The Victim and the Perpetrator: Self Esteem Issues

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What is Domestic Violence?

Attempt to cause or causing bodily injury or death to spouse or significant other

Defining characteristics:

- repeated
- escalates in severity over time
- defined by society as personal/private
- asymmetric in power, status, protection of law
- isolates victim from the outside world with intent to control
- associated with

low self-esteem in perpetrator & victim

Historical Perspective on DV

(based on Family Life Development Center, Cornell U.)

- Religion-sanctioned dominion over women,
 - e. g. Bible, Koran -- OK to beat women
- Societal norms, e.g.:
 - Punic Wars (200s BC) "illegal to beat upper class women,"
 - -- all the rest OK to beat
 - Sanctioned old habit, e.g.:
 - "the rule of thumb" in England (1150-1861)
 - -- OK to beat women, but limit damage
 - Outside norms and laws, e.g.
 - Texas law, 1961; DV declared crime, 1984
 - -- not OK to beat women, but not hate crime

Extent of Problem, U.S.

EACH YEAR: America's most predictable murders

- 4M reported/2-3M unreported (est.) incidents
- approx. 1 incident every 12 seconds
- leading cause of injury, women aged 17-28
- 1/8 of all homicides, 75% of female homicides
- 3000 murders committed by husbands
- 75% of murders occur after woman leaves
- 30% of teenage girls have violent dating relationships

Costs of Problem, U.S.

EACH YEAR:

- individual health/psychological/economic damage ò shelter costs
- medical, productivity loss, absenteeism ò \$4 billion
- dysfunctional families, societal problems ò prison costs
- trans-generational perpetuation of battery pattern

Why DV? Some theories

- 1890s
- Psychoanalytic (Freud)
- Social Learning (A. Bandura)
- Attachment (J. Bowlby)
- Systems (Lane & Russel)
- 1990s
- Male psyche (T. Real)
- Relational (N. Jacobson & J. Gottman)
- Low self-esteem theory (SFK)

Steinbacher, Forinash & Kaufman

HIS 'N'HER DOMESTIC ABUSE KIT (restraining order) FOR HER FOR HIM

Cartoon by Steve Sack. Reprinted with permission of the Star Tribune, Minneapolis.

Self-Esteem:

Love of self, one's own imperfections notwithstanding

Source:

 unconditional positive regard during infancy/childhood

Signs:

- essentially internal
- inherent worth considered same as others'

Lack leads to:

- Need for supplements
- Endless search

Male Self-Esteem Supplements

Futile search for external fixes

Addictive!



- S. Freud: Depression is a form of internalized violence
- Self-attack
- T. Real:
 - Self-attack = Shame (low self-esteem)

Manifestations:

- Narcissistic defense
- Grandiosity to ward off shame
- Diminishing other ("less than..." to "better than ...")
- Ultimately, destruction of other

T. Real: Male searching modes

- Old heroes: from helplessness to triumph through spiritual awakening:
 - Odysseus, Orpheus, Siddhartha, Jesus
- New heroes: from helplessness to triumph through rage & revenge:
 - Movie heroes:

The Graduate (D. Hoffman)
The Unforgiven (C.

Eastwood)

Rambo 4 (S. Stallone)

Female Self-Esteem Supplements

Futile search for external fixes

Overt depression:

- Freud: Repetition compulsion
- Self-loathing
- Steinbacher, Forinash, Kaufman:
 - Self-loathing = Self-annihilation

• Manifestations:

- Dates/marries "strong" man
- Loses boundaries between self and perpetrator
- Goes into denial -- "stands by her man" despite abuse
- Experience of conflict between home security & flight

SFK: Female searching modes

- Old heroines: from helplessness to desired helplessness through endurance, humility & virtue:
 - Penelope, Virgin Mary, Maria Goretti
- New heroines: from helplessness to desired helplessness through submission:
 - Movie heroines: Gone with the Wind (V. Leigh)
 Pretty Woman (J.

Roberts)

Eve's Bayou (L. Whitfield)

Gottman & Jacobson: Perpetrator profile

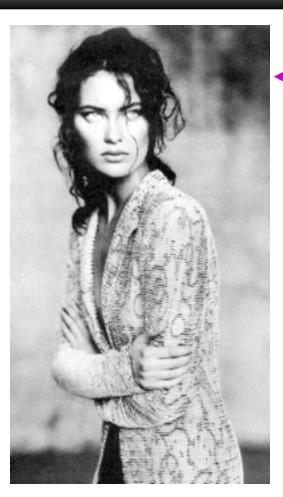
Pit Bulls: remorseful

- emotionally dependent
- insecure, sees betrayal everywhere
- heart rate increases during battery

Cobras: remorseless

- violence can be diffused
- severe antisocial traits
- heart-rate decreases during battery
- fight ends when control is reestablished

Steinbacher, Forinash, Kaufman: Victim profile



←・・・ Rag-doll



Piñata

Steinbacher, Forinash, Kaufman: Victim profile

- Rag-doll: self-esteem lowered prior to relationship
 - emotionally dependent on protector
 - expects battery as deserved punishment
 - harbors sense of inherent worthlessness
 - perpetual striving to please
 - submits to abuse compulsively to fix the past
- Piñata: self-esteem lowered due to relationship
 - passive
 - self-blame for abuse of self and loved ones
 - sees battery as price for security
 - harbors suppressed anger

Male-directed strategies

	Ex ante	Ex post
Societal:	G norms	G penalties
	G education (toys, books, movies)	al G enforcer attitudes
Individual:	G family	G recognition
	G role mode G p	els of depression programs
incarceration	on	G

Female-directed strategies

	Ex ante	Ex post
Societal:	Gnorms, laws	G attitudes
	G education	nal G
resources legislation		(toys, books, G
	movies)	
	G human	rights
• Individual:	G family G role models G protection	G recognition of anger G emergency
		G long-term programs

Steinbacher, Forinash & Kaufman

Conclusions

<u>Violence against</u>

Women: I global/American problem

Past remedies: I inadequate singly

I ignored root causes (men 's outward rage, women's inward anger)

Ideal: combination of past & new remedies I multi-pronged approaches I combined short- & long-term strategies:

Short term Long term

remove/punish/reform offender protect/restore victim

change norms

educate

Next Steps

- Validate SFK self-esteem framework:
 - case studies
 - new analysis of existing data
- Test/evaluate variety of remedial strategies:
 - at different scales
 - at short/long range
- Inject knowledge into political decisions
- Expand awareness & action to global scale