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Presentation Outline

The CDHPIVP

The homicide of Jared Osidacz

The Context

Findings from CDHPIVP literature review & key informant survey/interviews
- Risk factors
- Risk assessment
- Safety planning
- Risk management

Implications – Gap between Research and Practice
Canadian Domestic Homicide Prevention Initiative with Vulnerable Populations (CDHPIVP)

• 5-year project (2015 – 2020) funded by the Social Sciences Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) to:

  • Conduct research on domestic homicides in Canada;
  
  • Identify protocols/strategies to reduce risk, particularly among 4 vulnerable/marginalized populations: *indigenous*, *immigrant/refugee, rural/remote communities & children killed in context of DV*
  
  • Improve access to risk assessment, risk management and safety planning strategies, particularly for vulnerable populations;
  
  • Share this knowledge with the wider community;
  
  • Reduce serious repeated domestic violence/homicide in Canada.
Canadian Domestic Homicide Prevention Initiative with Vulnerable Populations (CDHPIVP)

**Phase 1**
- Literature review/national DH database

**Phase 2**
- Survey and interviews with key informants

**Phase 3**
- Interviews with survivors and proxies
Recognizing Harm to Children Living with DV

Exposure to DV may affect children’s well-being at every age and stage of development: PTSD, significant emotional and behavioural problems.

Exposure to DV is one of the most frequent forms of maltreatment = 1 in 3 of substantiated cases annually.

1 in 3 substantiated cases children are age 3 or less.

1 in 4 children became physically involved as the abusive incident was occurring.
Children Killed in the Context of Domestic Violence

Three situations:

1. Indirectly as a result of attempting to protect a parent during a violent episode

2. Directly as part of an overall murder–suicide plan by a parent who decides to kill the entire family (altruistic motivation)

3. Directly as revenge against the partner who decided to end the relationship or for some other perceived betrayal.
Harm to Children

10-20% of domestic homicide victims are children (based on Canada, US, NZ and AU Fatality Reviews)

Many are eye witnesses to horrific tragedy and trauma

Many lose one or both parents – some are caught in subsequent custody disputes between paternal and maternal family systems – few receive counselling
## Child Domestic Homicides in Canada: Data from Reviews

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Committees</th>
<th>Number of Cases/Number of Deaths</th>
<th>Child Victims</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alberta Family Violence Death Review Committee</td>
<td>132 deaths (75% of victims killed by current/former partner; 15% by family member)</td>
<td>11% of deaths involved victims under the age of 19</td>
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<td>(Jan 2008 – Dec 2015)</td>
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<td>BC Coroners Service Death Review Panel</td>
<td>75 cases resulting in 100 deaths</td>
<td>17 cases children living in the home (total of 27 children)</td>
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<tr>
<td>(Jan 2010 – Dec 2015)</td>
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<td>2 deaths; 3 injured or threatened</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Some witnessed homicide or found victim</td>
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<tr>
<td>Domestic Homicide in New Brunswick (1999 – 2008)</td>
<td>32 cases resulting in 32 deaths</td>
<td>25% of the victims were under the age of 15</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ontario Domestic Violence Death Review Committee</td>
<td>346 cases resulting in 489 deaths</td>
<td>9% (36) of the homicide victims were children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saskatchewan Domestic Violence Death Review</td>
<td>48 domestic homicides with 9 related suicides</td>
<td>15 victims were children (14 being 10-years old or less)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Death Review (Jan 2005 – Dec 2014)</td>
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The homicide of Jared Osidacz

http://www.vawlearningnetwork.ca/areas/julie-craven-2011
Voice of a Survivor: Julie Craven

• Her son, Jared, was killed by her ex-partner
• The case was the subject of an Inquest into a more collaborative response to domestic violence and enhanced training
• These are her views about some of the things that could have been done differently
• Not presented as a blaming exercise but rather a reflection
• After the video reflect on how you are feeling, the key elements of her message without being defensive, and what you would do differently
Julie Craven

• Video
Reflections

• How you are feeling?
• What are the key elements of her message without being defensive?
• Think about examples of information that you would have wanted or needed at various points and how you would get it
• What would you do differently?
Our Reflections

• There were missed opportunities

• Communication, coordination and collaboration amongst the various system players may improved the outcome

• Lack of effective protocols/resources

• Lack of education about DV and dangerousness amongst system players and lack of genuine understanding about roles

• Sometimes the only safe access is no access
In certain cases, you may not be able to prevent a tragedy.

