

Serene Harbor, Inc.
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE CENTER

www.sereneharbor.org

Domestic Violence and Its Impact on Children

Presented by:

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For

Children's Advocacy Center of Brevard

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Learning Objectives

- Improve your understanding of domestic violence
- Develop an enlightened perspective to help you improve your ability to work with a domestic violence service provider
- Improve your understanding of the impact of domestic violence on children



Domestic Violence Overview



National Statistics

- **15.5 million children in the United States live in families in which partner violence occurred at least once in the past year, and seven million children live in families in which severe partner violence occurred. ***
- **Several studies have found that in 30% to 60% of families in which a woman is battered, children are also battered.****
- **It is estimated that 1/3 of all calls for police assistance in the US are for domestic violence**
- **During the month of March 2009 at least 8 mass homicides in the US claimed the lives of 57 people; all but one of those were domestic violence offences**

*Whitfield, CL, Anda RF, Dube SR, Felittle VJ. 2003. *Violent Childhood Experiences and the Risk of Intimate Partner Violence in Adults: Assessment in a Large Health Maintenance Organization*. Journal of Interpersonal Violence. 18(2): 166-185.

**NCADV Fact Sheet July 2007



Domestic Violence in Our State

- According to the Florida Department of Law Enforcement 113,123 domestic violence crimes were reported in our state in 2008.
- 194 of those crimes were homicides.
- 7,575 of those crime were committed against a child.
- 34 children were murdered.



Florida Shelter Statistics

- Last year, the state-wide network of 42 certified domestic violence programs provided counseling and advocacy services to over 176,000 victims; a 10% increase over the previous year.
- As the economy has taken it's downward turn in 2009 we have seen a 37% increase in the number of victim's seeking emergency shelter services across Florida.



Florida Shelter Statistics

- Last year 14,504 women and children were sheltered in Florida. In the 1st 6 months of this year, 8,076 have already been sheltered-at this rate 16,152 will be served in Florida's shelters-an increase of 1,648 victims over last year.
- During March 2009 Serene Harbor provided 444 nights of shelter, double that provided the month before.



Domestic Violence in Our Community

- In 2008 law enforcement agencies in Brevard County reported 3,921 domestic violence offences.
- During one weekend (April 11th-12th 2009) in Brevard there were 29 arrests and bookings for domestic violence. It is estimated that only 1/3 of all domestic violence incidents get reported, assuming that, then nearly 90 domestic incidents took place in Brevard on this particular Saturday and Sunday.



Clearly DV is an epidemic in our country...

Lets take a look at some common issues that we as a society have become fully engaged in and rightfully so:

- We as a society support the rights and needs of individuals who have Downs Syndrome...
- the odds of having a Downs Syndrome child if you are less than 30 years old...
- 1 in 1,000



- We as a society have recognized Autism as an epidemic and are fully invested in supporting efforts ...

- the odds of a child being diagnosed with Autism ...

- 1 in 150


- We as a society have so fully supported non-smoking efforts that smokers are now in the minority ...

- the odds of dying of smoke related illnesses if your are a lifelong smoker ...

- 1 in 12



- We as a society are fully engaged in supporting efforts to improve survival rates of those who are diagnosed with breast cancer...
- the odds of getting breast cancer...
- 1 in 9
- The odds of a women being a victim of Domestic Violence in her lifetime...
- 1 in 4
- What keeps society from being fully invested in the fight against Domestic Violence?



My guess is that most people just don't understand why she just doesn't leave.....

■ What does she know?

- It is awful at home
- I don't like the way I am being treated
- My kids have a roof over their heads
- My kids have food to eat
- My kids seem to be doing ok



- What doesn't she know?

- What happens if I leave...
- Will he take my kids...he says he will
- Will he kill my kids...he says he will
- Will he kill my parents...he says he will
- Will he kill me...he says he will

- It is very possible that he will...

- 65% of all murdered victims of domestic violence were killed after they left their abuser.



Domestic Violence: Legal Definition

- **Domestic Violence** is any assault, aggravated assault, battery, aggravated battery, sexual assault, sexual battery, stalking, aggravated stalking, or any criminal offense resulting in physical injury or death of one family or household member by another who is or was residing in the same single dwelling.

