitation Program in the last year?**

- A) 1 hour or less**
- B) 2-3 hours**
- C) 4-5 hours**
- D) Full day or more**

**Question: How many hours of training have you had on Children Exposed to Domestic Violence (CEDV) in your home visitation program in the last year?**

- A) 1 hour or less**
- B) 2-3 hours**
- C) 4-5 hours**
- D) Full day or more**



# **The Effects of Violence on Children**



# Overview of this Module

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- **Estimated Time:** 45 minutes
- **Training Outline:**
- Learning objectives
- Large group discussion on the effects of domestic violence on children
- First Impressions DVD
- Large group discussion on strategies to help children exposed to domestic violence
- Strategies to strengthen mother-child bond
- Resources
- **Overview:**
- One of the important advances in the field of domestic violence has been research on how exposure to violence affects children. Early trauma such as chronic exposure to domestic violence can lead to predictable physical, mental, behavioral, and cognitive problems for children.

# Large Group Discussion

"How does exposure to domestic violence affect children?"



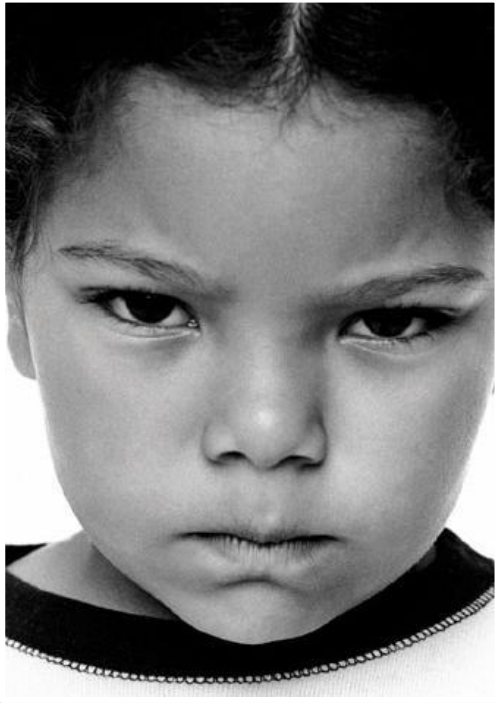
# CHILDHOOD EXPOSURE TO VIOLENCE INCREASES THE LIKELIHOOD OF CHILDREN EXPERIENCING:

- Failure to thrive
- Bed wetting
- Speech disorders
- Vomiting and diarrhea
- Asthma
- Allergies
- Gastrointestinal problems
- Headaches

Campbell and Lewandowski, 1997;  
Graham-Bermann & Seng, 2005



# CHILDREN EXPOSED TO INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE ARE AT SIGNIFICANTLY HIGHER RISK FOR:



- Posttraumatic Stress Disorder
- Depression
- Anxiety
- Developmental delays
- Aggressiveness

Edleson J, 1999; Graham-Bermann & Levendosky, 1998; Hurt et al, 2001; Lehmann, 2000; McCloskey & Walker; 2000; Pfouts et al, 1982; Spaccarelli et al, 1994; Wilden et al, 1991; Wolfe et al, 2003

# SCHOOL HEALTH & PERFORMANCE

Childhood exposure to IPV increases the likelihood of:

- More school nurse visits
- Referral to a school speech pathologist
- Frequent school absences
- Lower grade point averages
- School suspension

Hurt et al, 2001, Kernic et al, 2002

# DVD AND DISCUSSION

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- 15-minute DVD
- For parents and caregivers
- Describes impact of DV on children
- Available at no cost from the FVPPF
- In English and Spanish





**Group Discussion: What are some strategies you can offer to a mother to help her children when they have been exposed to domestic violence?**

# Most Consistent Protective Factor for Children Exposed to Domestic Violence

- Children's resilience to trauma is linked to the presence of a healthy parent or adult in their lives (Margolin, 1998)
- Children's emotional recovery from exposure to DV depends more on the quality of their relationship with the nonbattering parent than any other single factor (Bancroft & Silverman, 2002)



