

HANDOUT IV – 1

SOURCES OF INFORMATION FOR IDENTIFYING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

- A. Identifying domestic violence requires gathering information about the following**
- the use or threat of physical force against intimate partner
 - the pattern of coercive behaviors (see list in Handout IV-2)
 - who is the victim and who is the perpetrator
- B. Sources of Information**
1. REPORTS FROM AGENCIES AND INDIVIDUALS
 - referral reports, evaluations, concurrent contact reports, etc.
 - child-welfare agencies, police or courts, counselors, domestic violence programs, schools, etc.
 2. FAMILY MEMBERS' SELF-REPORTS
 - victim, perpetrator, or child may sometimes volunteer information when seeking assistance for the issue or during discussions of other issues
 3. DIRECT OBSERVATIONS BY PRACTITIONER
 - acts of physical abuse, threats of violence or harm to partner
 - observation of psychological abuse as a tactic of control
 4. OBSERVATIONS OF THE EFFECTS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE
 - injuries, stress-related illnesses, damage to physical property, etc.
 - behavior indicating fear of or control by partner
 - children's behavior indicating fear of one parent or protectiveness of the other parent
 - symptoms or evidence of child abuse (high overlap between child abuse and domestic violence)
 - depression, anxiety, suicide attempts, substance abuse, fleeing, and/or repeated help-seeking by victim
 5. ROUTINE, DIRECT INQUIRY FOR PURPOSE OF IDENTIFYING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE
 - given prevalence of domestic violence and impact on family preservation process, important to directly inquire about domestic violence with all families

HANDOUT VII – 2

BEHAVIORS OF THE DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PERPETRATOR THAT HURT CHILDREN: A CHECKLIST

(The following list was developed by EMERGE, a batterers' education program in Boston, to describe the types of abusive behavior used by their clients against children.)

VIOLENT AND CONTROLLING BEHAVIOR TOWARDS CHILDREN

- slapping, kicking, punching, grabbing, choking, pushing, restraining, pulling hair, pinching, pulling ears, poking shoulders, boxing, burning, squeezing, tripping
- use of weapons or any other instrument for physical discipline, throwing things, threatening with use of weapons or instruments
- exposing the children to reckless or drunk driving or other dangerous activities
- abusing toys or pets, destroying child's possessions
- scaring with raised tone of voice, threatening supernatural violence (e.g., boogey-man, devil, God), frightening them with stories
- harassing, badgering, not respecting privacy, embarrassing child in public
- isolating, locking child up or threatening to do so

SEXUAL ABUSE

- unwanted touching, penetrating any body opening with any object
- creating sexual tension in relationship with the child
- frequently commenting on the child's body
- relating to the child as a potential sex partner
- unwanted fondling or kissing
- exposing adult sexual body parts in front of the child
- forcing the child to be physically affectionate to another adult
- tickling or secret games which lead to confusion about body touching
- touching the child's sexual area under the guise of a game

PSYCHOLOGICAL AND ECONOMIC ABUSE

- exposing the child to violence in the home
- yelling, swearing, being lewd, raising voice, using angry or scary gestures
- criticizing, name-calling, mocking, ridiculing, accusing, blaming, trivializing words or gestures, not accepting child's emotions, only having negative interactions with child

Continued ...

HANDOUT VII – 3

ASSESSMENT OF CHILDREN LIVING WITH DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

The literature suggests that assessment of children living with domestic violence should include a consideration of:

- behavioral problems
- emotional problems
- social and environmental disruption as a result of violence (moving, losing family, changing schools)
- effects of violence on the child's primary caretakers (maternal stress compounds difficulties for kids)
- child-protective factors in the child's environment (achievement, friendships, good relationships with adults)

Jaffe, P., M. Suderman, and D. Reitzell. 1992. "Child Witnesses to Marital Violence." In Assessment of Family Violence, ed. R. Ammerman and M. Hersen. New York: John Wiley and Sons.