{s. 741.30 F.B. 1993}

- **Family or Household Member** is defined as spouses, former spouses, persons related by blood or marriage, persons who are presently residing together as if a family or who have resided together in the past as a family, and persons who have a child in common regardless of whether they have been married or have resided together at any time.

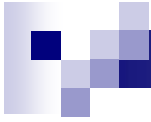
{s. 741.30 F.B. 1993}

- the relationship must fit the statute; parties do not have to be married and same-sex relationships may apply if they fit the statute

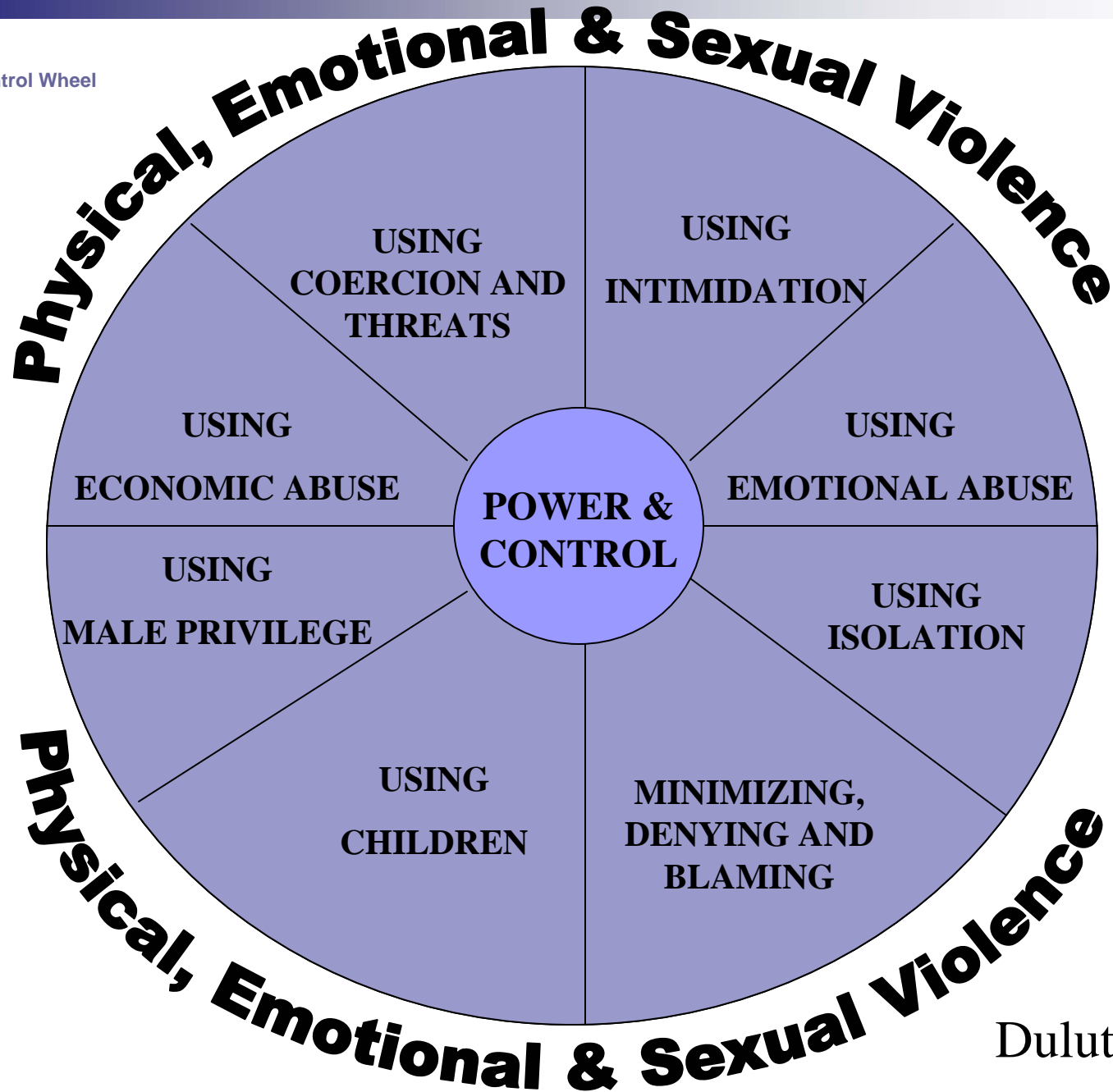


Domestic Violence: Working Definition

Abusive or coercive patterns of behavior used to control an intimate partner and/or other family members. Includes the use of physical, sexual, psychological/emotional abuse and economic coercion.