These tragedies furnish an opportunity.

Examine the system: What were the missed opportunities?

Prevent future tragedies.
The Context: Best Practices for Children Exposed to DV

- Collaboration – courts & community agencies
- Safety planning with children / Include children in risk management
- Assessing risk specifically for children
- Recognizing harm to children living with DV
Findings from CDHPIVP (Literature Review & Key Informant Survey/Interviews)

- Risk Factors
- Risk Assessment
- Safety Planning
- Risk Management
Social Workers and Social Service Workers play a critical role in many sectors that work with families experiencing domestic violence:

- Healthcare
- Mental health
- Social service
- Child protection
- Child custody assessments
- Victim services
- PARs
- Education
Assessing Risk Specifically for Children

CDHPIVP Definition of Risk Assessment:

Evaluating the level of risk of harm a victim (or others connected to the victim) may be facing including the likelihood of repeated violence or lethal (dangerous) violence, based on a professional’s judgment and/or a structured interview and/or a tool (instrument) that may include a checklist of risk factors.
Understand the Risks

Consistent Risk Factors
- Separation
- History of DV
- Paternal mental health

Intersectional Factors
- Intergenerational trauma/generational cycle of violence
- Isolation/dual relationships/confidentiality
- Language barriers
- Culture and stigma barriers
- Distrust/fear of systems
- Limited resources
- Substance abuse
Risk Assessment Tools

Risk Assessment Tools
• None unique for children
• In general: risk to mothers=risk to children

Structured Tools
• Danger Assessment
  (www.dangerassessment.org)
• ODARA
  (http://odara.waypointcentre.ca)
• Child Protection
• Other (e.g., Family Violence Investigation Report (FVIR), Internal to agency)
Challenges for Risk Assessment

Barriers to Disclosure of Violence for Children

• Normalizing the violence
• Fear of being taken away
• Do not know their rights
• Distrust service providers
• Lack of knowledge of where to go for help
Central to assessing risk

DV and child maltreatment co-occurrence – 60-75%

Obstacles to CPW effectively identifying and responding to DV
- Personal characteristics
- Professional factors

Risk assessment tools utilized not specific to DV?
Role of Courts

• Lack of information sharing among three courts: child protection, child custody & criminal proceedings
• No consistent DV screening in Canadian family law system
• Use of risk assessment tools is inconsistent across Canadian jurisdictions
Role of Healthcare and Education Sectors

**Healthcare**

- Not routine/mandatory to screen for DV in pediatric settings—some research suggests screening is ineffective (lack of training/referrals to specialized resources)
- Duty to Report – children exposed
- Barriers to DV screening

**Education**

- Recognizing and responding to signs of children exposed to DV
- Duty to Report
CDHPIVP Definition of Safety Planning:

Finding strategies to protect the victim and those around the victim such as an alarm for a higher priority police response, letting others around her know of the risks, a different work arrangement, readily accessible items needed to leave home in an emergency.
Safety Planning with Mothers AND Children

• Respect adult victim’s autonomy but children’s safety at forefront

• Recognize complexity of risk assessment & safety planning in DV cases (e.g., CPS)

• Emphasize parental well-being and capabilities including protective strategies of mothers

• Include collaborative arrangements

Strategies mothers use to physically protect children during DV include:
• physically separating children from violence
• calling third party for help
• using signals to warn children
• calming the perpetrator or attempting to stop the arguing
• sending children to live with relatives
• obtaining protection orders (Haight et al, 2007)
Address physical and emotional safety

Ongoing, developmentally appropriate, individualized, guided by child, multiple methods (e.g., role playing)

Prevention of violence is not the child’s responsibility
Safety Planning within Context of Child Custody and Access Disputes

- Presumption children need to have relationship with both parents balanced with safety planning for mother and children
- Lack of DV training with custody evaluators
- Therapeutic and legal support for children (e.g., Speaking for Themselves program)
- Safety provisions in place prior to custody/visitation – court approved parenting plan include safety strategies
- Collaboration with community agencies
Including Children in Risk Management

CDHPIVP Definition of Risk Management:

Strategies intended to reduce the risk presented by a perpetrator of domestic violence such as close monitoring or supervision, psychosocial interventions to address the violence and/or related issues such as mental health and addictions.
Custody, Access, and Supervision

Access may be a problematic source of contact between victims & perpetrators.

