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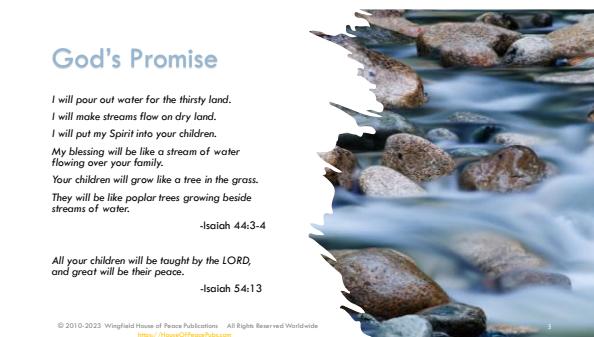
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## Child Experienced Coercive Control + Male vs. Female Responses = Abuser Dynamics or Victim Dynamics



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## Children Who Experience Domestic Abuse/Coercive Control Defined

Individuals ages pre-natal -18 years

Witnessed and/or experienced physical, sexual, or psychological abuse and violence in their family or extended family

Children who experience coercive control/parental abuse are as seriously traumatized and at-risk for long-term problems as if they themselves had been abused

Child who experience coercive control, due to the likely desensitization to coercive control and abuse, are at risk of a delayed or inadequate development of empathy and compassion



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## EXPERIENCING COERCIVE CONTROL

Children's presence during police response to IPV call incidents ranged from 32% to 59% (Howey et al., 2023).

Studies have estimated that 3.3 - 10 million children witness domestic violence each year (Carlson, 1984; Straus, 1992).

We need to address physical and sexual abuse of children that may take place as an additional form of child abuse when family violence is occurring.

82% of husbands who witnessed abuse between their parents also reported being abused, supporting the belief that children who witness interparental abuse are at risk for abuse themselves (Rosenbaum & O'Leary, 1981).

The impact on children of witnessing family violence has as great an effect as that of being hit.



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DR. EMMA KATZ  
LECTURER IN CHILDHOOD AND YOUTH  
LIVERPOOL HOPE UNIVERSITY

HARMFUL IMPACTS OF LIVING WITH COERCIVE CONTROL  
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### Katz' Research Questions

1. How are children harmed by coercive control in contexts where their father/father figure is perpetrating domestic abuse against their mother?
2. How do children act to resist coercive control in their daily lives?
3. How can we support children to recover from coercive control?



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### Key Arguments

- Children must not be invisible or left on the margins in work on coercive control.
- As we continue to recognize coercive control against women/mothers and seek to tackle it more effectively, we must also account for the impacts it has on children.
- In CC contexts, perpetrators/fathers not only harm children by exposing them to physical violence, they harm them by pervading children's family lives with coercive control – perpetrators/fathers must be held accountable for this.
- Perpetrators'/fathers' coercive control places children in isolated, disempowering, and constrained worlds which can hamper children's resilience and healthy development and contribute to emotional and behavioral problems.



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### Published Work on This Topic

Katz, E. (2016). Beyond the Physical Incident Model: How Children Living with Domestic Violence are Harmed by and Resist Regimes of Coercive Control, *Child Abuse Review*, 25 (1): 46-59. Available on course Web Page

Katz, E. (2022). *Coercive Control in Children's and Mothers' Lives*. Oxford University Press.



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### How Children Learn Beliefs about Abuse/Coercive Control

- When we use coercion to discipline our children, we make it easier for them to become more tolerant of coercive force as they grow older.
- This rewarded coercive behavior then leads to more frequent acceptance and use of violence.
- The more violence you observe, the more tolerant you become of violent behavior.



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### IMPACTS OF COERCIVE CONTROL

- Well known impacts on physical and mental health (Dillon et al., 2013)
- Coercive control limits adult victims'/survivors' 'space for action' (Westmarland & Kelly, 2013).
- As perpetrators micro-regulate their everyday behaviors, adult victims'/survivors' options, choices, and ability to decide for themselves diminish further and further (Stark, 2007).
- Children in these families also frequently suffer from limited opportunities to choose, to feel free, and to develop a sense of independence and competence (Katz, 2022, 2016).



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## Impacts of Coercive Control

Constraints on freedom, autonomy, and voice contribute to adult victims' /survivors' disempowerment, loss of self, and confidence (Motheson et al., 2015; Westmarland & Kelly, 2013).

Empowering and rebuilding confidence are therefore acknowledged as important strands of work with victims/survivors.