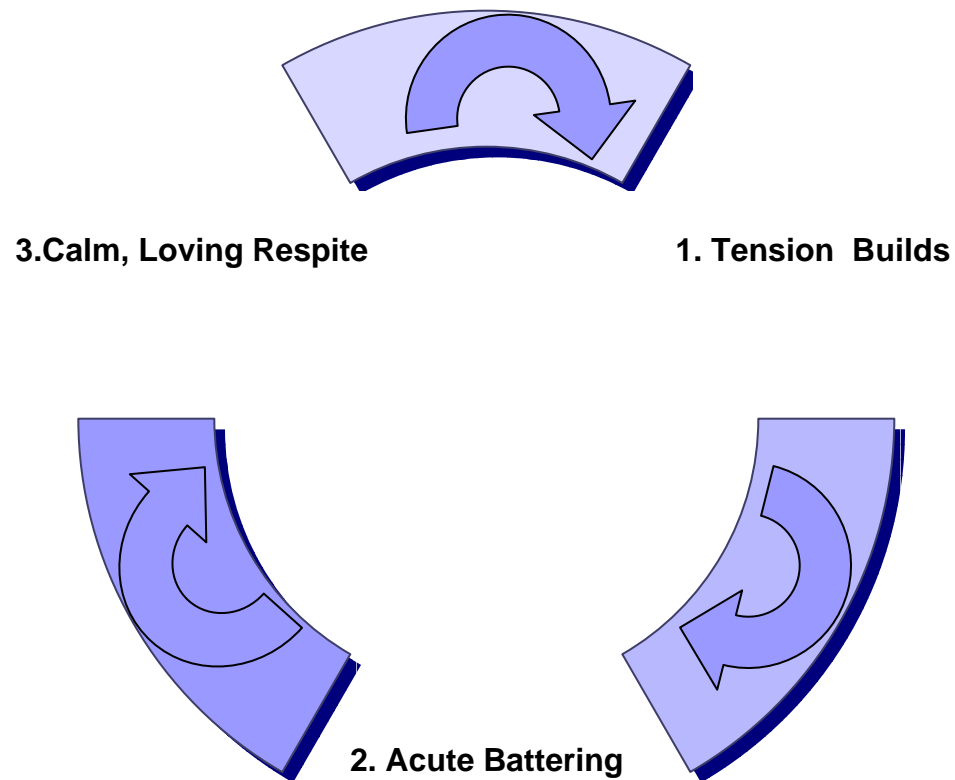


Power & Control Wheel



Duluth Model

Cycle of Violence





CHARACTERISTICS OF BATTERED WOMEN AND THEIR BATTERERS*

Battered Women

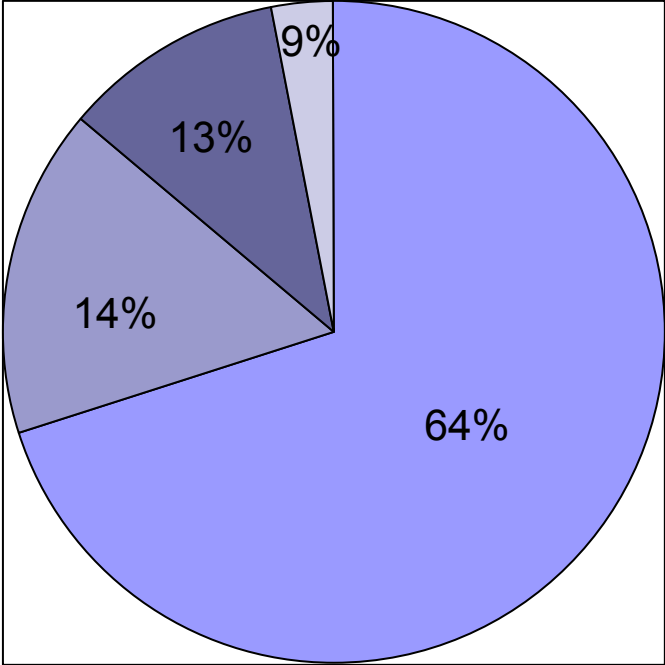
1. Low self esteem
2. Believes all myths about battering relationships
3. Is a traditionalist in the home, strongly believing in family unity and the prescribed feminine sex role
4. Accepts responsibility for the batterer's actions
5. Suffers from guilt yet denies the terror and anger she feels
6. Presents a passive face to the world but has strength to manipulate her environment so she can survive
7. May have suffered from child abuse or neglect or may have seen her father beat her mother
8. Believes no one will be able to help her resolve her predicament except herself

