

Finding a Good Balance: Incorporating Engagement and Accountability Strategies with Fathers Who Have Used Violence



Dr. Johnny Rice II
Assistant Professor of
Criminal Justice
Coppin State University

Presenter

September 20, 2016
Jekyll Island, Georgia

Brainstorm

Why should we
engage fathers
who use
violence?



Why Work With Men Who Batter?

- Fathers who use violence often have legal and illegal contact with their children.
- Because most men want to be good fathers, in some cases this contact can be transformed into a positive and healing experience for the children.
- Many mothers who have suffered abuse want their children to have safer and healthier contact with their fathers.
- Some men are able to develop empathy towards their children, which may be a protective factor against further abuse.

Why Work With Men Who Batter?

- Many men who have used violence grew up in abusive households and have lived through the intergenerational cycle of violence.
- Abuse is a deliberate choice and a learned behavior and therefore can be unlearned.
- Building relationships and working with fathers enables us to more effectively centralize safety for women and children.
- Giving fathers more opportunities for change and healing is an essential component to end violence against women and children.

What We Know

Impact of Domestic Violence on Women

- Females are more likely than males to be victim of nonfatal intimate partner violence
- Women between the ages of 20-24 are most at risk and 1,640 women are killed every year by their male partners.
- Women today, as in the past, remain the group most adversely affected by this violence, and their male partners remain the primary perpetrators.

What We Know

Impact of Domestic Violence on Children

-Possible Effects Include:

- Behavioral and emotional problems
- Cognitive functioning problems
- Longer-term problems in adolescence

What We Know

Domestic Violence and Men

- Arrest and incarceration
- Temporary protection/restraining orders
- Court-mandated batterer's and abuser intervention programs
- Coordinated community approach

Men Who Batter – Who are they?

-It's not a clinical diagnosis

-It's a behavioral profile, which includes:

- Intimidation
- Psychological and emotional abuse
- Exaggerated, intrusive, disproportionate entitlement
- Physical and sexual violence

Presentation

- Defensive-aggressive
- Challenging
- Charming-manipulative
- Superficially compliant
- Avoidant

Parenting By Men Who Batter

- Continued threats and violence after separation
- Behavior negatively affects children
- More controlling and abusive parenting
- Perpetrators often involve children in violent events
- Good under observation

Bancroft & Silverman, 2002

Impact on Families

- Undermining of mother's authority
- Interference with mother's parenting
- Use of the children as weapons
- Sowing of divisions

Bancroft & Silverman, 2002

Use of Systems

- Court
 - Multiple filings
 - Requests for Documentation
 - Change of Providers
- CPS
 - Allegations of negligence and/or abuse
- Visitation Provider
 - Allegations of contempt or non-compliance
 - Proof of cancellations
 - Scheduling challenges

from T. Parker

Father Involvement: Why Should We Care?

- Fathers are key partners in supporting the healthy development of children.
- As a parent dads provide a foundation so that their children can survive and thrive

Father Involvement: Why Should We Care?

- Children survive and thrive with parental support
- A strong foundation supports healthy transition to adulthood.



Source: Annie E. Casey Foundation (AECF)

Positive Impact of Father Involvement

In a study examining father involvement with 134 children of adolescent mothers over the first 10 years of life, researchers found that father-child contact was associated with better socio-emotional and academic functioning. The results indicated that children with more involved fathers experienced fewer behavioral problems and scored higher on reading achievement. This study showed the significance of the role of fathers in the lives of at-risk children, even in case of nonresident fathers.

Howard, K. S., Burke Lefever, J. E., Borkowski, J.G., & Whitman, T. L. (2006). *Fathers' influence in the lives of children with adolescent mothers. Journal of Family Psychology, 20*, 468- 476.

Source: National Fatherhood Initiative (NFI)

Men's Services Responsible Fatherhood Program – Baltimore

- Responsible Fatherhood is a pathway for engagement and accountability



What is Responsible Fatherhood?

- *Responsible Fatherhood* is generally defined as – targeted efforts to provide comprehensive services to low-income, non-custodial, and non-resident fathers.
- Services include job training and referral, parent education, support groups, and help with child support obligations.

Who are the men/fathers we are trying to reach?

Men ranging in age from 18-35 years of age

- Limited parenting skills
- Low educational attainment
- Health and mental health issues
- Housing
- Substance abuse/addiction
- Criminal history
- No and/or limited formal employment history
- Child support arrears
- Family and community violence

Part 2 – What We Must Consider

Balancing Accountability and Engagement

What We Must Consider

When Balancing Accountability and Engagement

1. Recognize the duality in men who batter: Humanity and abusive behavior can co-exist;
2. Acknowledge that engaging men can support the goal of keeping women and children safe.

Points to Consider in Approaching this Work

Point

Men who batter are manipulative, dangerous and cruel. They need to be observed and monitored.

Counterpoint

Men who batter can change, heal their relationships and contribute to the movement against domestic violence.

Working with Men who Batter

Point

Our first priority always has to be the safety of women and children and accountability of men who batter.

Counterpoint

Safety and accountability can be accomplished by positively engaging men who batter.