Katz's research suggests that this is the case for children as well as adult victims/survivors (Katz, 2022, 2016).

Anything that can be done, big or small, should be done to make adult and child victims/survivors feel in control, respected, worthwhile, skilled, and capable.



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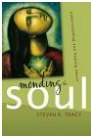
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## Impacts of Coercive Control

• Children don't have the capacity to reject the lies of abuse on their own.



• Children who experience shame (abuse) in the home are impacted because "Children don't have the cognitive or emotional resources to ferret out the truth and to reject the undeserved shame abusive parents heap on them" (Tracy, 2005).

• "A child is emotionally unable to refuse, modify, or detoxify a parent's abusive projections. The power differential is too great and the projections too toxic and overwhelming. Furthermore, the child actually lives in the emotional world and fantasy life of the parent. That is the child's reality" (Frazier, 2000).

• **But**, the healthy parent can help them discern truth and fight the lies.

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## Mothers

• Mothers are often wrongly held accountable (and hold themselves accountable) for the impacts of domestic abuse on their children.

• It is vital to remember that mothers are victims of coercive control too.

• Perpetrators trap mothers and children in 'un-realities' shaped by manipulations, distortions, excuses, minimizations, and denials designed to keep them confused and compliant (Williamson, 2010).



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## Mothers

- There is also very little wider social awareness of coercive control.
- In these circumstances, mothers living with men's/fathers' coercive control cannot be expected to recognize the impacts that it is having on children – mothers require multi-layered supports to enable this recognition.

(Katz, 2022, 2016; Callaghan, 2015; Jouriles & McDonald, 2014; Williamson, 2010)



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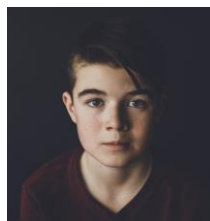
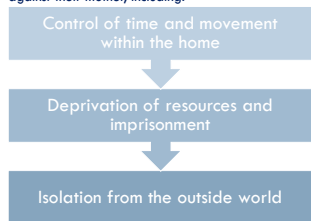
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## Katz Findings

Children were affected by many forms of coercive control beyond the physical violence against their mother, including:



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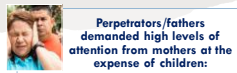
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## CONTROL OF MOVEMENT AND TIME



**Perpetrators/fathers demanded high levels of attention from mothers at the expense of children:**



"[My daughter] Leah used to want me to sit and brush her hair – that wasn't allowed because he'd be jealous. He'd say things like: "You've spent enough attention on her, what about my attention?" (Marie, mother).



"When Mum was giving me attention, he'd tell her to go over to him, so she'd have to leave me to play by myself." (Shannon, aged 10).

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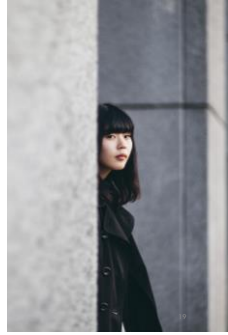
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## Control of Time and Movement

- Perpetrators'/fathers' coercive control limited the amount of maternal attention children could enjoy and reduced the opportunities for fun and affection in their homes.
- Children described feeling sad, annoyed, and angry at these ongoing situations.
- This contributed to the withdrawn or aggressive behaviors that most of the children in Katz's study displayed during the domestic abuse.

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## ISOLATION FROM THE OUTSIDE WORLD

When perpetrators/fathers controlled mothers' movements outside the home, this severely restricted children's social lives. It prevented them from engaging with wider family, peers and extra-curricular activities:

- "They [the kids] couldn't have any friends round because he'd kick off or something. Kids' parties were another problem because he'd be accusing me of trying to 'get off' with one of the dads, so parties were out the question. We couldn't do any after school clubs because I had to be back by a certain time. Me and the kids weren't allowed to go round to see their grandparents." (Isobel, mother).

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## Isolation from the Outside World

"If got to the stage where I didn't go out apart from to the supermarket, I'd panic and I've have to come home or I'd be scared of missing a [housework] job. I just didn't go out at the end so then the children didn't go out. It was just school and home, school and home."

"When he was at home at the weekend if I suggested us going out to the park he would mean that he'd been at work all week."

"So they missed out on days out, family trips, just day to day going out and socialising with people. And they've missed out on knowing what healthy relationships are about in other families because children don't make as many friendships if you don't mix with other mums, so they've missed out on all that." (Marie, mother).



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## Isolation from the Outside World

The isolation that children lived with as a result of perpetrators'/fathers' controlling tactics severely limited their opportunities to create resilience-building relationships with non-abusive people outside their immediate family.

