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Making a Difference in Family Violence Cases

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Preliminaries:

- Zoom Polls: Time is Short. Vote fast! Top of mind responses.
- Enter questions in the chat
- Terminology: Batterer “him” and Survivor “her”
- Speak only for myself
- Two videos with explicit scenes of domestic violence



People will forget what you said.
People will forget what you did.
But people will never forget how you
made them feel.

— Maya Angelou



How do Survivors come in feeling?

- Alone
- Scared
- Unsupported
- Fragile



Thank you again for talking to me. You're the third person in the community I've ever talked to about this besides the police. *I feel a little stronger from it.* Scared, but maybe stronger.

— Custodial Parent



In this session you'll learn

- 1) Dynamics of DV
- 2) How to detect DV in the caseload
- 3) How to respond proactively

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Zoom Poll





Why is this any of our business?

- Financial support is a major predictor of Survivors' ability to leave and stay out of battering relationships. Financial support is our business.
- Ensure our agreements/orders/enforcement actions are based on case facts, not unfair intimidation
- Explains unusual actions of Survivors
- Protect Survivors and children
- Protect our offices



Bad News

- 1) DV is very prevalent
- 2) DV is very complicated
- 3) Survivors/families have tons of needs



Good News

- 1) You don't have to be an expert on DV
- 2) It won't take a lot of time
- 3) You can make a big difference



“Boardroom” DV PSA WARNING EXPLICIT VIOLENCE



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What friends and family see





Reality



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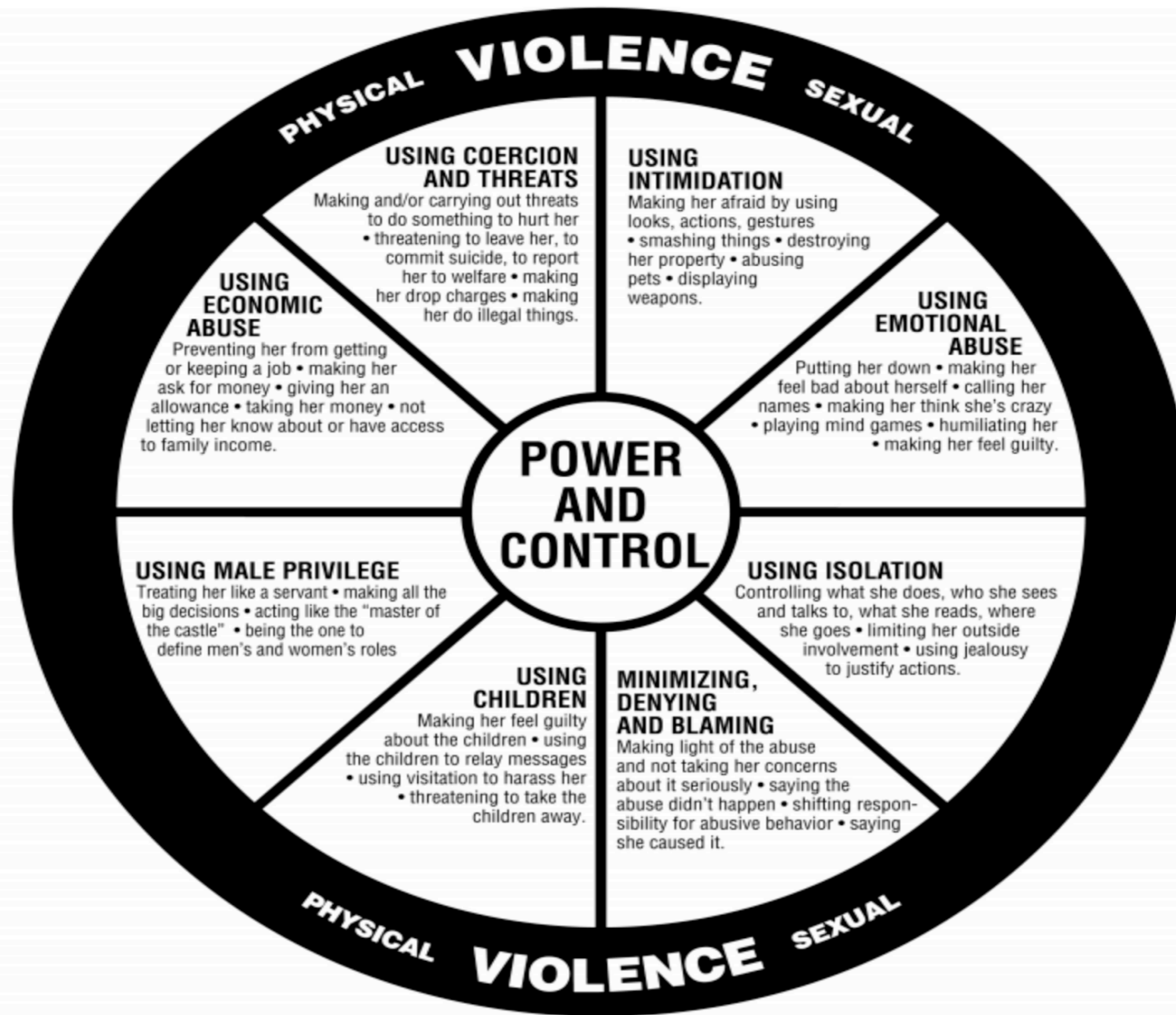
Zoom Poll





