DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND SUBSTANCE MISUSE: A GUIDE TO TREATING SURVIVORS

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Florida State Statute
F.S.S 741.28
Domestic Violence is any assault, battery, sexual assault, or any other criminal offense resulting in physical injury or death of one family or household member by another who is or was residing in the same single dwelling unit.

Domestic Violence Defined
• Control - domestic violence is a pattern of assaultive and coercive behaviors. The intent of these behaviors is for the perpetrator to establish power and control over the victim.
• Awareness of Actions – the abuser is abusive and violent both when sober and under the influence. Intoxication/addiction are used as excuses for the abusive behavior
• Choice – domestic violence perpetration is a choice, not a disease or mental health/psychological problem. The individual is choosing to be violent and harm others in order to get his way and because he thinks he is justified in doing so.
Domestic Violence

- A woman’s chances of being murdered by her partner increase by 75% when she leaves the relationship.
- 1 in 100 battered women in the United States reports the abuse she experiences.
- Slightly more than half of female victims of intimate violence live in households with children under age 12.
- It is estimated that anywhere between 3.3 and 10 million children witness domestic violence annually.
- 95% of spousal abuse victims are female.

Substance Abuse

- Addiction is a primary, chronic disease of brain reward, motivation, memory, and related circuitry.
- Characterized by:
  - Loss of control
  - Impairment in behavioral control
  - Disinhibition
  - Cravings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Drugs</th>
<th>Effects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stimulants</td>
<td>Cocaine, Meth, ADHD drugs</td>
<td>Speed the body's CNS and create feelings of energy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inhalants</td>
<td>Glue, Paint thinner, aerosol sprays</td>
<td>Deprivation of oxygen creates rapid heart rate, &amp; feeling of euphoria</td>
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<tr>
<td>Depressants</td>
<td>Benzodiazepine, barbiturates, alcohol</td>
<td>Slow down activity of the CNS &amp; create feelings of relaxation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Opioid &amp; morphine</td>
<td>Morphine, hydromorphone, heroin, oxycodone</td>
<td>Attach to pain receptors in the brain impacting emotions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cannabinoids</td>
<td>Marijuana</td>
<td>Attaches to cannabinoid receptors in the CNS.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hallucinogens</td>
<td>LSD, PCP, DXM</td>
<td>Interrupts the communication of neurotransmitters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Synthetic drugs</td>
<td>Cannabinoids, Cathinones</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
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Co-occurrence of Domestic Violence and Substance Abuse

- The relationship between domestic violence and patterns of drug use is complex.
- Reported rates of substance use among domestic violence survivors varies, however it ranges from 65 to 90% of women experience both domestic violence and substance abuse.
- Battered women have a 6 times greater risk of drug abuse and 15 times greater risk for alcohol abuse than for non-battered women.
- Research suggests that 47% of the time substance use precedes intimate partner violence.
- 92% of men who assaulted their female partner had used substances on the day of the assault.

Co-occurrence of Domestic Violence and Substance Abuse

- Key point of substance use and domestic violence
  - Substance use does not cause domestic violence and abuse
  - Use can increase the frequency and severity of domestic violence
  - Is often used as a coping mechanism
  - Substances often make people more likely to misperceive other people's behavior and interpret their motives in a negative light.
  - Utilize substance use as an excuse for violence

Co-occurrence of Domestic Violence and Substance Abuse

- Risks associated with survivors who use substances
  - Acute and chronic substance use may prevent the survivor from assessing the level of danger posed by the batterer.
  - Under the influence, victims may feel a sense of increased power. Survivors may erroneously believe in their ability to defend themselves against physical assaults, or their power to change the batterer.
  - Substance use impairs judgement and thought processes so the survivor may have difficulty with adequate safety planning or difficulties leaving violent situations.
Co-occurrence of Domestic Violence and Substance Abuse

- Risks associated with survivors who use substances
  - Survivor may be reluctant to contact police for fear of their own arrest or referral to Department of Children and Families.
  - Substance use often increases the likelihood of other illegal activities
  - Fears of being denied access to shelter or other services.
  - Less aware of injuries suffered
  - Reduced ability to protect children

The book “Compelled to Crime” highlights the issues of substance use and domestic violence. It reports the following:

- Many battered women had been introduced to drugs by their abusive partner
- The introduction to substance use was coercive
- The abuse preceded the use
- Battered women believed using drugs enhanced safety