Batterers

1. Low self esteem
2. Believes all myths about battering relationships
3. Is a traditionalist in his home, believing in male supremacy and the stereotypic masculine sex role
4. Blames victim for his actions
5. Is pathologically jealous and intrusive into his woman's life
6. Presents a dual personality - a Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde
7. May have suffered from child abuse or neglect or may have seen his father beat his mother
8. Does not believe his violent behavior should have negative consequences

*Walker, Lenore E. The Battered Woman. New York; Harper and Row: 1979

Ethnicity



Serene Harbor Client
Demographics FY 2007-2008



Culture & Religion

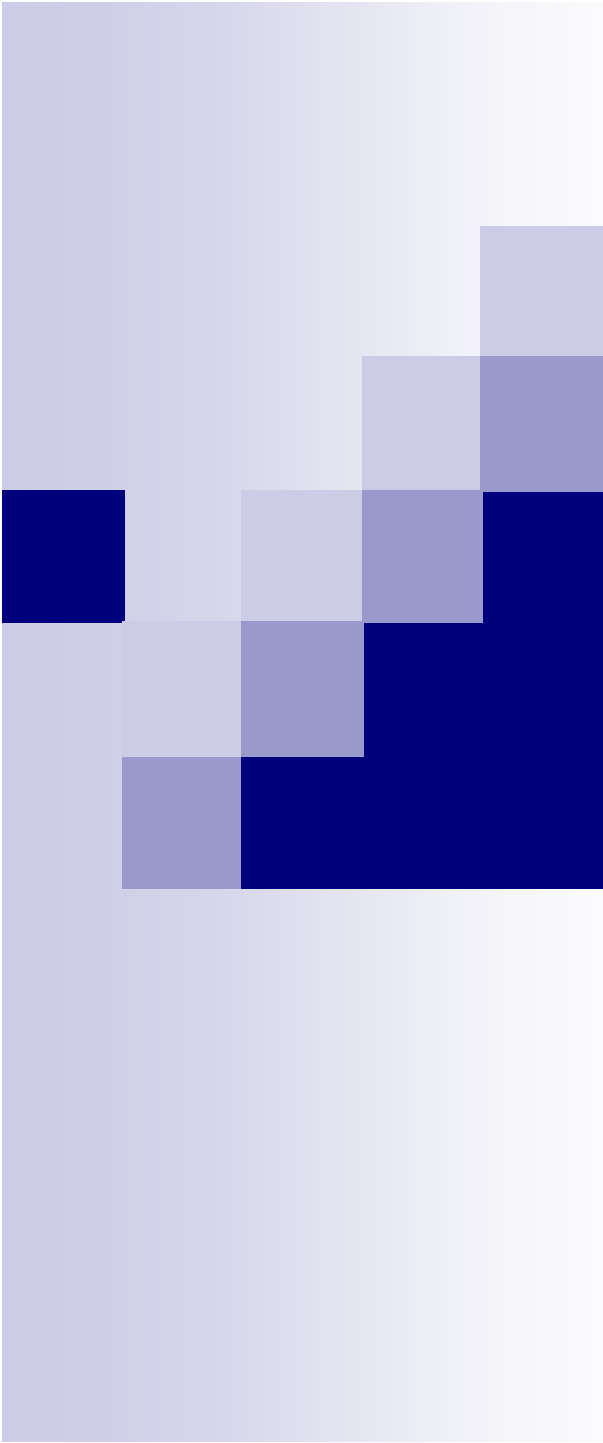
- Culture and religion can play key roles in the dynamic of domestic violence in a family or a community. Some cultures and religious belief systems can make it very difficult for a victim to even consider reaching out for help.