# Strategies to Strengthen Mother-Child Bond

- Reassure
  - You will take care of them as best that you can
  - You love them unconditionally
  - You will help them to make a plan to be as safe as possible

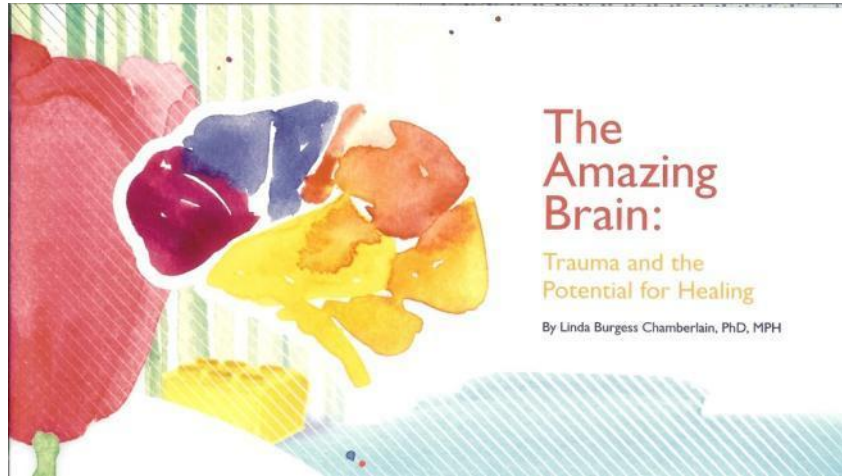
Baker and Cunningham, 2004

# **Strategies to Strengthen Mother-Child Bond**

- Be willing to talk about the violence
  - Respect their feelings
  - Acknowledge that these feelings are okay
  - Help them to find the words to talk about their feelings
  - Be prepared to hear things that may be painful

Baker and Cunningham, 2004

# Resource: The Amazing Brain Series



- Developed for parents
- 5<sup>th</sup> grade reading level
- Six key factors about early brain development and what children need

## **Resource: A Kid is So Special (KISS)**

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- Series of booklets developed by the Pennsylvania Coalition Against Domestic Violence
- These interactive booklets are designed to strengthen mother-child bonds
  - “Growing Together” discusses child development
  - “Playing Together” includes information on what a parent can do when there is hurting at home



## **Impact of Violence on Mothering and Promoting Resiliency**

# Mothers who experience domestic violence around the time of pregnancy have lower maternal attachment with their infants

Quinlivan & Evans, 2005



# DOMESTIC VIOLENCE (DV) AND PARENTING SKILLS



- Mothers who experienced DV were more likely to have maternal depressive symptoms and report harsher parenting
- Mothers' depression and harsh parenting were directly associated with children's behavioral problems

Dubowitz et al, 2001

Families with domestic violence are

**2X AS LIKELY**

to have a substantiated case of child abuse compared to families without domestic violence.

Rumm et al, 2000



# Victimization May Compromise Parenting but..

- Battered mothers may be more likely than others to use some type of aggression against their children but are less likely to do so when they are safe (Edleson et al. 2003)
  - ▶ Battered mothers appear to have greater stress than non battered women
    - » However, this stress does not always translate to diminished parenting

(Holden and Ritchie, 1991 Holden et al., 1998)



# Resiliency in Mothers Exposed to Violence

- Some mothers who face severe stress may compensate for violent events by offering increased nurturing and protection of their children. (Levendosky et. Al , 2003)





## CASE STUDY

**Ways that Exposure to  
Violence Can Impact  
Parenting**

**Feeling out of control**

**Flooding/Triggering**

**Feeling Overwhelmed**

**Shame/Anxiety**



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**In the same way current victimization impacts parenting, childhood exposure can also impact parenting.**

# Resiliency

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- 70% of abusive parents were abused as children themselves
- 70% of abused children do not become abusive parents (Center for the study of social policy, 2005)
- Number one factor for the difference was the development of empathy for self and others

(Steel et al, 1997; Higgins et al. 1994)

# STRATEGIES FOR HOME VISITORS

- Discussing childhood exposure to violence with parents can be a way to discuss healthy relationships, parenting and the impact of violence on health and emotional well-being from infancy to adulthood



# Universal education vs. assessment

When talking to moms about their childhood exposure to violence we recommend universal education rather than direct assessment.

