Treatment Options for Women Who Use Force

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Context Matters
Not everyone who hits ... is a batterer.
A hit is not a hit is not a hit.
Context matters.
A lot. A whole lot.

BACKGROUND

- Conflict Tactics Scale (CTS)
  & CTS2

- Mandatory, Preferred, & Pro- Arrest Policies
Conflict Tactics Scale (CTS) & CTS2

- National Family Violence Survey
- 39 Questions Focus on Physical Aggression to Resolve Disagreements
- Counts “blows” & Assesses “severity”
- Excludes Context of Motivation and Intent
- Ignores Influence of Culture and Ethnicity
Conflict Tactics Scale

Similarities in Number of Assaultive Acts

BUT

Substantial Differences in Injury Levels

- Women receive significantly more serious injuries than men
Mandatory, Preferred & Pro-Arrest

- Public acknowledgement that DV is a serious crime and will be punished.
- To empower and protect victims.
- To create uniformity of police response.
A Story

Tonya and George
At the scene ...

**She**
- Crying, screaming
- She talks about her behavior and actions
- She takes responsibility
- How can I help him?

**He**
- Calm & Bleeding
- He talks about her behavior and actions
- It’s not my problem
- If she hadn’t ...
Incident Based Thinking

“I don’t go there to figure out what happened. I don’t care what happened. My job is to decide whether or not a criminal act occurred and if so, what criminal act and who committed it.”

-Delaware Police Officer

As quoted in Miller (2005)
BEHIND THE SCENES?
Her Arrest & Conviction Have an Impact On (I):

- DV shelters’ willingness to accept her
- His ability to use arrest & incident details against her at “home”
- Native women’s access to tribal land.
Her Arrest & Conviction Have an Impact On (II):

- Her public benefits including housing & financial aid
- Her employment and/or schooling
- Opportunity to chaperone school fieldtrips
At a Crossroads...
Assumptions
- Compliant
- Helpless
- Quiet
- Seeks Help
- Protects Her Children
- Looks Beaten Down
- White
- Psycho-bitch
- PMS’ing
- Loud
- Doesn’t Look Bruised
- Doesn’t Protect Her Kids
- Violates “The Code”
- Women of Color
African American Women

- Expectation by other American ethnic groups that African American women are “strong” and “invulnerable” (Miller, 2001).

- Dilemma: If they report their partner’s violence against them, they are reinforcing negative stereotypes that black men are naturally violent (Donovan & Williams, 2002; Swan and Snow, 2006).
Generational Shift
Preemptive violence

- Survivors of long term abuse
- Young women
Imminent Danger

- Legal definition “Imminent Danger”
  - imminent - About to occur; impending
- Often no apparent imminent threat
Use of Weapons

- An attempt to equalize physical disparity
- Give false sense of safety
- Often Increase the violence against the women
Language
Where Do They Fit?
Use of Force

...refers to physically, verbally, and emotionally detrimental behaviors used toward an intimate partner...to gain short term control of chaotic, abusive and/or battering situations.

(Dasgupta, 2002; House, 2001; Larance, 2006; Osthoff, 2002)
Battering

...signifies a pattern of coercive control, intimidation, and oppression effectively used to instill fear and maintain long term relationship domination.

(Osthoff, 2002; Pence and Dasgupta, 2006; Schechter, 1982; Stark, 2007)
Coercive Control

entails a malevolent course of conduct that subordinates women to an alien will by violating their physical integrity…, denying them respect and autonomy…, depriving them of social connectedness…, …or denying them access to the resources required for personhood …

Stark (2007, p. 15).
Women Batterers

…it is exceptional for a woman to achieve the kind of dominance over her male partner that characterizes battering. Social conditions which do not condone women’s use of violence, patterns of socialization…physical disparities …make the woman “batterer” an anomaly.

Pence and Dasgupta (2006, p. 6)
“I had had had enough.”