The multiple benefits that positive experiences with grandparents, friends, or in after-school clubs can have on children's social skills, confidence and development were denied to these children.

To help to repair this, building the skills, confidence, and opportunities to socialize and explore the wider world should be incorporated into recovery work with children who have lived with coercive control-based DA.



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## DEPRIVATION OF RESOURCES AND IMPRISONMENT

**Extreme tactics for depriving the family of freedom, independence, and resources impacted on children as well as mothers:**

- "He'd tell us we couldn't touch the food in the fridge, that we weren't allowed to eat, he'd lock us in the house a lot of the time so we couldn't get out, he'd unplug the phone..." Eloise (mother).
- "He'd take out the power because in the hall we've got an old electrical box where you can take things out and that's it - you've got no power" John (aged 20).
- "He used to take an element out the central heating, so we'd have no heating. He'd lock us in the house and go out. He'd take the modem so John couldn't do his homework and I couldn't do my banking on the computer. So, we were prisoners in a way." Eloise (mother).

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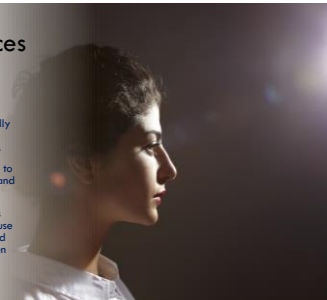
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## Deprivation of Resources and Imprisonment

- These tactics highlight how some perpetrators/fathers directly and purposefully extend their coercive controlling abuse over their children as well as their girlfriend/wife.
- Experiencing this abuse is likely to contribute to poor physical and mental health in children and poor achievement in school.
- Rather than seeing the perpetrator's/father's treatment of the adult victim as domestic abuse and their treatment of the child victim as child abuse, both adults and children could be seen as victims of his regime of coercive control. Coercive control could be usefully seen as a form of child abuse.



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## Our Hope - God's Justice

- For God will bring every **dead into judgment**, with every secret thing, whether good or evil (Ecclesiastes 12:14).
- O LORD, You have heard the desire of the humble; You will strengthen their heart, You will incline Your ear to **vindicate the orphan and the oppressed, so that man who is of the earth will no longer cause terror** (Psalms 10:17-18).
- Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to sin, it is better for him that a **heavy millstone** be hung around his neck, and that he be drowned in the depths of the sea (Matthew 18:6).



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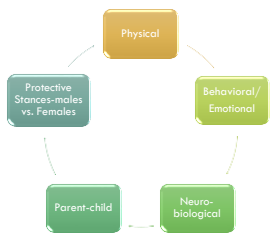
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## Impacts on Children

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## EXPERIENCING DOMESTIC ABUSE/ COERCIVE CONTROL

- The setup: lessons from pre-natal & early childhood development
  - Brain Architecture
  - Toxic Stress
- Epigenetics- child abuse is an environmental factor that leaves an epigenetic mark on the brain.



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- Indirect fetal risks:**
- Pyelonephritis –kidney infection
  - Chorioamnionitis –fetal membrane inflammation
  - Antepartum hemorrhage
  - Higher HIV risk
  - Increased maternal cortisol (reaching fetus)
  - Less prenatal care
  - Maternal polysubstance use
- (Mueller & Tronick, 2019; Chambliss, 2008; Calkinsides, 1999)

**The Child as a Victim of CC**



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- Direct fetal risks:**
- Preterm labor
  - Preterm delivery
  - Intrauterine growth restriction
  - Low birth weight
  - Uterine rupture/Placental abruption
  - Intracranial injury
  - Neonatal death, including elective abortion
- (Mueller & Tronick, 2019; Dasavan et al., 2016; El Kady et al., 2002; Heggans, 2004; Stephens, 1997)

**The Child as a Victim of CC**



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## Risk of Exposure to the Infant

Impacts on emotional, behavioral, cognitive, and brain development

- Poorer general health, increased irritability and crying
- Reduced attentional capacities
- Lack of responsiveness to adults
- Eating, sleep, and mood disturbances
- Increased emotional arousal, fear, and aggression
- Affects Hypothalamus-Pituitary-Adrenal (HPA) axis (stress response system)- elevated cortisol, increased sensitivity to stress, and slower rate of post-stress recovery
- Interferes with maternal caregiving, co-regulation of emotions, and secure mother-infant attachment

(Mueller & Tronick, 2019)



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### The Child as a Victim of CC

- Co-occurrence of child abuse and CC/DA:
- In 30 to 60% of families where one is occurring, the other will be found (Edelson, 1999).
- If CC/DA present in the home:
- Physical child abuse 3.4x more likely
  - Child psychological abuse 2.0x more likely
  - Child neglect 2.0x more likely (McGuigan, 2001)



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### The Child as a Victim of CC

- In homes of abused children:
- 45% prevalence of physical violence against the caregiver within her lifetime
  - 29% of caregivers had one or more incidents of abuse within the last year (Hazen, 2004)

CC/DA often precedes child maltreatment!