Why?

Because disclosure of childhood exposure is not the goal—making her aware that she might have unexpected triggers and a plan for what to do is the goal.

# Resource: Loving parents, Loving kids card



## Let's Talk Pregnancy

- Does my partner support my decisions about if or when I want to have more children?
- Does my partner refuse to use condoms when I ask?
- Does my partner make me have sex when I don't want to?
- Has my partner ever tried to get me pregnant (recently or in the past) when I didn't want to be?

Unplanned pregnancies, especially if they are closely timed after your first pregnancy--can make it difficult to care for the children you already have.

If you are feeling frustrated or angry with your child and just need to talk...

**For confidential help call:**

**Child Help  
1-800-422-4453**

**If you are being hurt by a partner it is not your fault. For help, call:**

**National Domestic Violence Hotline  
1-800 799-7233  
TTY 1-800 787-3224**

**Sexual Assault Hotline  
1-800 656-4673**

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

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## Taking Control

*Your partner may see pregnancy as a way to keep you in his life and keep connected to you through a child—even if that isn't what you want.*

**If your partner pushes you to have sex, messes with your birth control or refuses to use condoms:**

1. Talk with your health care provider about birth control that you can control and that your partner doesn't have to know about (examples--IUD, Emergency Contraception (EC), Depo, Implanon).
2. Ask your home visitor about local and national programs to help women struggling in their relationships with control or abuse.



## What About Your Childhood?

- ✓ Did you (or your partner) see your mom hurt (beat up) by your dad or her boyfriend?
- ✓ Did you (or your partner) experience unwanted sexual touching by someone in your family?
- ✓ Did you (or your partner) have injuries or live in fear of being hurt by someone in your family?

If you answered *YES* to *ANY* of these questions you are not alone. Talking about these experiences with your home visitor or a friend can help.

## Parenting is Hard Work

**Parenting after being hurt by someone you know and love can make the work even harder.** Many parents who were abused can be 'triggered' easily, quick to anger, have less patience and have more anxiety.

**These are learned responses to what previously happened to you, but there are strategies to make it better:**

- If you feel frustrated, gently place the baby in the crib while you catch your breath in the next room.
- If you feel unsure about your partner's ability to handle their frustration with the baby, don't leave the baby alone with them.
- Find a safe person that you can call to take a break if you are frustrated with your baby and call your home visitor for support.

**Key learning point: Children Exposed to Violence (CEV)  
is an entry point for conversations about DV and  
breaking the cycle of Intergenerational Violence**



**Question: How often do you use education about lifetime exposure to violence as a way to do primary prevention of child abuse and a way to discuss planning for triggers in parenting?**

**A) Never**

**B) Rarely**

**C) Sometimes**

**D) Often**



# **Fathering After Violence**

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# Overview

- Many men who have used violence grew up in abusive households and have lived through the cycle of violence (Silverman et al, 1995; Silverman and Williamson, 1997).
- Many mothers who have suffered abuse want their children to have safer and healthier contact with their fathers (Atchison et al, 2002; Bent-Goodley and Williams, 2007)
- Big shoes by the front door—Implications and opportunities for home visitation

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## **Fathering After Violence: Lessons Learned**

- Builds on our work in the Batterers Intervention Programs that focused on the development of empathy
  - For themselves
  - For their children
  - Legacy work—“Your children learn from you everyday--What do you want to teach them?”

