

# **MEN WHO BATTER: RISKS & OPPORTUNITIES**

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# MEN WHO BATTER:

- Who are they?
- Understanding risks
- What to do
- Understanding opportunities—levers for change... **Walking together toward empathy.**
- → Limitation: research focused on low income men

# Who are they?

- **MODERATELY VIOLENT** 40-60%
- low level of violence & control
- **ONGOING REASSAULTERS** 40-50%
- **GENERALLY VIOLENT**
- **OBSESSED/POSSESSIVE**
- **HIGHLY DANGEROUS** Less than 5%
- **SUBSTANCE ABUSE INTENSIFIES RISK; ALSO INSTABILITY**
- **NOT MAJOR MENTAL CLINICAL GROUP**
- **PERSONALITY DISORDERS & TRAUMA**

# What to do?

- Safety & protection for victims & children
- Accountability: CJS, BIPs, coordinated community response—collaboration btwn systems. **“It takes a community”**
- Talking to men in different settings—framing the conversation→ DV as a lifespan issue for men

# DV as a lifespan issue for men

## Overview

- Witness DV as child—research, profound impact
- Concern about parenting and role modeling for boys and girls
- Partner with women & ch who had been exposed to abuse/violence

# Witness DV as a child

- Research/focus groups-graduates of fatherhood programs in MA & FL
- 50-60% of low income men exposed
- Very traumatic impact: fear, terror, anger, want to protect mom, lasting rage & trauma: “You are changed forever. You cannot go back.” “I planned to kill him.” “I tried to kill him.” “I was suicidal.” “Became angry kid.”
- Legacy & Modeling: hated abuser, repulsed/revolted, managed to avoid DV, OR rage turned to violence and ending up perpetuating the legacy they hated.

# Witness DV as a child, II

- Powerful understanding of modeling & different messages for boys & girls
- Crystallized new understanding: “You cannot hurt abuse your children’s mother without also hurting your children. They will carry what you do forever.” “You cannot say you are a good father and be abusive to their mom.”

# Application

- Frame conversation. Information and understanding his legacy. Non-labeling & non-blaming, but focused on DV
- What was your childhood like? What were your father, father figures like?
- Did you witness any DV as a child? How did it impact you? How did it impact your mom? Talk about various dimensions. Use your own extensive knowledge of impact of DV on children.

# Application II

→ IF HE HAS CHILDREN, use this approach lavishly. Talking about the impact of witnessing on kids by age and by gender is very powerful. “IT’S NOT JUST ABOUT HER, IT’S ABOUT YOUR CHILDREN.” “You cannot go after her without hurting your children.”

→ If he has ch. & doesn’t respond, this may tell you a lot about his potential for change and his missing parts.

# Application III

→ IF DOES NOT HAVE CHILDREN OR STEP CHILDREN, but he was exposed to DV, talk about the impact on him and on his family (parents & peers) and ask him if he has thought that he is passing on the same impact—transferring that impact—to someone else. If he can connect with his own pain, he is in better shape moving forward.

“It’s not about bad people doing bad things, it’s about people who were hurt who are passing on the hurt.”

# Sources

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