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### The Child as a Victim of CC

Injury to a child in the act of CC/DA may not be a purposeful act against the child:

- Infant being held in mother's arms while she is abused
- Young children are often unable to get out of harm's way.
- Older children/adolescents may be harmed trying to protect the abused caregiver.



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### Neurobiological Impacts of Trauma

- Especially when experienced in childhood, **trauma produces neurobiological impacts on the brain, causing dysfunction in the hippocampus, amygdala, medial prefrontal cortex, and other limbic structures.**
- When confronted with danger, the brain moves from a normal "information-processing" state to a survival-oriented, reactive "alarm state."
- Trauma causes the body's nervous system to experience an extreme adrenaline rush, intense fear, problems processing information, and a severe reduction or shutdown of cognitive capacities, leading to confusion and a sense of defeat.

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### Neurobiological Impacts of Trauma

If there are insufficient biological or social resources to assist in coping, the "alarm state" may persist even when the immediate danger has passed, and this can lead to PTSD.

Excessive and repeated stress causes the release of chemicals that disrupt brain architecture by impairing cell growth and interfering with the formation of healthy neural circuits.

When trauma occurs repeatedly, permanent changes in the brain can occur, compromising core mental, emotional, and social functioning – and resulting in a brain that is focused on simply surviving trauma.



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### Neurobiological Impacts of Trauma

- Research suggests post-traumatic stress is not a permanent neuropsychological condition, but rather a functional and largely reversible distortion in the multi-dimensional pathways that meld the mind and body.
- These discoveries, together with a range of new therapy approaches, are opening new perspectives on healing, and new treatments are being explored within this context.




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## Mother-Child Aggression

- The amount was significantly related to child behavior when effects of age, race, father status, and amount of marital violence witnessed were controlled.
- Race was found to be significantly related to externalizing behavior problems, with Caucasian children scoring significantly higher on externalizing scores than Black children.



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## Parent/Child Bonding

Parents focus on the relationship problems

In some relationships, part of the abuse may center around sabotaging the parent/child relationship by the abuser.

Tend to have poor bonding with their children

Take form of discounting any disciplinary actions of the parent or colluding with the children to triangulate parents so that children are always "caught in the middle"



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## Attachment Impacts with Children

Children who have difficulties in this area may be inappropriate with you by sitting too close to you or hugging you after the first meeting.

Children who violate boundaries for affection from other adults need to be assessed for attachment problems with parents.

Helping parents to develop appropriate bonds with their children may be the most important intervention you provide.



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## Protective Stance of Males vs. Females

- Biological parent/the abuser  
vs
- Non-biological parent/parent figure being the abuser



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Where relationship violence is occurring, we tend to see role reversal between parents and children.

When the child feels the need to be the rescuer, they place themselves as the focus of the conflict.

Children may internalize blame, guilt, anxiety, and feelings of inadequacy because of an inability to change parental behavior, or this can create difficulty in forming gender identity.

## Protective Stance of Males vs. Females

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Research on parent-child aggression and witnessing of marital violence:

- Addressed whether father-child or mother-child aggression connected with witnessing of marital violence had more effect on child behavior problems
- Found boys received significantly more father-child aggression than girls
- Significant correlation between amount of marital violence witnessed/experienced and father-child aggression

(O'Keefe, 1994; Sullivan, 2023)

## Male Impacts

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### Male Response

Males tend to be more protective of their mother's during abusive incidents when they are younger.

Between ages 7 and 10, boys begin to take sides with the abuser, aggressor. This occurs because boys begin to lose respect for the apparent helplessness of their mother and begin developing anger toward her.

In stepfamilies, the dynamics are different. Boys will protect mom (may sleep with knives, bats, etc.) or ask, "so how are you planning to get even with step dad?"



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### Female Response

Females tend to remain supportive to their mothers.

As they get older, they also tend to identify with the abuser.

In stepfamilies, females tend to side with mother and be protective of her.