Managing risk after separation may depend on court findings & orders.

Custody & access arrangements are critical.
Custody, Access, and Supervision continued...

Barriers to effective parenting plans for children:

• Lack of consistent screening for DV
• Lack of understanding of evidence/dynamics of DV
• Conflicting reports about DV
• Lack of assessment of risk
• Increased access/security of supervision centres
Parenting Programs

• Engaging men as fathers
  • A reminder of potential trauma from own childhood
  • Motivation for intervention as fathers
    • E.g., Caring Dads, Strong Fathers
Role of Child Protection Workers in Risk Management

Unique position to engage with perpetrators in order to support the safety of victims and children

Child protection workers’ own perspectives:
- Lack training to specifically manage DV perpetrators’ behaviours
- Limited available resources at their disposal to work with violent men

Differences in perspectives toward appropriate interventions and goals
- Separation as a goal of intervention?
- Discontinuation of services once separation has been achieved
Implications for Practice:
*Risk Assessment, Safety Planning, & Risk Management*

Children must be considered

Awareness and education on dynamics of DV

Culturally-appropriate/culturally-informed training for professionals
Implications for Practice: Risk Assessment

Risk to mother = risk to child

Case coordination – sharing information on risk across multiple systems

Develop tool or use standardized tool that is commonly used – need to address intersectionality/culture
Implications for Practice:
Safety Planning

- Leaving the relationship may not always be an effective safety plan
- Victim autonomy and child safety may be competing priorities
Implications for Practice: Risk Management

Parenting programs in conjunction with other programs aimed at:
- Preventing post-separation violence/safe co-parenting
- Promoting accountability and change
- Education on DV-related issues (i.e., the effects of DV exposure on children)

Ongoing evaluation of parenting programs

No access or supervised access

Continued training, supervision and support aimed at increasing skills and confidence in working with perpetrators of DV
Examples of Encouraging Programs

Caring Dads
- Group intervention that works with fathers to change patterns of abuse, increase awareness and application of child-centered fathering, and promote respectful co-parenting
  [Website](www.caringdads.org)

Here to Help (Child Development Institute Toronto)
- Group intervention that provides a safe and supportive environment for mothers and children to talk about the violence they experienced and process their emotions together
  [Website](https://www.childdevelop.ca/programs/family-violence-services/group-programs)

Nurturing Parenting Program – Infants to Preschoolers (PHAC)
- Family-centered trauma-informed initiative that builds nurturing parenting skills as an alternative to abusive and neglecting parenting and child-rearing practices
  [Website](http://cbpp-pcpe.phac-aspc.gc.ca/pppractice/nurturing-parenting-program-infants-toddlers-and-preschoolers/)

Children in Between: A Co-Parenting Program for High Conflict Solutions (Center for Divorce Education U.S.)
- Helps parents manage stressful and difficult situations during separation or divorce and protect children from conflict
  [Website](https://www.highconflictsolutions.com/)
TO LEARN MORE...

Visit our website at

www.cdhpi.ca

http://cdhpi.ca/sites/cdhpi.ca/files/Brief_3-Final.pdf
To get involved....

Complete the online survey and volunteer to participate in an interview (www.cdhpi.ca)

To complete the survey and volunteer for interview, please go to https://uwo.eu.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_7UtzyiUW37vFCT3

OR

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I'm thinking about becoming a social worker. I wonder what they make.

They make a difference, Pepperment Patti, they make a difference!
More Information at Canadian Domestic Homicide Prevention Initiative (www.cdhpi.ca)

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Centre for Research and Education on Violence Against Women and Children
www.learningtoendabuse.ca