TOUCH AND SENSITIVITY
CHILD AND ADOLESCENT SURVIVORS OF PARENTAL DOMESTIC VIOLENCE HOMICIDE

Number of children adversely affected:

- 3,000-4,000 per year
- Study: children witnessed 35% of the homicides and 62% of attempted homicides
- Montgomery County DVFRT:
  - Children lived at home in nearly 50% of the cases
  - 53% of them witnessed the event
CHALLENGES WITH INFORMATION

DV fatality review teams largely do not systematically collect this information.
Child welfare systems do not systematically collect information.

VOCA – ACASI opportunities.
The view from 68th St, looking east, toward the crime scene on Chaparral Road. (Photo: Garrett Mitchell)

Police and paramedics swarmed a neighborhood near Paradise Valley on Tuesday morning after a reported shooting that left two people dead.

Officers were called to the area near 68th Street and Chaparral Road before 8:30 a.m. after construction workers in the area heard a child screaming for help Tuesday morning, said Officer Kevin Watts, a Scottsdale police spokesman.

One of the workers came to the home where he wrestled a gun from a man, Watts said.

The construction worker then took the man's wife and a child across the street, Watts said.

The man inside the house brought out another gun and shot his wife several times on the sidewalk, Watts said.

A worker who witnessed the shooting said the man turned the gun on himself after he shot his wife.

The child was unharmed and is in police custody, according to Scottsdale police.
COMPLEX TRAUMA

“Veil of Silence”
Feelings of shame
Loss of familiar belongings
New living situations and family and social dynamics
COMPLEX TRAUMA

Dual identity struggles
Fear of the perpetrator targeting them
Attachment problems
COMPLEX TRAUMA

New experiences of abuse or perpetration
Suicidal thoughts, plan, attempts
Ill-equipped caregivers
Limited resources
Lack of training among professionals
COMPLEX TRAUMA

Complications involving legal cases resulting from the event

Prior abuse histories

PTSD
- Bedwetting
- Fascination with guns and weaponry
PTSD CONTINUED

- Flashbacks
- Headaches
- Earaches
- Sleeplessness
- Nightmares
TO DEVELOP A MULTI-COUNTY TRAUMA-INFORMED SYSTEM OF CARE THAT PROVIDES SPECIALIZED SERVICES AND SUPPORT TO CHILDREN WHO HAVE LOST A PARENT TO INTIMATE PARTNER HOMICIDE

ARIZONA CHILD AND ADOLESCENT SURVIVOR INITIATIVE (ACASI)
WHAT IS INTIMATE PARTNER HOMICIDE?

• IPH is the killing of a current/former spouse or partner
• Male is typically the perpetrator
• Perpetrator suicide, incarceration, free.
ACASI SERVICE AREA & POPULATION

- Maricopa, Pima, Pinal, Yavapai and Yuma Counties
- Children 0-17.
- Caregivers are “victim proxies.”
SERVICES WE PROVIDE

- Follow-up Contact and Support
- Counseling
- Information, Referral and Connection
- Personal Advocacy
- Volunteer Mentoring
COLLABORATION IS KEY

• Stakeholders
• Community Partners
• Advocates
• Service Providers
WHAT HAPPENS BEFORE AN INTIMATE PARTNER HOMICIDE?
THE MICRO-DYNAMICS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Situational couple violence (M. Johnson)
Intimate terrorism and coercive control
SITUATIONAL COUPLE VIOLENCE (SCV)

Formerly Common Couple Violence
Arises out particular situations
No attempt to control
Most common form of IPV
Stress and anger release
SITUATIONAL COUPLE VIOLENCE

Serious injury including death possible
Typically is less severe and fleeting
Offenders immature, poor communicators, abuse drugs and alcohol, poor anger control
Men and women commit similar amounts
Social surveys find SCV not so much IT
INTIMATE TERRORISM (IT)

Perpetrator strategizes **general control**

Originally called “Patriarchal Terrorism”

PT implied violence rooted in patriarchal ownership, attitudes, traditions. Problematic.

Profoundly gendered
INTIMATE TERRORISM

Female intimate terrorists.
Gender ratios Men: Women = 90:10?
Abuser violent & controlling.
Partner is not.
COERCIVE CONTROLLING ABUSE

A harmful course of conduct that:

Subordinates the will by:

- Violating physical integrity (violence)
- Denying respect and autonomy (intimidation)
- Depriving them of social connectedness (isolation)
- Denial of personal liberty (control).
COERCIVE CONTROLLING ABUSE

Focus not on discrete incidents or acts of violence
Rather focus on intimidation, control, surveillance, human degradation, isolation, entrapment, denial of autonomy and freedom
Really dangerous IPV
Hostage-like levels of fear combined with a state of entrapment and subordination
TYPES OF INTIMATE TERRORISTS

Dependent intimate terrorists
Antisocial intimate terrorists

Both are impulsive, accepting of violence, hostile toward women, and have traditional sex role attitudes
DEPENDENT INTIMATE TERRORISTS

Emotionally dependent, needy, jealous, and therefore controlling. Obsessed with their partners
Higher levels of abandonment anxiety
Not violent toward others
Physiologically in turmoil when arguing with partners
ANTISOCIAL INTIMATE TERRORIST