- Sadia
Yes, she used violence but is she a *batterer*?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Advocacy Model</strong></th>
<th><strong>Criminal Legal System</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Survivor</strong></td>
<td><strong>Victim</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Person who experiences a pattern of coercive power and control by another over time.</td>
<td>Person against whom a crime of battery has been committed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Batterer</strong></td>
<td><strong>Perpetrator</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A person who establishes a pattern of coercive power and control over another person over time.</td>
<td>Person who has been convicted of committing a crime of battery.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Connie Burke, 2004, for the Northwest Network of BTLG Survivors
Distinctions in Behavior
His Motivation

- Long term relationship control
- Intimidate her
- Instill fear
Her Motivation

- Self-defense from him
- Defense of children
- Control of the situation
- Retribution for real or perceived wrongs
- Fear of him

Dasgupta (1999), Swan and Snow (2006)
Motivation: Her Words

- I wanted to stand up for myself.
- I wanted make him take some responsibility.
- I just use what he used against me.
- I wanted to make him respect me.
- I wanted him to pay for his behavior.
- I wanted to hurt him because he threatened my family...
- I am “tough”.
- I refuse to be a victim!
At Court…

“I believed if I just told the whole truth then everything would be fine.”

- Sarah, RENEW Program Member
Men’s Group

- Over-report victimization
- Under-report battering tactics
- Violent & coercively controlling tactics changed partners’ behaviors over short & long-term

Women’s Group

- Under-report survivorship
- Over-report use of force
- Use of force escalated violence against them over short or long-term
Primary Power vs. Secondary Power

- Decides What the Choices Are
- Has Access to Resources
- Exercises Authority

- Picks from Available Choices
- Seen as Manipulative When Seeking Power
- Seeks Autonomy
Primary vs. Secondary Power

Corporations Can Terminate

Unions Can Go On Strike

Who Has Primary Power?
Women’s Use of Force Increases:

- *His violence* toward her and, therefore, risk to her safety (Swan and Snow, 2002).

- Likelihood that she will be injured severely by her male partner (Archer, 2000).

- Risk that she will use force again — putting *her* — at increased risk of future harm (Larance, 2006, 2007).
Keep Fishing for Answers...

ASSESSMENT
“So I could go to the grave, the psych hospital or jail...”

- Connie
“Yes, I slapped him and I did it because the cops were there to back me up!”

-Laura
The Dunking Chair Test
Circa 1692

*If she floated she was a witch and would then be burned at the stake.*

*If she drowned she was exonerated ...and dead.*
“She is Not an IPV Survivor” (Are You Sure?)

- “It was just a fight with another woman.”

- “But her husband is a great guy.”

- “She says she is not afraid of him.”
Fear Factor...

- Does she **dread** his presence?

- Does she **dread** his findings?

- Does she **dread** what he can do to her if she doesn’t comply with his demands?
Majority of the women in the programs have been arrested.

The women need assistance exploring choices.
Gender Responsive Intervention
Creating Programming
Considerations

- Site selection
- Staff selection
- Cost
- Childcare
- Intake process
- Program development & approach
Women Examining Accountably Violent Encounters
Integrity

Holding Women Accountable

vs.

Holding Women Accountable Appropriately
Women Using Violence Under Duress

Understanding is not the same as excusing
To emphasize and promote safety...

*her’s, children’s, partner’s, and community’s*

...is our professional duty.
To not consider safety is to be derelict in our duty as professionals.
Trauma Informed Intervention
How Women See Themselves

“I feel sorry for all these women who’ve been abused. I have never been abused”

Carla 45
“I was gonna buy cigarettes and no man was gonna stop me!”

-Nicole, RENEW Program Member
Philosophy: The Three Strands...

Safety & Support

Socio-Cultural Messages

Skills & Resources
RENEW Program Design

- Fundamentals:

- Examination:

- Sankofa:
Phase 1: Fundamentals of Abuse

Help Women Be Aware of the Power & Control Wheel

Explore Women’s Responses to the Wheel

Remember: the wheel about **having** POWER *not* wanting power
Phase 2: Examination of Personal Belief System
Phase 3: Sankofa

- How am I continually watching out for the safety of myself & others?

- What can I look for in new relationships that will clue me in?
OPPORTUNITY IS NOWHERE
Questions & Answers
RESOURCES:

W-Catch22 Listserve

Vista Curriculum:  www.jbws.org

RENEW Program Website:  
www.csswashtenaw.org/renew
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