Abusers often utilize substances as a tool to control the survivor

- Initiate substance use and/or sabotage recovery efforts
- Abuser provides the drugs to the survivor therefore creating dependence on the abuser to meet their needs
- Survivor may become dependent on the relationship for financial means to obtain substances
- Threats to reveal substance abuse by the survivor to DCF or law enforcement
Identifying Co-occurrence of Domestic Violence and Substance Abuse

- Utilize RADAR
  - R – routinely screen consumers to identify those experiencing domestic violence
  - A – ask direct questions.
  - D – document the findings of your screening, assessment, and referrals
  - A – assess client safety
  - R – refer to appropriate services

Red Flags for Domestic Violence

- One partner attempting to set appointments for other
- Wanting to deliver messages/keeping you from speaking to one party
- Wanting to be present during assessment
- One person answering for the other
- Following her to treatment
- Wanting to attend treatment with her
- Waiting for her in parking lot
- Calling her in the middle of treatment
- Reporting things to treatment provider/courts to try and get her in trouble

Identifying Co-occurrence of Substance Abuse and Domestic Violence

- Make sure to assess for domestic violence without the partner present
- Be mindful of triggers for violence that treatment can create
- When assessing relationships explore:
  - How long they have been together?
  - Have they ever separated?
  - For what reasons did they separate?
  - What led to the decision to get back together?
Identifying Co-occurrence of Domestic Violence and Substance Abuse

- Things to consider when assessing for domestic violence
  - Use caution and tact; don't initially refer to the partner's behavior as domestic violence.
  - A woman might not feel safe disclosing information to you initially.
  - Proceed sequentially from the least sensitive to the most sensitive topics.
  - Be careful about criticizing the partner's behavior.
  - Avoid labeling survival strategies or other behaviors as co-dependent.

Treating Co-occurrence of Domestic Violence and Substance Abuse

- Addressing only substance abuse issues will likely negatively impact treatment effectiveness and relapse risk.
- Focusing solely on domestic violence may increase the risk of further victimizations.
- Treating both the trauma experienced through domestic violence as well as the substance abuse issues will improve overall treatment outcome.

Treating Co-occurrence of Domestic Violence and Substance Abuse

- Research highlights the importance of collaboration amongst domestic violence and behavioral health services providers, however this is often difficult to establish.
- Barriers to inter-agency collaboration
  - Cultural clash
  - Single issue focus and concerns about causality
  - Lack of knowledge and training across substance use and domestic violence
  - Concerns regarding confidentiality
Treating Co-occurring Domestic Violence and Substance Abuse

- Treatment plan for women who experience the co-occurrence of domestic violence and substance abuse should include the following:
  - Long term relapse prevention and safety planning
  - Emphasis on placing responsibility for abuse upon the batter and helping the survivor assume responsibility for their addiction.
  - It is important for survivor to acknowledge she is only responsible for her behavior not her partner’s behaviors.
  - Work on improving decision-making skills
  - Trauma informed approach
  - Important for the survivor to understand the relationship of the substance use and its impact on domestic violence.

Treating Co-occurring Domestic Violence and Substance Abuse

- Practical interventions
  - Psychoeducation
  - Relaxation
  - Grounding
  - Cognitive exercises
  - Safety/safe coping skills
  - Emotion identification/expression
  - Healthy relationships
  - Exploring trauma

Treating Co-occurrence of Domestic Violence and Substance Abuse

- It is important to combine both the substance use and domestic violence into one comprehensive relapse prevention/safety plan.
- What would these plans look like?
  - SA perspective
    - Needs to address internal and external triggers for use
    - List positive supports that can be easily accessed when necessary
    - Provide a written list of positive coping skills that will help the person avoid using
  - DV perspective
Hope in Recovery

- Collaborative project between the local domestic violence shelter (Lee Conlee House) and community behavioral health provider (Stewart-Marchman-Act Behavioral Healthcare)

- Goal is to provide advocacy as well as comprehensive behavioral health treatment for domestic violence survivors who also experience addictions, through creating a non-judgmental, safe, and opening environment to promote growth and self-exploration

- Services are provided on site at the shelter

- Program has served 190 plus women over the past three years

Hope in Recovery

- Substance Abuse Counselor imbedded in the Domestic Violence shelter M-F 8am-5pm to address issues as they arose.

- Services provided included:
  - Mental health and substance abuse screening
  - Assessment
  - Case management/case coordination services
  - Individual counseling
  - Group therapy - Seeking Safety and a Wise Mind (DBT based) group
  - Linkage to outpatient clinic for medication management when appropriate.