May be more likely to stand up to the abuser if he is a stepfather than a father



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### Breakout Discussion

What kinds of questions do you get from mothers about their kids and how do you help them?



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## God's Command for Parents

- Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged (Colossians 3:21).
- Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord (Ephesians 6:4).
- Point your kids in the right direction—when they're old they won't be lost (Proverbs 22:6, MSG translation).
- These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the door frames of your houses and your gates (Deut. 6:6-9)



### What we model impacts our children

- I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and now, I am sure, dwells in you as well (2 Timothy 1:5).
- He that walketh with wise men shall be wise: but a companion of fools shall be destroyed (Proverbs 13:20).
- And you should imitate me, just as I imitate Christ (1 Corinthians 11:1).

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## Risk of Exposure to the School-Age Child

- Social functioning difficulties
- Aggressive with peers
- Bullying
- Poor academic performance
- Long-standing stress/anxiety (Juffs, 1986)
- Propensity to continue the cycle of violence (Kaufman, 1987)



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## Risks to Children Who Grow Up in Coercive Control & Abuse

- Higher risk of mental health difficulties throughout their lives (Peltonen, Ellonen, Larsen, & Hallberg-Larsen, 2010; Maltzer, Dicos, Vostanis, Ford, & Goodman, 2009; Bogat, De Jonghe, Levendosky, Davidson, & von Eye, 2006; Mezry, Roach, Sawley, & White, 2003)
- Increased risk of physical health difficulties (Bair-Merritt, Blackstone, & Fendner, 2006)
- Risk of educational drop out and other educational challenges (Wills et al., 2010; Byrne & Taylor, 2007; Koenen, Moffitt, Caspi, Taylor, & Purcell, 2003)
- Risk of involvement in criminal behavior (T. Gilbert, Farrand, & Lankhear, 2012; R. Gilbert et al., 2009)
- Interpersonal difficulties in their own future intimate relationships and friendships (Siegel, 2013; Black, Susman, & Unger, 2010; Elvansoft et al., 2003)

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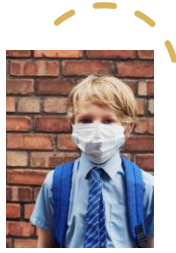
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## Additional Risks

- More likely to be bullied and to engage in bullying themselves (Espino, Luukkainen, & Paavolahti, 2011; Boldry, 2003)
- More vulnerable to sexual abuse and sexual exploitation
- Becoming involved in violent relationships themselves (Turner, Finkelhor, & Ormrod, 2010; Finkelhor, Ormrod, & Turner, 2007)
- May also be lasting neurological impact that can have far reaching implications for children's lifelong well-being (Choi, Jeong, Finkelhor, Rubin, & Tschir, 2012; Anda et al., 2006; Koenen et al., 2003)
- Suggested that "witnessing" domestic violence is at least as impactful as being directly physically abused (Callaghan et al., 2015; Soose et al., 2011; Maytan et al., 2010)



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## Children Coping with Coercive Control

|                                    |                 |                         |                   |
|------------------------------------|-----------------|-------------------------|-------------------|
| New generation of violent families | Runaways        | Violence on our streets | Substance abuse   |
| Food addictions                    | Sexual assaults | Date rape               | Sexual harassment |
| Use of pornography                 | Teen Pregnancy  | Violence at school      | Truancy           |

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## Reactions by Age Group

| Birth to 5  | Ages 6 to 11  | Ages 12 to 18  |
|---|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Sleep and/or eating disruptions</li> <li>- Withdrawal/lack of responsiveness</li> <li>- Intense separation anxiety</li> <li>- Inconceivable crying</li> <li>- Developmental regression, loss of acquired skills</li> <li>- Intense anxiety, worries, and/or new fears</li> <li>- Increased aggression and/or impulsive behavior</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Nightmares, sleep disruptions</li> <li>- Aggression and difficulty with peer relationships in school</li> <li>- Difficulty with concentration and task completion in school</li> <li>- Withdrawal and/or emotional numbing</li> <li>- School avoidance and/or truancy</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Antisocial behavior</li> <li>- School failure</li> <li>- Impulsive and/or reckless behavior; e.g.,                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- School truancy</li> <li>- Substance abuse</li> <li>- Running away</li> <li>- Involvement in violent or abusive dating relationships</li> </ul> </li> <li>- Depression</li> <li>- Anxiety</li> <li>- Withdrawal</li> </ul> |