So...“Why doesn’t she just leave?”

- Fear for her life or the lives of her children
- She sees this dynamic as normal because she lived it as a child
- She doesn’t think anyone will help her and her children
- She does not know where to turn for help
- She is afraid she can not provide for her children without the economic stability her abuser provides
- Her culture says “make the marriage work for the sake of the children”
- Her religion says divorce is not allowed or sinful and she should do whatever she has to do to make the marriage work

...there are many reasons





Developing Effective Relationships with a Domestic Violence Service Provider




Things you should know

- We want to be helpful but sometimes we are bound by statute not to be helpful no matter who you are.
 - For example:
 - Florida Statutes Title V Chapter 39
 - **39.908 Confidentiality of information received by department or domestic violence center.—**
- **Information about domestic violence center clients may not be disclosed without the written consent of the client to whom the information or records pertain.**

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- **Information about a client or the location of a domestic violence center may be given by center staff or volunteers to law enforcement, firefighting, medical, or other personnel in the following circumstances:**
 - To medical personnel in a medical emergency.
 - Upon a court order based upon an application by a law enforcement officer for a criminal arrest warrant which alleges that the individual sought to be arrested is located at the domestic violence shelter.
 - Upon a search warrant that specifies the individual or object of the search and alleges that the individual or object is located at the shelter.
 - To firefighting personnel in a fire emergency.

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- To any other person necessary to maintain the safety and health standards in the domestic violence shelter.
 - Upon a court order based upon an application by a law enforcement officer for a criminal arrest warrant which alleges that the individual sought to be arrested is located at the domestic violence shelter.
 - Upon a search warrant that specifies the individual or object of the search and alleges that the individual or object is located at the shelter.
 - To firefighting personnel in a fire emergency.
 - Information solely about the location of the domestic violence shelter may be given to those with whom the agency has an established business relationship.

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- **The restriction on the disclosure or use of the information about domestic violence center clients does not apply to:**

 - Communications from domestic violence shelter staff or volunteers to law enforcement officers when the information is directly related to a client's commission of a crime or threat to commit a crime on the premises of a domestic violence shelter; or

 - Reporting suspected abuse of a child or a vulnerable adult as required by law. However, when cooperating with protective investigation services staff, the domestic violence shelter staff and volunteers must protect the confidentiality of other clients at the domestic violence center.



The Impact of Domestic Violence on Children



Children in Florida Shelters

- Of the 14,504 individuals who sought safety in one of Florida's domestic violence shelters last year; 48% or 6,962 of those individuals were children.
- Of the 48% of shelter residents who were children and the 17% of outreach program participants who were children; 92% were under 12 years of age.



