

# Traumatology Conference Panel

Domestic Violence Research  
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## Status of Outcome Research on Batterer Intervention

- History of non-experimental and quasi-experimental studies demonstrating apparent positive but modest effects of BIP.
- More rigorous studies disappointing and yet to show significant positive effect

## Brief Review of Recent Studies

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## What constitutes rigor?

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- Valid and reliable measurement of abuse outcomes
  - Partner report, not self-report or official arrest records
  - Measurement of range of abuse and controlling behavior, not just physical assault
- Follow-up measures over an extended period of time-not just a few months
- Confirmation that the intended intervention was actually delivered.
- Credible and convincing comparisons that form the basis of the conclusion that the intervention has been effective

## How much reassault occurs?

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- Across all types of evaluation designs, approximately a third of the victims report the recurrence of abuse about a year after treatment (Saunders, 2006)
- Using police reports, recidivism ranges from about 10 percent to 20 percent (Saunders, 2006).

## Gondolf et al.

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- 4 programs, varying lengths and approaches
- 15 month follow-up - 33% recidivism (partner report)
- 30 mos.
  - 42-47% recidivism (partner only, partner/self)
  - % of reassaults decreased over time
  - vast majority (79%) did not reassault during 15-30 month period
  - 32% of recidivists within 3 months
  - 23% repeatedly reassaulted, accounted for most injuries
- no difference between sites (includes diversion)

## Gondolf, cont.

- Other forms of abuse decreased about the same amount as physical abuse
  - verbal abuse (77%)
  - threats (53%)
  - any reassault (42%)
  - severe reassault (28%)
  - injury (27%)
  - medical care (7%)
- 69% of partners said they were better off, 12% worse off
- 84% felt very safe

## Gondolf- continued

- Drop-outs more likely to reassault
  - 38% completers, 50% non-completers
- Alcohol abusers more likely to reassault
- Men with severe pathology more likely to reassault (depression, thought disorder, paranoia, borderline personality)
- No other differences by race, marital status, cohabitation, partner contact, prior arrests, alcohol screening test scores or other personality test scores

## Implications

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- Some impact of program?
- Evidence of change not due to program itself?
- Evidence that with some attention, many do not escalate abuse?

## Dunford (2000)

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- San Diego study-Military families
- Four groups
  - Men's only counseling
  - Couples group
  - Intensive monitoring
  - Safety planning only
- No differences in outcome
- Women did not participate in the couples group despite incentives

## Dunford results

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- No differences were found across the four conditions after treatment on measures such as physical and psychological abuse and fear of endangerment
- Did a “surveillance effect” produce change?
  - Sanctions for reoffense could be severe.
  - An analysis of the men’s fears of sanctions did not support.

## Other Experimental Evaluations

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- Feder and Forde (2000)
  - Broward County Florida
  - No significant difference between probation-only and profeminist group program
- Taylor, Davis, and Maxwell (2001)
  - New York
  - Profeminist vs. community service only
  - BIP better on official reports, no difference on victim reports

## Gondolf, 2005

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- Call for culturally competent treatments for men of color.
  - Unfair or unjust criminal justice response
  - Lack of match of leaders, workers
  - Less comfort in groups
- 501 men
- Randomly assigned to
  - culturally-focused counseling in all-African-American groups,
  - conventional counseling in all-African-American groups,
  - conventional counseling in racially-mixed groups
- Partners interviews every three months for 12 months
- No difference between the types of group
- 23% reassault overall
- Men in the racially-mixed groups were less likely to be re-arrested for domestic violence than the men in the culturally-focused groups.

## Meta-analyses

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- Meta analysis combines numerous studies
- Derives an “effect size” across the studies
- Overall findings from recent meta-analyses show small but significant effects
  - (Babcock, Green, and Robie, 2004; Levesque, 1998)
  - Stronger effects for official records rather than victim reports
  - With victim reports and most rigorous studies, effects can disappear

## What else should we try?

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- Improve current system response
  - Close gaps and lack of follow-through
  - Improve competence and consistency of batterer intervention
  - Increase sanctions
  - Create better fit of participants and programs (see Saunders, 1998)
- Increase prevention efforts
- Explore alternative models in responsible, careful manner

## A quick reference

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- [www.vawnet.org](http://www.vawnet.org)  
National Online Resource Center on Violence  
Against Women

# Poverty and Domestic Violence

What is the link?  
What should we do about it?