National Child Traumatic Stress Network

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### Child Abuse Cripples Children



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### Internalizing and Externalizing Behavior

- The relationship between amount of marital violence witnessed was significantly related to both internalizing and externalizing behavior
- Internalizing behavior relates to anxiety, depression, and withdrawal
- Externalizing behavior relates to aggression, delinquency, and under control

(Mueller & Tronick, 2019); Maylan, et al., 2010)



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### Risk of Exposure to the School-Age Child

#### Internalizing Behaviors:

- Anxiety
- Depression
- Withdrawal
- Somatic complaints

#### Externalizing Behaviors

- Attention problems
- Aggressive behavior
- Rule-breaking actions

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### Child Severity of Disturbance

Children showing more severe disturbance were more likely to have witnessed a greater frequency/severity of marital violence as well as to have experienced more mother-child aggression.

Boys and girls displayed elevated scores on both externalizing and internalizing behavior problems.

The father is clearly not only the more violent spouse, but also the more violent when disciplining the children.

(O'Keefe, 1994; Sullivan, 2023)

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### Results of Children who Experience CC

loneliness, escape, lack of communication, fear, helplessness, hopelessness, self-blame, diminished self-concept, vulnerability to suicide or homicide, feeling unloved

looking for means of empowerment and release (gang involvement), modeling violent behavior, grief, rage, sadness, panic

may self-nurture through fantasy, imaginary friends, and animals

may abuse animals or learn to be a victim or abuser



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confusion, disorientation, dissociation, erosion of self-concept, sleep disturbances, nightmares, monsters, regressive behaviors, frozen feelings, fight or flight stance, damaged attachment to parents

negative impact on IQ and cognitive functions, reduced volume in visual and auditory cortex; impaired proprioception (sensory motor)

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### Resistance to Coercive Control

- Both children and mothers engaged in acts of resistance to the coercive control they experienced
- Possibilities for resistance depended on the opportunities that children and mothers had under the particular regimes of coercive control that fathers/father figures imposed
- Resistance often took the form of finding ways to maintain elements of 'normal life' and close mother-child relationships when possible

(Katz, 2022)



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### Resisting Deprivation of Resources

- "We did things together. When we went to the pictures or we went shopping we could just 'let our hair down' and do what we wanted to do. We were going to the cinema 2-3 times a week to get out of the house" Eloise (mother).
- "When we would come back with shopping bags, sometimes we had to hide them..." John (aged 20).
- "because he would go mad that I'd spent money on John. We used to throw the bags over the hedge..." Eloise.
- "...into the garden, so he wouldn't see them" John.



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### Resisting Control of Time and Movement

- 'Well, some days he would be out, and me and Mum would watch a movie and have some time together [which he wouldn't let us do when he was at home]. I used to help cook tea with my mum because I enjoy cooking so we'd, like, help each other.' (Katie, aged 12)
- 'On those days when we were alone we would snuggle up on the sofa and watch films together, and we always emotionally supported each other then.' (Ruby, mother)



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### Resisting Emotional Distress

- "He always made her [daughter] sleep on her own you see, but she wouldn't go to sleep without me being next to her, so I'd wait for him to go to sleep and then I'd get in next to her or she'd get in next to me" (Ellie, mother).
- "When he had a tantrum and went off to the pub then I'd just comfort Mum and hug her and she'd hug me as well" (Shannon, aged 10).
- "When we were locked in the house and Mum was upset, I would hug her and tell her it was going to be okay" (Roxie, aged 11).



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## Resisting Coercive Control

- Mothers and children found opportunities to promote each other's well-being and reduce the negative impacts of the domestic abuse - this was the case even when much of their lives were being overrun by perpetrators'/fathers' coercive control.
- By defying perpetrators'/fathers' control when possible, children and mothers maintained some sense of autonomy and prevented perpetrators'/fathers from gaining total control over them.
- Highlighting the ways that they resisted can help mothers and children to recognize their strengths and see that they were not passive victims.



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## Recovery and Healing Happens 😊

- "[My son] John dropped the paint, he thought I was going to go mad, he was painting the ceiling for me in the bathroom and he got paint on the floor, so I come along and he said "you're probably not going to ask me to paint anymore" and I said "don't worry John, I will", things like that he [perpetrator/father] wouldn't have allowed him to do...Now John makes lovely little meals and he said to me the other day "Mum will you teach me how to make pastry?" because he wants to learn" (Eloise, mother).