Hope in Recovery

- Seeking Safety – is a present-focused therapy curriculum to help people attain safety from trauma/PTSD and substance abuse with the following key principles
  - Safety as the overarching goal (helping attain safety in relationships, thinking, behavior, and emotions)
  - Integrated treatment (working on both PTSD and substance abuse at the same time)
  - A focus on ideals to counteract the loss of ideals in both PTSD and substance abuse
  - Four content areas: cognitive, behavioral, interpersonal, and case management
  - Specific/deliberate attention to clinician processes (helping clinicians work on countertransference, self-care, and other issues)
Hope in Recovery

- Wise Mind—dialectical behavioral therapy group to help participants learn emotion regulation and address borderline personality traits.
  - Emotion (helping attain safety in relationships, thinking, behavior, and emotions)
  - Integrated treatment (working on both PTSD and substance abuse at the same time)
  - A focus on ideals to counteract the loss of ideals in both PTSD and substance abuse
  - Four content areas: cognitive, behavioral, interpersonal, and case management
  - Specific/deliberate attention to clinician processes (helping clinicians work on countertransference, self-care, and other issues)

Hope in Recovery

- Benefits of the program
  - Use of motivational interviewing techniques by advocacy staff to address substance related incidences within shelter.
  - Reduction in the number of substance related issues that would have possibly resulted in involuntary exit from shelter.
  - Developing peer support environment
  - Improved screening and referral by behavioral health staff
  - Cross-training opportunities and being able to learn from one another

Hope in Recovery

- Two separate listening projects were completed with the women who participated in treatment. The following is some of the key themes learned from these discussions:
  - Substances role in the violence:
    - Abusers would threaten to expose substance use creating fear for the survivors, therefore they would comply with what the abuser wanted from them
    - Provided substances as a method of controlling the relationship and ensuring that the survivor didn’t have any other methods to access substance without him
    - Using substances as a way to “make up” for the violence which had occurred
    - Substances were used to deal with the abuse and escape the trauma which was occurring
Hope in Recovery

- Two separate listening projects were completed with the women who participated in treatment. The following is some of the key themes learned from these discussions cont.:
  - Perceptions regarding accessing treatment
    - Location and ability to access services
    - Services being on-site allows for easier access and they report feeling more comfortable to attend services.
  - Themes regarding treatment
    - Treatment has allowed the participants to gain awareness of the problems
    - The ability to participate in group with others for support as well as individual time to discuss things that would not come up in group has been beneficial
    - Was able to recognize what substance abuse is and how it impacted their lives.

Hope in Recovery

- Surveyed 20 behavioral health staff across the state regarding experience with domestic violence among substance abuse clients:
  - Frequency of co-occurrence of domestic violence issues
    - 10% very frequently
    - 30% routinely
    - 55% somewhat often
  - Frequency regarding the inclusion of domestic violence in treatment planning
    - 35% very frequently
    - 30% routinely
    - 30% somewhat often

Hope in Recovery

- Surveyed 20 behavioral health staff across the state regarding experience with domestic violence among substance abuse clients:
  - Majority of respondents, 95%, were aware of their local shelter and the services they provide to survivors
  - 79% reported a collaborative relationship with the local domestic violence shelter
  - Respondents identified barriers to treatment
    - Stigma inflicted by the abuser
    - Client self-blame and guilt
    - Limited services or difficulties accessing service
Hope in Recovery

- Surveyed 76 domestic violence staff across the state regarding experience with substance abuse among survivors:
  - Frequency of co-occurrence of domestic violence issues
    - 41% very often
    - 36% routinely
    - 24% somewhat often
  - Frequency of discussing substance use with survivors
    - 22% very frequently
    - 33% routinely
    - 36% somewhat often

- Frequency of referring women to substance abuse services
  - 20% very often
  - 29% routinely
  - 39% somewhat often
  - 10% rarely

- 58% reported a collaborative relationship with the local substance abuse provider
- A large number of respondents identified concerns regarding substance abuse providers knowledge of domestic violence.

Hope in Recovery

- Cross training of staff occurred throughout the project duration.
  - Domestic violence staff training
    - Training on the use and implementation of motivational interviewing techniques to promote communication regarding substance use
    - General knowledge of substance use and importance of addressing these issues along with the domestic violence
  - Behavioral health staff training
    - Assessing for the presence of domestic violence and referral to services
    - Dynamics of domestic violence and how it impacts treatment
What we Now Know

- Importance of having a specialized, trained substance abuse counselor imbedded into the actual DV shelter provides a safe and secure environment for women to begin to address their substance use issues.
- The use of Providers’ experts to provide training and awareness to professionals in their field of expertise.
- Addressing both substance abuse and domestic violence issues is more likely to have a positive outcome for the survivor.