# Why is Educating Fathers about CEV Important?

- Understanding the effects of domestic violence on their children can be an important motivator for abusive fathers to change their violent behavior (Donovan and Paterson, 1999).
- Positive involvement by a father figure can be very beneficial to children's development (Dubowitz et al, 2001)



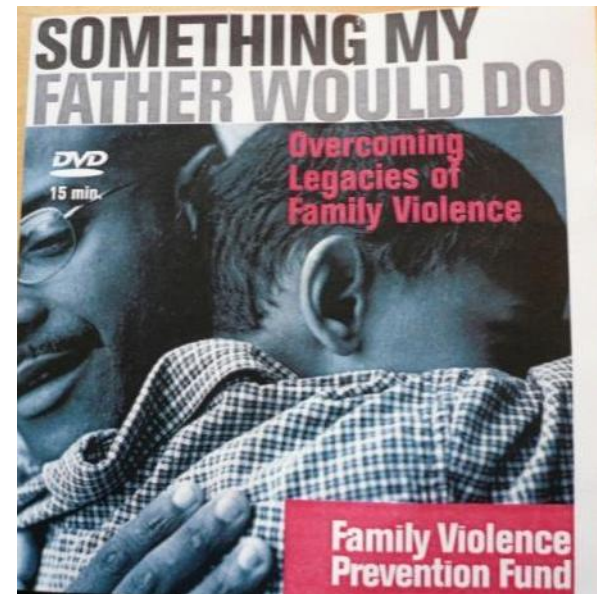
# **Resources: “Parenting After Violence”**

This free publication includes:

- Strategies and tools for educating parents about domestic violence and the effects on their children
- Addresses special issues when working with abusers
- Download at [www.instituteforsafefamilies.org](http://www.instituteforsafefamilies.org)

# Something My Father Would Do: Overcoming Legacies of Family Violence

- 15-minute DVD features stories of three men who grew up with abusive fathers and how they grappled with their own choices as fathers
- Includes discussion questions for general audiences and questions to ask when working with men who batter





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**Desiree: Home Visitation Visit**

**Connecting the Impact of Violence on Children's Health to DV**



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**Marta: Home Visitation Visit  
Assessment for Post Partum Depression and DV**

# **Preparing Your Program And Supporting Staff Exposed to Violence and Trauma**



# **Human Principles**

- **Because family violence is so prevalent, assume that there are survivors among us**
- **Be aware of your reactions and take care of yourself first**
- **Respect confidentiality (clients/staff)**
- **Acknowledge there can be much hurt and fear associated with 'helping' (historical trauma)**

## Exposure to Violence and Secondary Traumatic Stress

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- Working with clients who are experiencing domestic violence can trigger painful memories and trauma for staff
- A personal history of exposure to violence increases the risk of experiencing secondary traumatic stress



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**What are some common reactions to caring for  
survivors of trauma?**



# Personal Strategies to Prevent Traumatic Stress

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- Adequate sleep, good nutrition and exercise help to reduce psychological stress
- Connecting with other professionals and organizations to process experiences of working with survivors of trauma
- Training to improve skills and comfort level
- Providing yourself time-out from work to pursue personal interests, social connections, and spiritual outcomes

# Trauma-Informed Organizational Self-Assessment

- Instrument designed to help agencies to create trauma-informed, supportive work environments
- Checklist format for organizations to evaluate:
  - Training and education
  - Support and supervision
  - Communication
  - Employee control and input
  - Work environment
- Self –assessment handout for employees

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

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# Philadelphia Story

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# Big Picture Learning Objectives

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## **Last Question:**

**Given today's webinar are you likely to integrate universal education about CEV with parents?**

**YES**

**NO**

**OR Please feel free to type feedback in the chatbox.**



Thank you for your commitment to creating futures without violence [Rebecca@endabuse.org](mailto:Rebecca@endabuse.org)

Please visit: [www.endabuse.org/health](http://www.endabuse.org/health) for more information and free materials