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## Recovery Happens

- "Jack has so much more confidence now. He's like a different boy. Now he's more willing to do things like making sandwiches as he knows he won't be criticised by his mum. He finds it much easier to relax" (Sybil, mother).
- **Children recover through both the absence of perpetrators'/fathers' hostile regimes of coercive control and the new climates of openness, tolerance and nurturing that mothers put in place. Children can also help their mothers to recover by boosting their confidence and self-worth.**
- "[My daughter] Shannon always says she thinks I'm brave, which is really good, and she's so proud of me for going to court, and she's so proud of my volunteer work, and she obviously thinks I'm a very important person. I am [important] in her world; it's just lovely" (Ellie, mother).



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### Conclusions

- Children are victims/survivors of coercive control – they are harmed by it and can also act to resist it.
- **In addition to safety, victims of coercive control need support to gain/regain their confidence and sense of empowerment – this applies to children as well as adult victims.**
- As coercive control is increasingly recognized, children's experiences of it must not be left invisible.
- **Like adult victims/survivors, children need safety from coercive control and help to recover from it.**
- Placing 'empowerment' and 'recovery' alongside 'safety' and 'protection' on the children and domestic abuse agenda would represent a positive step forward.



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### God's Restoration

- I will restore to you the years that the swarming locust has eaten, the hopper, the destroyer, and the cutter, my great army, which I sent among you (Joel 2:25).
- He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds (Psalm 147:3).
- For he will deliver the needy who cry out, the afflicted who have no one to help. He will take pity on the weak and the needy and save the needy from death. He will rescue them from oppression and violence, for precious is their blood in his sight (Psalms 72:12-14).



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### Journey to Resilience



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### Healthy Development Builds a Strong Foundation - For Kids and For Society



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### Childhood Development

#### Developmental Models

- Erikson- emotional development
- Kohlberg- moral development
- Piaget- cognitive development
- Goleman- social development, social & emotional intelligence
- Gardner- multiple intelligences



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### Erickson's Emotional Development



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### Kohlberg's Theory of Moral Development




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### Social-Emotional Intelligence

Social + Emotional Intelligence is the ability to be aware of our own emotions and those of others, in the moment, and to use that information to manage ourselves and our relationships effectively – even in challenging situations.



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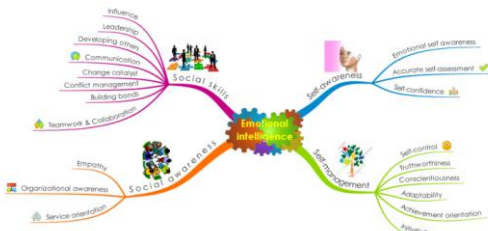
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### Emotional Intelligence




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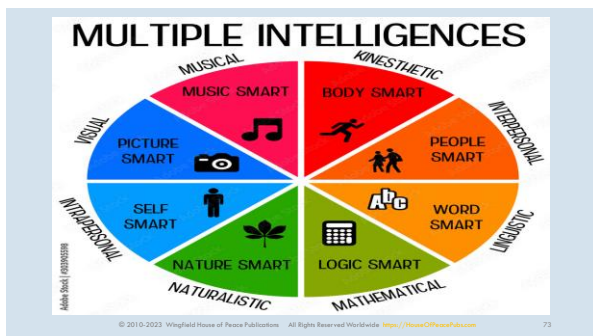
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## Character Building

Focuses on

- Socio-emotional development
- Values
- Attitudes



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## Character Counts




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## Building Resilience



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### Resilience/Protective Factors (Prevention Works-Steven Glenn)



- Build resilience and Protective Factors through Strength-based programming
  - Strength-based developmental assets identified by Search Institute (1958) <http://www.search-institute.org/>
  - DA/CC intervention/treatment allows application of strength-based goals for clients
  - Building strengths in DA/CC clients with generalization to their children helps end the cycle of abuse, coercive control, and domestic abuse.