What We Know

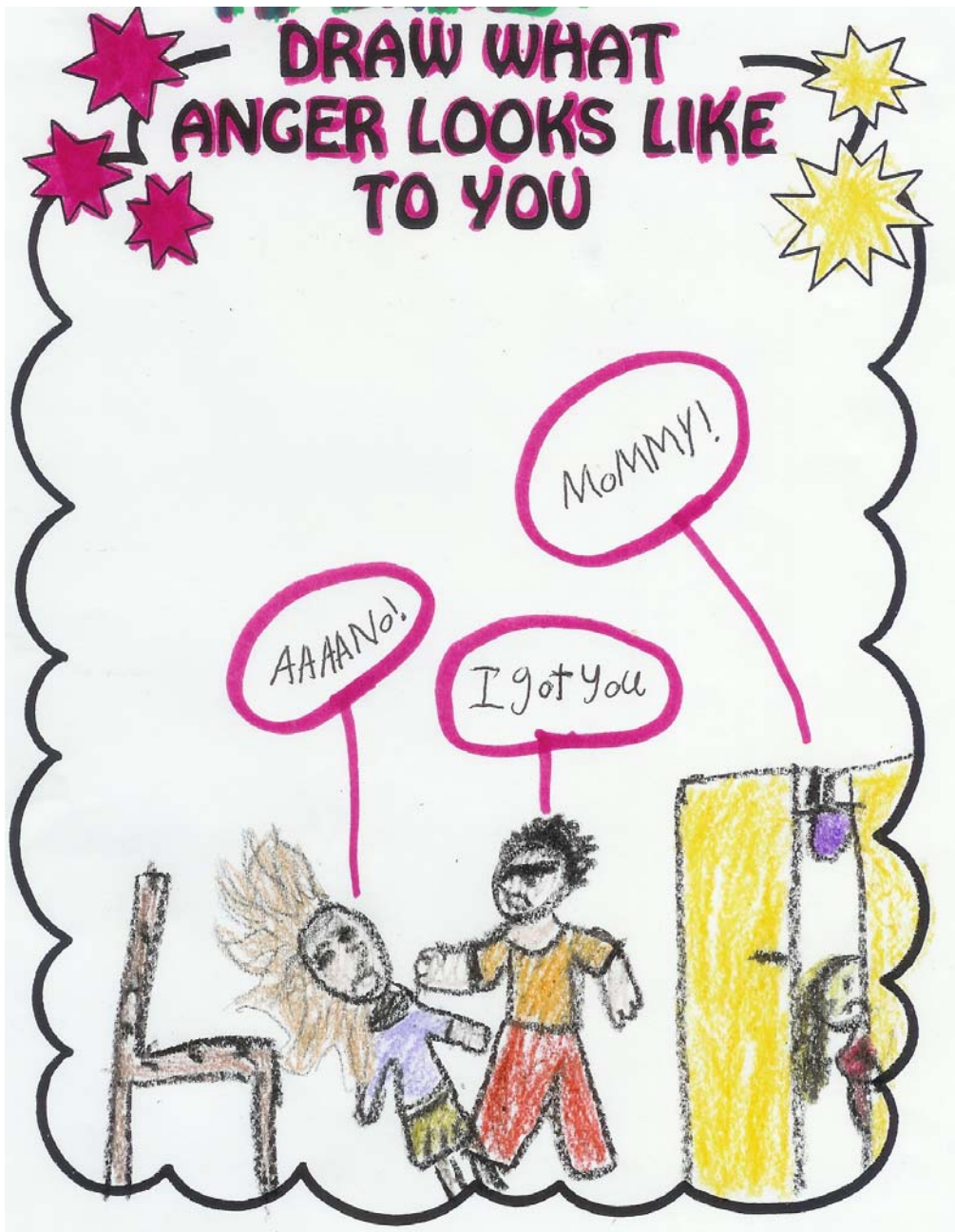
- We know that exposure to domestic violence can have a negative impact on a child's social, emotional and cognitive development
- We also know that exposure to domestic violence can have long-term negative effects on a child's well-being and ultimately effect their adult functioning
- We also know that exposure to violence can have significant effects on children as they form their own intimate relationships in childhood and adulthood.



Risk Levels and Reactions

- Children's risk levels and reactions to domestic violence exist on a continuum, protective factors can help children cope.
- Additional assessment factors that influence the impact of domestic violence on children include:
 - Nature of the violence**
 - Coping strategies and skills**
 - Age of the child**
 - Elapsed time since exposure**
 - Gender**
 - Presence of child physical or sexual abuse**

