

# Domestic Violence Safety Issues when Meth is Present



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Otokahe Teca Tipi

## What is Domestic Violence?

## Abuse Power and Control

- Physical Abuse
- Verbal/Emotional/ Psychological Abuse
- Economic
- Sexual Abuse/ Assault
- Use of Children
- Threats
- Spiritual
- Intimidation
- Using Male Privileged
- Isolation
- Stalking/Harassment
- Dating Violence

- 45% of woman abuse results in physical injury. The psychological effects of this can be far-reaching: 85% of abused women indicate that they have experienced some type of negative emotional effects including anger, fear, becoming less trusting, suffering from lowered self-esteem, depression, anxiety, shame and guilt. In order to combat these effects, 25% of these women report having used alcohol, drugs or medication.

### Effects of Abuse and Control

(This information on health effects is from the Final Report of the Task Force on the Health Effects of Woman Abuse, 2000.)

What are the safety concerns?  
What are the effects?  
How are children effect?  
What are we going to do?  
How do we help?

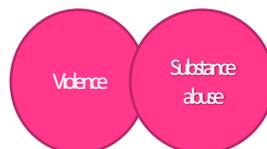
## DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE

## Domestic Violence and Addiction

- Both have power and control dynamics
- Both impact entire families, often harming generations
- Both thrive in silence and isolation
- Carry great societal stigma and shame
- Involve denial systems- minimizing and rationalizing
  - Women may find it easier to talk about stress in their relationships or their partners substance use before talking about DV or their own use.
  - Identify cues for shut-down or agitation

## Domestic Violence and Addiction

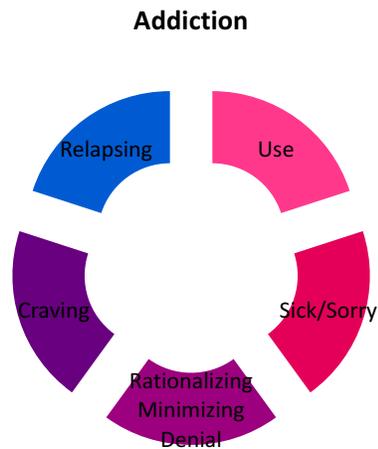
- Despite similarities DV and Addiction are different problems
  - Intervention need to involve both advocates and substance abuse counselors



## Women with substance abuse problems

- May respond to all senses, all in-put, all the time
- May not be able to prioritize
- May not be able to describe experience
- May not immediate grasp meaning of what they hear, may catch meaning every third word, may feel unable to ask you to slow down
- Reading comprehension is often low
- May have trouble expressing themselves
- Note: Hyperactivity, tactile defensiveness, impulsivity, rigidity (may be hard for them to transition from one thing to the next)

## Cycle of Addiction



## effects we see in shelter

### Substance Abuse (Meth)

- Loss of appetite
- Increased heart rate, blood pressure, body temperature
- Dilation of pupils
- Disturbed sleep patterns
- Nausea
- Bizarre, erratic, sometimes violent behavior
- Hallucinations, hyper excitability, irritability
- Panic and psychosis
- Loss of Respect and Hope
- Avoidance
- Disorientation of family(loss touch with reality)
- Loss of children and home, involved with Child Family Services

### Domestic Violence

- Low self esteem/depression
- Anxiety
- Suicidal Thoughts
- Lack of appropriate boundaries
- self degradation
- chronic stress
- uncontrolled or rapid anger response
- memory loss
- loss of concentration or productivity
- self-abusive behavior
- problems with parenting children
- unusual fear response
- increased watchfulness
- sleep disturbances/eating disorders
- Phobias
- Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder
- Dissociation

## Escaping violence; escaping chemical dependency

- Survivors do leave
- Substance abusers do stop
- People escape both abuse and addiction when it is safe to do so
- Offer supportive options for those seeking safety and sobriety

## Avoid Re-victimizing

- People do not choose to be victims of violence nor do they choose to develop the disease of addiction
- Think before speaking....How would you like to be spoken to?
- Remember to offer respect, not rescue; suggestions, not orders
- Use assessment tools and substance safety plan

## Working with people impacted by violence and substance abuse

- A successful competent intervention incorporates:
  - Awareness of one's own biases, prejudices and knowledge about the people we serve and their culture
  - Recognition of professional power (power differential between you and the client) in order to avoid imposing one's own values on others

## Acknowledge- You are listening

- Make her comfortable as possible; assure confidentiality of records when applicable
- Affirm autonomy and right to control decision-making, validate her concerns and use supportive statements:

“I’m sorry this is happening”

“Both you and your child’s health and safety are important; there may be some safer coping tools you might like to consider”

“Give yourself credit. You’ve been doing your best in these circumstances”

“We have a relationship with substance abuse treatment would like to see someone?”



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## Puppet on a string

By Michelle

You act like I know nothing about it, but I know enough.  
I know what it has done to you; I know what it's done to us.  
You're no longer a real person, more like a puppet on a string.  
Every single move you make is controlled by methamphetamine.  
I just can't seem to help you, can't break you away.  
I've tried to cut the strings so you could walk away.  
But without this attachment, your so-called support,  
Your body goes limp, and collapses to the floor.  
I can't lift you up, you fall right back down.  
Your body is like dead weight on the ground.  
I wish I could pull you to safety so you could be free.  
It's so hard to watch you be a puppet on a string.

I'm figuring out that I can't do this anymore.  
You have to let me go, I need to walk out the door.  
I've been in entrapment, under lock and key  
with your love that's pushed me to insanity.  
Step aside, you must let me through.  
My heart's taken enough abuse.  
You have become someone I don't want to know.  
There's no other choice; I really have to go.  
You can make it okay because you can always pretend  
whatever you want when the strings lift you back up again.

You attempt to burn the past away  
while everything you loved melts away.  
Your new life has taken what was once my place.  
Tomorrow you can't always fix your mistakes.  
You have a million reasons, always an excuse.  
And most of all its precious time that you abuse.