Working with Men Who Batter

Point

Challenge Behavior
Accountability
Focus on Problems
Limits

Counterpoint

Support Person
Connection
Focus on Strengths
Opportunities

DUALITY IN PRACTICE

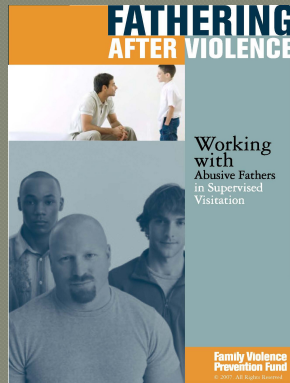


Fathering After Violence

It is not a program per se

It is a conceptual framework to help end violence against women by:

- Balancing accountability and engagement
- Using fatherhood as a leading approach



Fathering After Violence

It includes:

- Culturally appropriate practical tools
- Prevention and intervention strategies
- Policy and practice recommendations

It has been adopted by hundreds of programs in the US and abroad

You are a role model to your children. Is there anything you'd like to change?

Violence against women hurts everybody, including your kids. Children don't forget the violence they see or hear. Stop your abuse now and start changing the way they'll remember you. It's up to you.

www.endabuse.org Family Violence Prevention Fund

This program is supported by grant number 2007-02-0004 from the National Institute of Justice, U.S. Department of Justice. It is a product of the Family Violence Prevention Fund, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. © 2007 Family Violence Prevention Fund. All rights reserved.

Your kids make memories everyday. It's not too late to change how they remember you.

Violence against women hurts everybody, including your kids. Children don't forget the violence they see or hear but they can create new, different memories of you in the future. How they remember you is up to you.

www.endabuse.org Family Violence Prevention Fund

This program is supported by grant number 2007-02-0004 from the National Institute of Justice, U.S. Department of Justice. It is a product of the Family Violence Prevention Fund, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. © 2007 Family Violence Prevention Fund. All rights reserved.



Safety First

- There are risks to engaging with MWB. We need to plan carefully so as not to increase risk.
- There is a vast range in dangerousness and potential for change.
- If we assume that all MWB are lethal, we will miss many people.
- Always check with the victim about how to work with the perpetrator.

Strong Fathers Program

- Program for fathers in North Carolina adjudicated by child protection agency because of perpetration of domestic violence, based partly in the Fathering After Violence framework.
- Their goals are to improve the participants' parenting and help them understand the effects of violence on their children
- It is 20 weeks long

Strong Fathers Research Results

1. Increased knowledge and demonstrated competence in parenting skills
2. Increased knowledge regarding the deleterious effects of domestic violence on children, including the identification of negative consequences of violence
3. Increased empathy toward children
4. Reduction in controlling, coercive, and/or abusive behaviors towards the current or former intimate partner (child's parent)

Some Accountability Strategies

- Naming the violence without shaming
- Direct, respectful conversation with perpetrator
- Referral to batterer intervention
- Enlisting others with whom he has a relationship
- Communicating with other service providers
- Police or court response (differential impact on men of color)

Some Engagement Strategies

- Universal messages that promote non-violence in parenting and intimate relationships
- Strengths-based and positive approaches
- Using fatherhood – Legacy
- Using culture
- Development of empathy
- Meaningful referrals

Balancing Accountability and Engagement

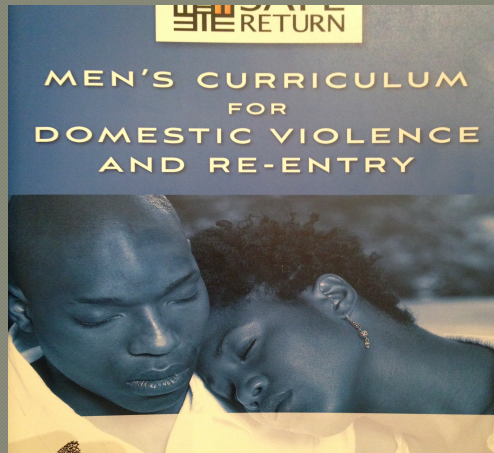
1. Safety must always be our number one priority;
2. Communication to mothers is paramount;
3. Mastering the “accountability and connection” approach is difficult and requires a high degree of skill;
4. Fathers’ engagement is connected to safety;
5. We need to consider the long term effects of our interventions.

-
- We end up making mothers responsible for everything—this may increase risk.
 - We overlook a significant opportunity to increase safety.
 - We overlook a potential reparative resource for many children.

Final Thoughts: Why We Can’t Wait

- How will you continue to work as a collective to support fathers and families.....

Key Resources



Contact Information

Johnny Rice II, DrPH, MSCJ
Assistant Professor of Criminal Justice

Department of Criminal Justice
and Applied Social & Political Science
College of Behavioral and Social Sciences
and Bishop L. Robinson Sr. Justice Institute
Coppin State University
2500 W. North Avenue
Baltimore, Maryland 21216
Office: (410) 951-6104
E-Mail: jrice@coppin.edu
Web: www.coppin.edu

THANK YOU!

Questions & Answers

Learn More at:
www.futureswithoutviolence.org
www.Vera.org

Email to receive pdf of slides:
jrice@coppin.edu