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### DEVELOPMENTAL ASSETS

- BUILDING BLOCKS FOR HEALTHY YOUTH
- PROTECT YOUTH FROM HIGH-RISK BEHAVIORS
- PROMOTE POSITIVE ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIORS



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### EXTERNAL ASSETS

- SUPPORT
- EMPOWERMENT
- BOUNDARIES AND EXPECTATIONS
- CONSTRUCTIVE USE OF TIME



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## INTERNAL ASSETS

- COMMITMENT TO LEARNING
- VALUES
- SOCIAL COMPETENCIES
- POSITIVE IDENTITY



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## SUPPORT

- Family support
- Positive family communication
- Other adult relationships
- Caring neighborhood
- Caring school climate
- Parent involvement in school



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## EMPOWERMENT

- Community values youth
- Youth as resources
- Service to others
- Safety



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## BOUNDARIES AND EXPECTATIONS



- Family boundaries
- School boundaries
- Neighborhood boundaries
- Adult role models
- Positive peer influence
- High expectations

| The 5 Important Big Expectations |  |
|----------------------------------|--|
| Adult Role Models                | Adults set the example.  |
| Family Boundaries                | Your family has clear and consistent rules and consequences for your behavior. They keep track of you and know where you are at all or most of the time. |
| School Boundaries                | Your school has clear rules and consequences for behavior.   |
| Neighborhood Boundaries          | Your neighbors keep an eye on kids in the neighborhood.  |
| Adult Role Models                | The adults in your family behave in positive, responsible ways. They set good examples for you to follow. So do other adults you know.                   |
| Positive Peer Influence          | Your best friends behave in positive, responsible ways. They are a good influence on you.  |
| High Expectations                | Your parents and teachers expect you to do your best at school and in other activities.  |

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## CONSTRUCTIVE USE OF TIME



- Creative activities
- Youth programs
- Religious community
- Time at home

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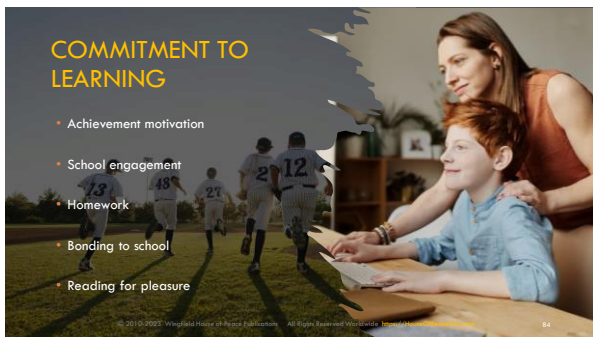
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## COMMITMENT TO LEARNING

- Achievement motivation
- School engagement
- Homework
- Bonding to school
- Reading for pleasure



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## VALUES

- Caring
- Equality and social justice
- Integrity
- Honesty
- Responsibility
- Restraint



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## SOCIAL COMPETENCIES

- Planning and decision-making
- Interpersonal competence
- Cultural competence
- Resistance skills
- Peaceful conflict resolution



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## NEGATIVE IDENTITY

- Restored agency
- Self-worth
- Sense of purpose
- Positive view of personal future

## POSITIVE IDENTITY



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## SIX KEYS TO ASSET BUILDING

- 🏠 Everyone can build assets.
- 👤 All young people need assets.
- 🤝 Relationships are key.
- 🔄 Asset building is an ongoing process.
- 📢 Consistent messages are important.
- 📌 Intentional redundancy is important



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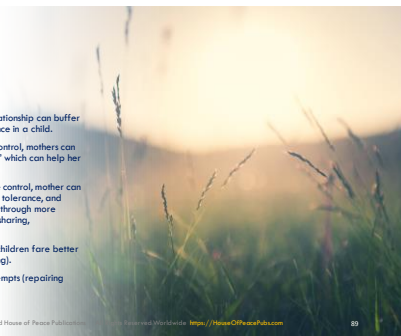
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## Reminders and Encouragement for Mothers:

- Even just **one** safe, stable, nurturing relationship can buffer effects of toxic stress and build resilience in a child.
- In a household impacted by coercive control, mothers can still work to find (safe) ways to "resist," which can help her and her children with coping.
- In the absence of the abuser's coercive control, mother can create a whole new climate (openness, tolerance, and nurturing) and strengthen relationships through more horizontal power dynamics (play/ fun, sharing, collaborating, and compromising).
- When mom is in therapy, she and her children fare better (trickle down effect from mother healing).
- Importance of parent-child repair-attempts (repairing ruptures)
- Ultimately, **God is in control.**



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## Breakout Discussion

Based on what you've learned, how would you share this educationally with a protective parent to understand that there is hope and their children can thrive even after experiencing abuse?



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## God's Love for His Children

### Example for Parents to Follow:

But you, O Lord, are a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness (Psalm 86:15).

Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand (Isaiah 41:10).

The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; his mercies never come to an end, they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness (Lamentations 3:22-23).

As a father shows compassion to his children, so the Lord shows compassion to those who fear him (Psalm 103:13).

Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends. (John 15:13).

Know, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord (Romans 8:37-39).



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