Not particularly jealous or dependent
Antisocial and violent outside the intimate relationship.
Often escalate violence with partners very fast
ANTISOCIAL INTIMATE TERRORIST

Do not control partners because they are obsessed. Rather, they like their own way!
### The Micro-Dynamics of Intimate Partner Homicide Cases with Female Victims

#### Prior DV History
- Weapons use
- Attempted strangulation
- Forced sex
- Threats to kill
- Access to weapons
- Stalking

#### Prior DV History
- Rigid control
- Surveillance
- Escalation
- Twists
- Entrapment
- Is he capable of killing?
PENDING/ACTUAL SEPARATION OR EMOTIONAL ESTRANGEMENT

Women experience increased risk of lethal violence

Especially when batterer “highly controlling.”
PENDING/ACTUAL SEPARATION OR EMOTIONAL ESTRANGEMENT

Generally effect of separation fades with time

Note: Julia Pemberton, Walter Larson
OBSESSIVE POSSESSIVENESS/MORBID JEALOUSY

Extreme and homicidal possessiveness among perpetrators.

He feels he owns her, particularly her reproductive capacities.

Emphasis on extreme and morbid forms.

Violently and constantly jealous.
DEPRESSION AND SUICIDAL POTENTIAL

More pronounced in homicide suicides
Ontario (2008) – perpetrator depressed (lay or professional) in 45 out of 77 cases (58%)
Prior threats or attempts to commit suicide in 37 out of 77 (48%).
ALCOHOL AND DRUG ABUSE

Alcohol and drug abuse a correlate of DV.
Chronicity the key.
REACTIONS TO SOCIAL CONTROL AGENCIES

Websdale - prior police 34/67 female IPHs (50.7%) and 12/36 male perpetrated homicide suicides.

Perpetrator defiance? Overt, covert?
PERPETRATOR CRIMINAL HISTORIES

Websdale -43% had prior criminal histories of violence.

Note links with the Cobras/Anti-social personality batterers and their acts of violence outside the intimate relationship.
ABUSE DURING PREGNANCY

- Kicking or punching a pregnant partner
- Sexually assaulting a pregnant partner
- Attempting to induce a miscarriage
- Depriving a pregnant partner of sleep
- Denying or interfering with prenatal care

Fetus experiences these abuses in utero.

Elevated risk of homicide.
STEPCHILDREN IN THE HOME

Major risk marker for violence against wives.
More dangerous if it is her child from a previous relationship than his child.
Major risk marker for death of the child.
Male perpetrators of DV 12 times more likely than biological mothers to kill their children (Yampolskaya, 2009)
PHYSICAL OR SEXUAL ABUSE

Decisions and behaviors that cause physical harm:

Examples:
- Hitting, punching, slapping or pushing the child
- Using excessive or coercive discipline
- Forcing the other parent to harm the child
- Sexually exploiting or grooming a child
- Using the child in pornography or sex trafficking
EMOTIONAL ABUSE

Wide-ranging decisions or behaviors that cause emotional harm:

Examples:
- Rejecting the child or denigrating child’s feelings
- Embarrassing, humiliating or shaming the child
- Creating a chaotic or unpredictable home life
- Fluctuating involvement with the child
ECONOMIC ABUSE

Decisions or behaviors that cause economic harm:

Examples:
- Refusing to provide available financial support
- Interfering with the other parent’s employment
- Denying the other parent access to resources
- Destroying the other parent’s credit
- Trading money or support for time with the child
USING CHILD AS A TOOL OF ABUSE

Using the child to manipulate, control, threaten or harm the other parent

Examples:
- Using the child to monitor the other parent
- Pitting the child against the other parent
- Encouraging child to disrespect the other parent
- Threatening to take child from the other parent
DENYING IMPACT OF ABUSE

Failing to acknowledge and repair the damage resulting from one’s own abuse:

Examples:
- Being intolerant of criticism for abuse
- Justifying abuse or blaming others for abuse
- Demanding respect in the face of abuse
- Refusing to apologize for abuse
- Interfering with other parent’s treatment efforts
IGNORING CHILD’S SEPARATE NEEDS

Beliefs that the child’s interests, needs and perceptions are either:

- Indistinguishable from one or the other parent’s
- Attributable to the other parent

Examples:

- Elevating one’s own needs above the child’s needs
- Believing child’s needs are identical to one’s own
- Believing that the other parent and child are conspiring
UNDERMINING THE OTHER PARENT

Decisions to or behaviors that either:

- Disrupt or harm the child’s relationship with the other parent
- Interfere with the other parent’s ability to parent or exercise parental authority

Examples:
- Refusing to enforce established rules
- Withholding information about the child
- Disrupting the child’s schedule or routine
- Using a new partner to replace the other parent
RELENTLESS HARASSMENT

- Persistently making false reports to authorities
- Engaging in harassing litigation
- Undermines safety, security of child
“Trauma is not what happens to us, but what we hold inside in the absence of an empathetic witness.”

Peter A. Levine, In An Unspoken Voice
ACASI: THE KEY TO EMPATHETIC WITNESSING