DV Definition for our Purposes

- A *pattern* of violent or coercive behaviors that may include
- physical, sexual, emotional, psychological, verbal and economic attacks
- used against an intimate partner to achieve compliance from or power and control over them.





Detecting Family Violence

- Create atmosphere that shows it's ok to talk about it
 - Posters on wall from local DV program
 - Brochures
- Create the context so it makes sense why we ask...
 - We take the safety of families seriously... that's why we're asking

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Detecting Family Violence

- **Ask about family violence**
 - Federal screening form in attachments
 - Create universal form to educate and tell us concerns
- **Ways to ask**
 - We see family violence in lots of our cases.
 - Is he kind of controlling?
 - It can and does happen to anyone.
 - Does he/she do things that scare you or make you afraid?



Detecting Family Violence: Signs of DV

- CP opening and closing her case repeatedly
- If someone is doing something against their interests, consider asking about DV and explain the consequences.
 - Forgiving arrears
 - “He’s going to pay me himself. He just doesn’t want the government involved.”
 - We just want to stop the income withholding order



The Propaganda:

What Survivors hear from batterers

- You're crazy.
- I don't remember doing that.
- That never happened - you're imagining it.
- Why do you make me hurt you?
- You're ugly, fat, etc.
- You're a bad mother/wife/friend/person.
- No one is going to believe you.

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The Propaganda:

What Survivors hear from batterers

- It's your fault I'm threatening/beating/choking you.
- You're weak. You could never make it on your own.
- You're a dumb ____ (insert derogatory term) ____.
- No one will ever want you.
- You deserve it.
- I'm going to kill you.
- If you leave I'll take the kids.
- *You'll pay me* child support.

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Let's Always Remember Something...

- By the time victims get to us they've done something remarkable.
- *They've gotten away.*
- *They've beaten the odds.*
- *They're protecting themselves and their children.*
- *BUT... This may be a very precarious status.*
 - *What we say, what we do, and how we make them feel may tip the scales.*



Responding Proactively:

*****The Anti-Propaganda*****

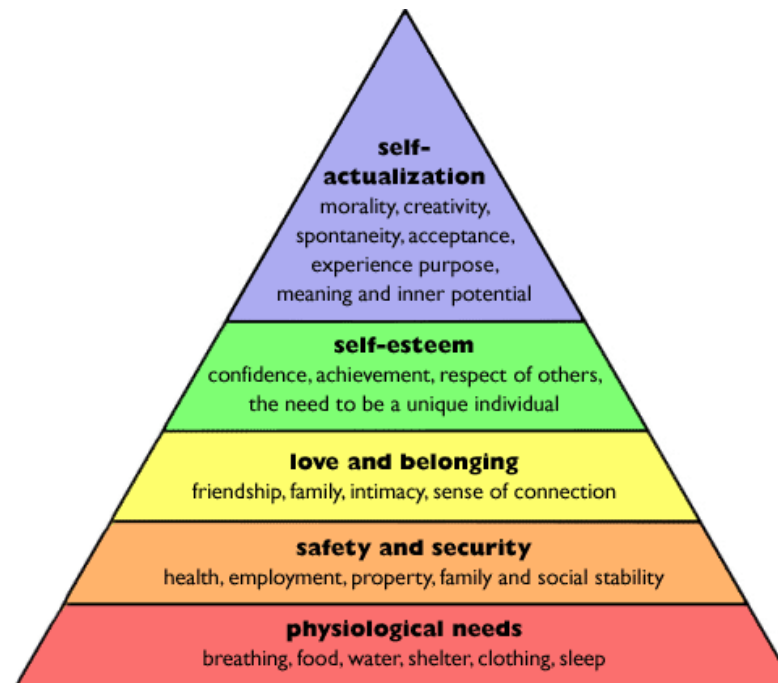
- You're not alone. DV happens more than anyone knows.
- It's not your fault.
- You don't deserve to be treated like this.
- You're a strong woman/mother.
- Good for you to get the kids away from the violence.
- You're doing all the things you need to do.
- We're here for you when you need us.

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Responding Proactively

What do Survivors need?





Responding Proactively

What do Survivors need?

- Physical/Emotional Safety
 - Protection order
 - Safety plan
 - Advocacy
 - Counseling from themselves/children
 - Housing
 - Safe House
- **Local DV Program can usually help with all of this**
 - You want to know where customers can find this help

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Responding Proactively

What do Survivors need?

- Economic support
 - Purposely kept poor: Without education/money/car
 - Child Support!!!
- Aid programs
 - SNAP, TANF, Workforce Services, Housing, community programs

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Responding Proactively

What do Survivors need?

■ Civil legal services

- Divorce
- Custody/Visitation
- Create handout/email with options for low/no cost legal representation
- Make sure all workers have canned response email with options -- Attachment: DV Considerations in Child Support Cases



Responding Proactively

What do Survivors need?

- Information about CS system
 - We don't represent them
 - Generally what is going to happen
 - And timing of it... surprises can be dangerous for survivors
- Where are the pitfalls
 - Attachment: DV Considerations in Child Support Cases

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Responding Proactively

Specific child support tools

- Family Violence Indicator
 - Hides survivor's contact information in Federal Parent Locator Service
 - May flag for workers that DV is an issue
 - For cases where survivor is fleeing or may be in future
- Nondisclosure order
 - *Court* won't release contact info for survivor
- Good cause
 - May not have to cooperate with child support if survivor of DV
 - TANF. Medicaid. Food Stamps (some states)
- Phone appearance for court
- No in-person settlement conferences



Responding Proactively

What do Survivors need?

- Champions
 - People who will make the system better

- They need you!!!
 - Talk about how DV is handled in your office
 - Make changes
 - It's not all or nothing
 - Dream big, start start small

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Zoom Poll





Resources

- Michael Hayes
 - Senior Programs Manager at OCSE
 - DV and child support expert
 - Michael.Hayes@acf.hhs.gov

- Handouts attached

- Brett Johnson
 - brett.johnson1@wyo.gov



Final Video PSA

WARNING EXPLICIT VIOLENCE

- From Center for Women & Children in Crisis in Orem, UT
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hhHdIhfK7LQ>

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Your Questions!!!





Thank You!!!

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