**DRAW WHAT
ANGER LOOKS LIKE
TO YOU**

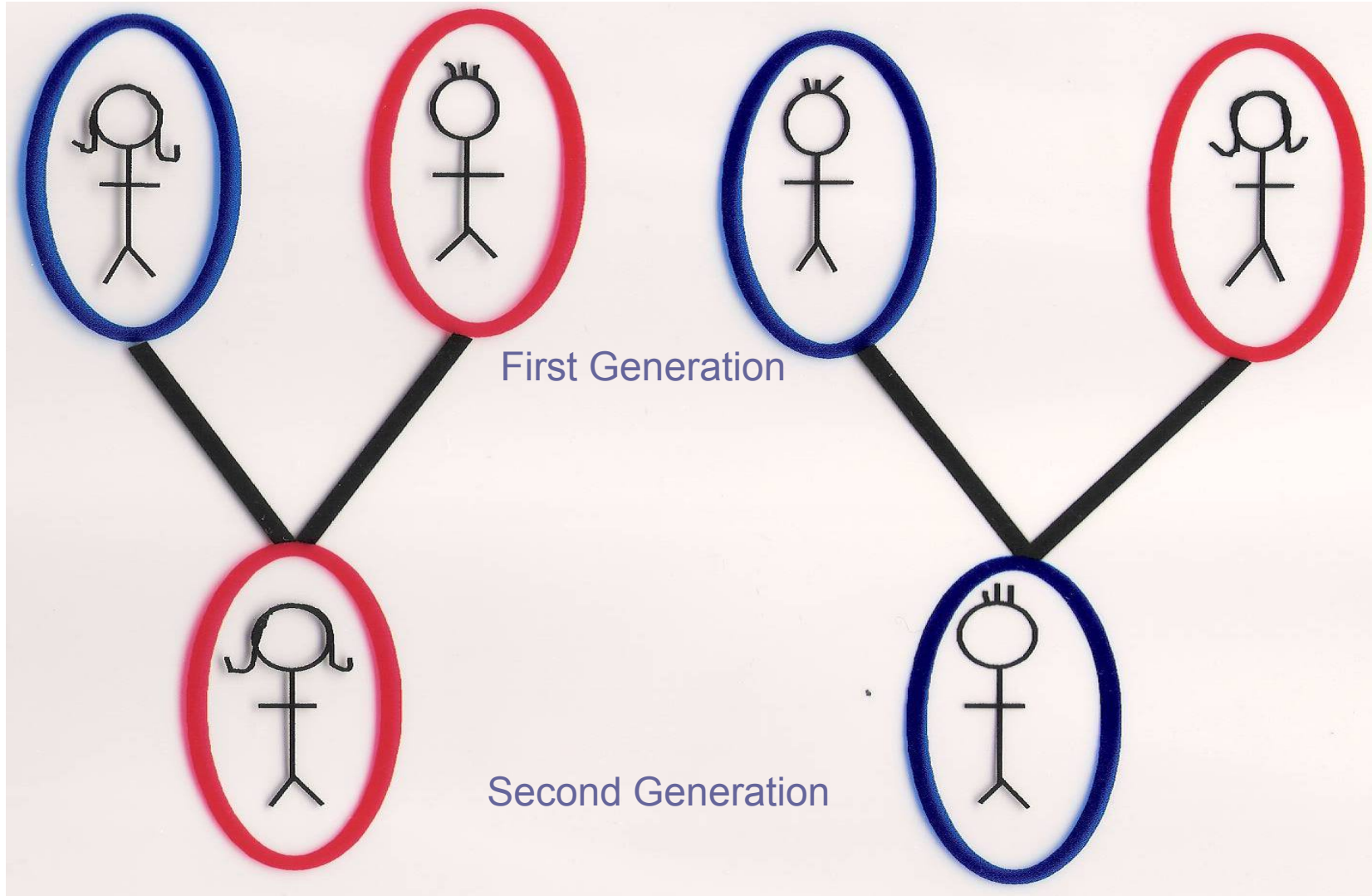


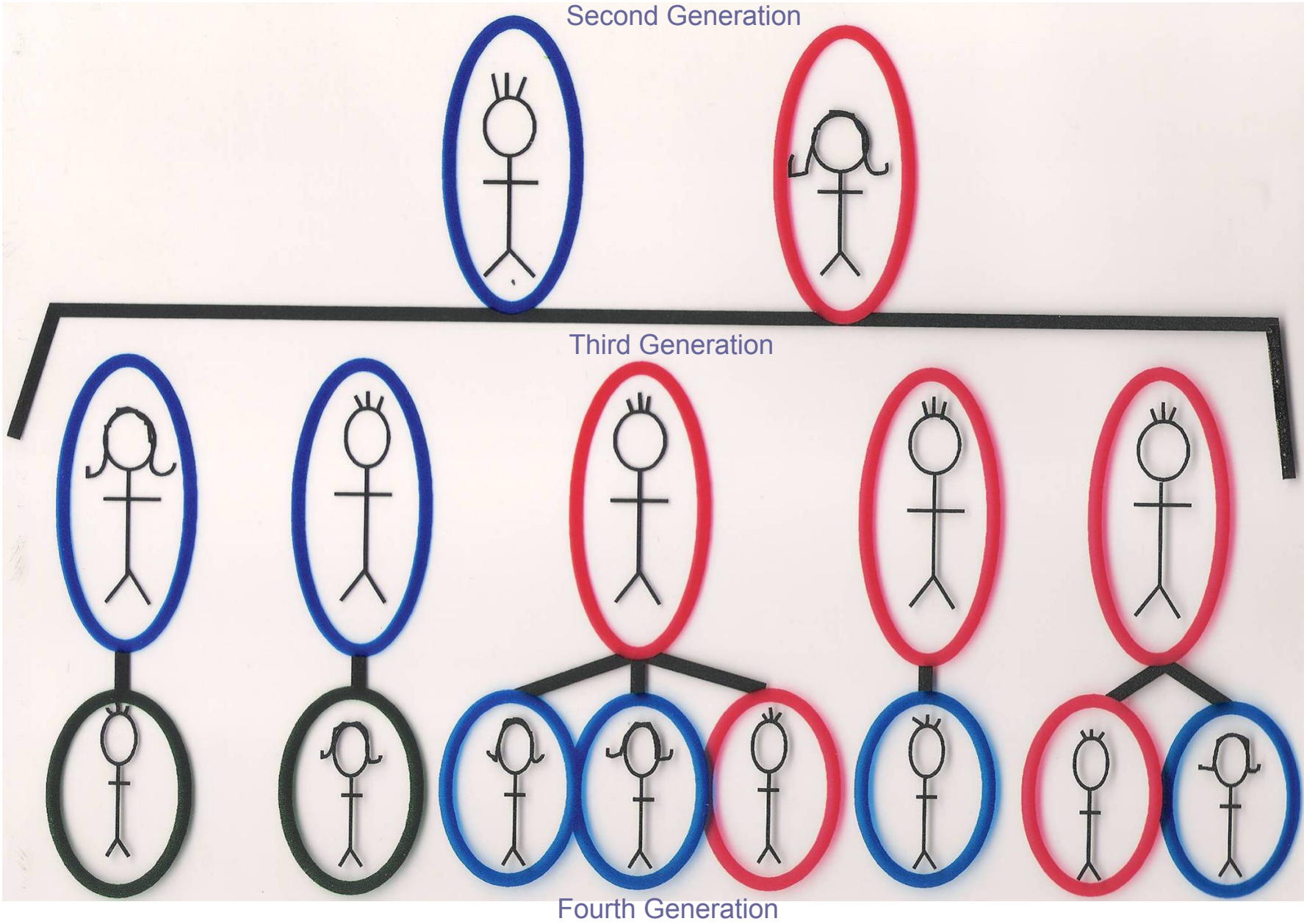
“Sad House”





Case Study

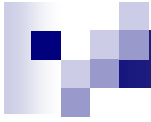






Minimizing the Risk of Long-Term Damage

- Child witnesses to domestic violence need the safety and security of their environment to be restored.
- Children exposed to domestic violence also need support from the adults around them, most importantly their own parents or other primary caregivers.
- The most effective interventions that help children are those that help their parents to increase their own safety and to increase the resources available to provide safety for their children
- Education based interventions may be the best hope for families in our society struggling with violence in their homes, these interventions can help prevent the cycle from repeating



What are we doing to help these children?

- Prevention
- Statutes
- Policies
- Counseling
- Safety Planning
- Case Management



The Children Are Watching



The Solution

- Emergency Services
- Education
- Intervention
- Primary Prevention
- Batterer Accountability

Those of us who fight this fight every day, to save the lives of these women and children, can not do it without your help.

Our community and our society as a whole must get fully behind this cause as we have so many other that deserved our attention.

If we all band together we can make such a difference in the lives of so many.



Useful Resources

- Florida Coalition Against Domestic Violence operates Florida's toll free domestic violence hotline visit their website at www.fcadv.org
- Florida Domestic Violence Hotline
 - 1-800-500-1119 (Voice)
 - 1-800-621-4202 (TDD)
- Florida Child Abuse Hotline
 - 1-800-962-2873 (Voice)
 - 1-800-455-3514 (TDD)
- National Domestic Violence Hotline
 - 1-800-799-7233
- 211 Helpline (available in most communities by dialing 211)
- Serene Harbor's Hotline
 - (321) 726-8282
- Serene Harbor's Website
 - www.sereneharbor.org