

**Breaking the Cycle:
Domestic-Violence
Child Welfare
Practice for Safety,
Healing, and
Prevention**

PRESENTED BY:

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Agenda


Domestic Violence Basics

Your Role as a Professional

DV-Informed Strategies to Work with Survivors, Abusers, and Children



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**Domestic Violence
Basics**

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Where does domestic violence come from?

"Abuse grows from attitudes and values, not feelings. The roots are ownership, the trunk is entitlement, and the branches are control."
 ~Lundy Bancroft

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A pattern of behavior by a perpetrator that creates a power imbalance between the intimate partners that creates real or feared risk of physical and sexual safety to one of the partners and to the child(ren) of the partner(s). These tactics include threats, coercion, intimidation, economic abuse, verbal abuse, using the children to assert power/control, using gender imbalances to assert power/control, isolation, minimization, denial and blaming. These tactics may also include the use of physical and/or sexual violence.

Defining Domestic Violence

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Nebraska Revised Statute 43-247 3(a)

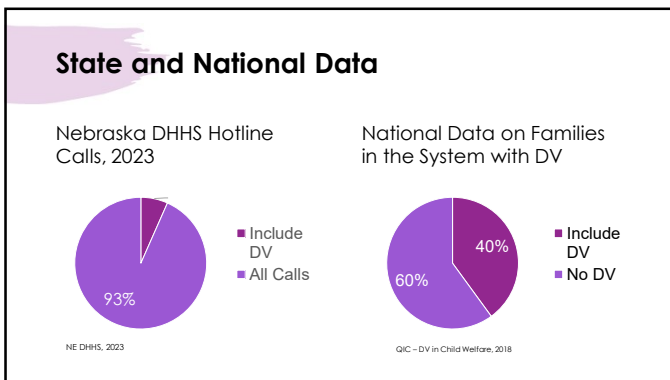
The juvenile court in each county shall have jurisdiction of any juvenile who:

Who is homeless or destitute, or without proper support through no fault of his or her parent, guardian, or custodian; who is abandoned by his or her parent, guardian, or custodian; **who lacks proper parental care by reason of the fault or habits of his or her parent, guardian, or custodian;** whose parent, guardian, or custodian neglects or refuses to provide proper or necessary subsistence, education, or other care necessary for the health, morals, or well-being of such juvenile; whose parent, guardian, or custodian is unable to provide or neglects or refuses to provide special care made necessary by the mental condition of the juvenile; who is in a situation or engages in an occupation, including prostitution, dangerous to life or limb or injurious to the health or morals of such juvenile

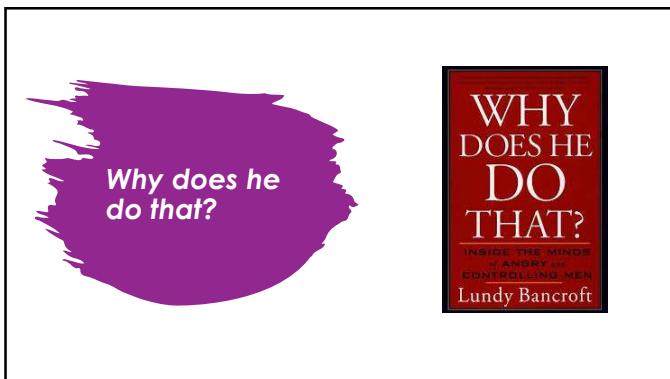
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The Profile of an Abuser

- Coercively controlling, intimidating, isolating
- Entitled and self-centered
- Believes he is the victim
- Manipulative
- Behavior driven by deep, long-held attitudes
- Disrespectful, Superior, Depersonalizing

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The Profile of an Abuser

- Punishes, retaliates
- Finds his abusive behavior rewarding
- Mentality of ownership, objectification

Take-away: **it's not about anger and losing control**

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Contributing Factors

- Substance misuse
- Mental illness
- Community collusion
- Lack of consequences

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Myths about Abusers

- Skill deficits
- Psychopathology
- Poor, ethnic minority

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Effects of Domestic Violence on Children

"Not understanding domestic violence is the biggest risk to child safety."
-Kendra Thomas

Attachment

Pervasive to the development of children

Children don't have to witness domestic violence to be affected by it

PTSD: 20-50%
Anxiety and Depression: 30-60%
Conduct and ODD: 40%

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Your Role as a Professional

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Your Role as a Professional

Don't unknowingly make it worse.

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The Role of Professionals Working with Abusers

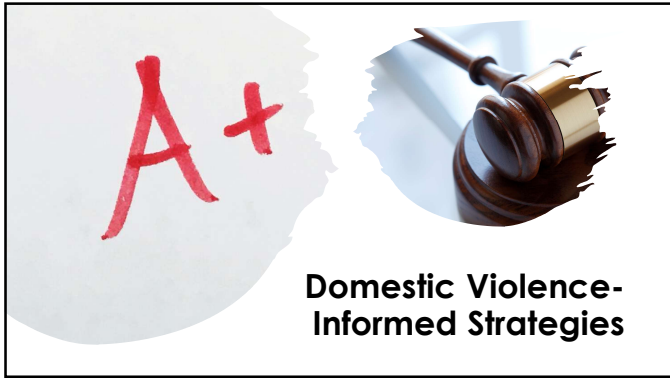
- Prioritize the safety of children and survivors – consider how interventions and your actions might impact their safety
- Expect abusers to play on your emotions – watch your boundaries
- Accountability is key
- Focus on their behaviors and actions
- Seek out specialized training and regular supervision/consultation

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What is Our Goal?

- The goal is **NOT** to end the domestic violence – you will forever be chasing this goal, if so!
- Accept the relationship will continue → co-parenting and/or intimate
 - How do we get there in the safest manner possible?
 - Help the abuser see how his behaviors are a parenting choice and affecting his children
 - Increase safety for the children and survivor
- Professionals to work as a TEAM

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Domestic Violence Survivors

- Seek out her protective factors – challenge yourself and your thoughts!
- Trust comes from transparency
- Recognize she knows her abuser best
- Timing is safety
- **Do not recommend couples counseling**

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Working with Abusers

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Domestic Violence Abusers

- Recognize domestic violence as his parenting choice and not just how he is as a partner
- The survivor's "side" as the default
- Point out his controlling behaviors
- Talk about the children and their experiences
- **Do not recommend couples counseling or anger management**

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Obstacles for Change

- Denial
- Minimization
- Lack of empathy for the survivor

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Elements of Change

- Consequences
- Education
- Confrontation
- Accountability

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Working with Children

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Children Affected by Domestic Violence

- All children are impacted by domestic violence regardless of if they witness the violence
- Recognize the default: children's best interests are served in-home
- Children become confused about who is responsible for the abuser's behavior
- Importance of therapy

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Resilience in Children

(Bancroft, 2024)

- | | |
|---|---|
| • Strength of mother-child relationship | • Positive school experiences and relationships |
| • Mother's protectiveness | • Positive activities |
| • Strength of sibling relationships | • Expressiveness |
| • Other healthy relatives | • Safe feeling places to go |
| • Strength of peer relationships | • Not feeling guilty/blaming mom |

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Children heal through...

(Bancroft, 2024)

- Repairing connection to mom and siblings
- Experiencing increased safety
- Healthy and attuned relationships with adults
- Receiving appropriate reactions to their disclosures
- Expressing and processing their experiences and distress
- Learning healthy values

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Questions?

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