

Serving Both Sides: Navigating Domestic Violence Amongst Service Users

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Learning Objectives

- Understand the unique tactics of domestic violence that may be present between service users of disability organizations; and
- Identify policy considerations when serving individuals experiencing domestic violence.

Disability Service Providers

Characteristics of Disability Service Providers

- Large service areas
 - Statewide
 - Multiple counties
- Minimal alternatives for programs and services
 - One option for classes or special events
- Mission to serve all

Understanding Domestic Violence

What disability programs need to know

Types of Violence

- Generalized, Non-battering Violence
 - Situational
 - Pathological
- Resistive/Reactive Violence
- Coercive, Controlling Violence (Battering)

Generalized Violence

Neither part of an ongoing pattern nor coercive

- Pathological
 - Underlying physical or mental health issue causes violence
 - Cannot be controlled, not purposeful
 - Not aimed at one person, violent in multiple areas of life
- Situational
 - Tied to the situation. No issue, no violence
 - Not part of larger pattern to control partner
 - Battering is often misinterpreted as situational

Resistive/Reactive Violence

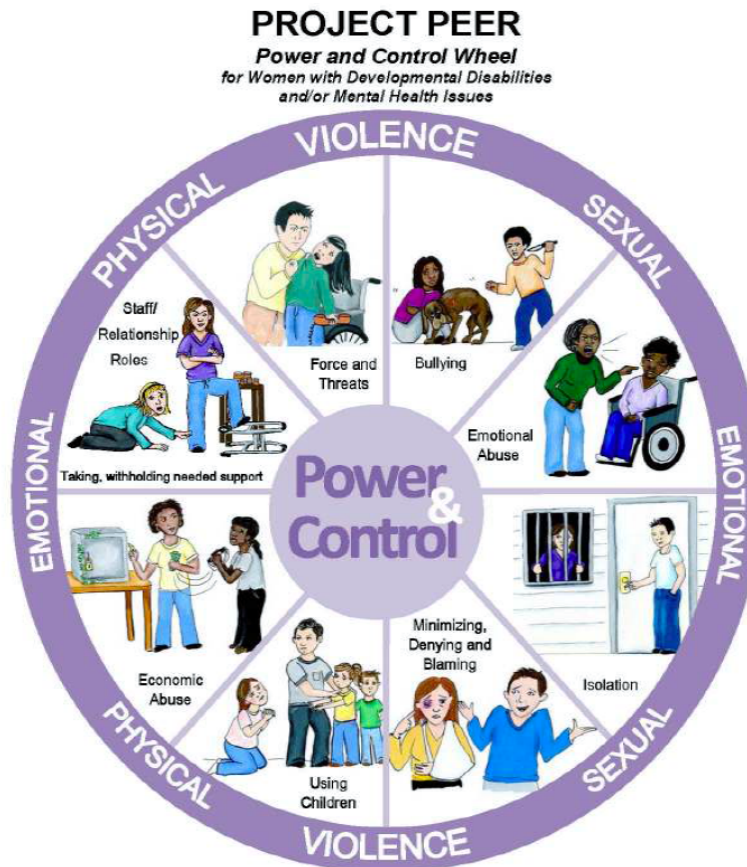
- Violence is part of victim's broader strategy to contain or stop the battering
- Can be legal or illegal use of violence
 - Defensive
 - Pre-emptive
 - Retaliation
 - Threats
 - Use of third parties
- Can result in increased risk of injury or death
- Typically less severe than battering, unless faced with "kill or be killed"

Coercive, Controlling Violence

- Ongoing pattern: coercion, intimidation, violence = control
- Violence creates a power differential that shapes interactions between outsiders and family members
- Person doing the Battering
 - sees themselves as rule maker/enforcer
 - believe they deserve to be in control
- Person being battered
 - faces consequences, which can be lethal/fatal if they challenge the "rule maker"
 - element of entrapment: You can't leave without punishment

Coercive, Controlling Violence (2)

- Takes many forms, not just physical violence



Coercive, Controlling Violence (3)

- Battering doesn't necessarily end when separation occurs.
- Some battering tactics will change to fit the new circumstances.
 - Using children
 - Using the system
 - Using known resources***

Using Known Resources

- Using their relationship with the disability program to:
 - Stalk the victim
 - Locate the victim
 - Be present at the agency while victim is receiving services
 - Follow the victim to and from the agency

Using Known Resources (2)

- Using their participation in shared programs as a way to:
 - Intimidate,
 - Humiliate,
 - Threaten and/or
 - Coerce the victim.

Using Known Resources (3)

- Using their relationship with the disability program staff to:
 - Deny the abuse,
 - Shift the blame of the abuse,
 - Degrade the victim's character and/or
 - Minimize the abuse

Using Known Resources (4)

- Using their relationship with the disability program to make the victim look bad by:
 - Canceling or changing the victim's appointments without their knowledge,
 - Removing victim from class or event rosters, and/or
 - Registering victim in classes or events without their knowledge.

Policy Considerations for Disability Providers

Start the conversations around...

- Screening for violence including domestic and coercive, controlling violence
- Confidentiality protections and limitation
- Mandatory reporting procedures
- Immediate safety planning
- Service eligibility and termination while avoiding discriminatory actions
- Staff working together as a team
- Making Informed referrals

Screening

What types of questions can disability providers ask to determine if a service user is a victim of domestic and coercive, controlling violence?

Preserving Confidentiality

How can disability programs ensure they are preserving the confidentiality of all service users?

Mandatory Reporting

- If a victim discloses violence, does staff need to make a report?
 - What are implications around the confidentiality of abuser's information?
 - What are the implications of victim's safety while they are receiving your services?

Safe Practices

What can the agency and staff do to ensure that the victim is safe during service delivery?

What about when they leave your agency?

Navigating a Restraining Order

If there is a restraining or no contact order, what should disability providers do to ensure the order is not broken during service delivery?

Preventing Discrimination

How can disability programs avoid discriminatory actions while serving both the victim and abuser?

Can you refuse services? Can you terminate someone?

Working as a Team

Can staff collaborate on cases to ensure that:

- Victim and abuser are not scheduled during the same time?
- Abuser cannot get information about the victim from agency staff?
- Abuser cannot cancel appointments or speak for the victim around the victim's services?
- Assumptions about victim or abuser are not impacting service delivery?

Making referrals

Who can you refer service users (either the victim or the individual using domestic and coercive, controlling violence) to, that can further assist them?

Recommendations for Getting Started

Some First Steps

- Collaborate with domestic violence and supervised visitation service providers in your community;
- Prepare and educate your staff on domestic violence;
- Ensure there is safe and confidential space for disclosures.



Any Questions?

Thank you!

Thank you for participating in today's webinar. Before you leave, please complete a [brief survey](#).