## In memory of Susan Schechter

If we consider batterer-generated and life-generated risks together, as abused women always do, it is easy to understand why many women often neither stay in nor leave their relationships, but, as research by Russell and Rebecca Dobash taught us, they come and go (1979). Both leaving and staying with an abusive partner create risks and cost women, especially poor women, dearly. If the woman leaves, she may have to give up affordable housing, friends and neighbors, and the additional income, childcare or transportation that her partner provides. Her life could end up to be worse. While many helping professionals think of her safety solely in physical terms and, as a result, urge her to leave the *violence*, she may think of her safety more broadly. Safety for her may be food, shelter, or a ride to work or the clinic.

Expanding Solutions for  
Domestic Violence and Poverty: What  
Battered Women with Abused Children  
Need from Their Advocates

## What is the evidence for the link between poverty and domestic violence?

**Table 6. Average annual rate of violent victimizations of women by a lone offender, by victim characteristics and victim-offender relationship, 1992-03**

Victim characteristic	Average annual rate of violent victimizations per 1,000 females age 12 or older				
	Total	Intimate	Offen- relative	Acquaint- unoffend	Stranger
<b>Crimes of violence</b>	36.1	9.3	2.8	12.9	7.4
<b>Race</b>					
White	35.2	9.1	2.8	12.5	7.1
Black	44.6	10.9	3.5	17.2	9.5
Other	27.8	6.5	4.5	8.4	5.7
<b>Ethnicity</b>					
Hispanic	33.9	7.9	3.2	10.0	9.0
Non-Hispanic	36.3	9.4	2.8	13.2	7.2
<b>Age</b>					
12-19	24.6	9.6	6.1	38.1	11.9
18-29	63.7	25.3	4.7	18.2	13.9
30-45	37.5	10.6	2.8	12.4	7.4
46-64	12.5	2.2	1.2	4.1	3.7
65 or older	4.8	1.2	0.3	1.1	1.2
<b>Education</b>					
Some high school or less	47.7	9.9	4.7	28.5	7.5
High school graduate	27.9	9.2	2.2	8.8	4.9
Some college or more	35.9	8.7	2.1	11.6	9.6
<b>Annual family income</b>					
\$9,999 or less	57.1	19.9	6.1	18.5	7.6
\$10,000-\$14,999	46.6	13.3	4.8	14.1	9.1
\$15,000-\$19,999	42.2	10.9	3.1	17.3	7.9
\$20,000-\$29,999	38.0	9.5	2.7	14.8	7.9
\$30,000-\$49,999	30.6	5.4	1.8	11.5	8.4
\$50,000 or more	24.8	4.5	1.8	9.7	6.3
<b>Marital status</b>					
Married	36.9	2.7	1.8	5.7	4.9
Widowed	30.4	1.9	0.8	3.6	2.5
Divorced	61.8	21.1	4.2	19.5	10.2
Separated	123.5	42.2	10.6	19.9	1.4
Never married	63.9	12.0	4.8	27.2	12.9
<b>Location of residence</b>					
Urban	45.4	10.7	3.8	15.9	10.8
Suburban	33.6	9.2	2.7	11.5	7.1
Rural	29.5	7.7	2.7	12.2	3.7

Note: Rates of violence for this table include rapes, sexual assaults, robberies, and aggravated and simple assaults from the NCVS. Rates exclude homicide victimizations. Relationship-specific rates do not add to the total because some victims did not identify their relationship to the offender.

## Canadian Data

Weighted data Type of violence		Nfld., P.E.I., N.S., N.B.	Que.	Ont.	Man., Sask.	Alta.	B.C.	Canada
Any non-severe (physical)	50-	12.6	11.9	12.8	19.3	18.3 <sup>†</sup>	18.5	14.1
	29,999	6.4 <sup>†</sup>	8.0 <sup>†</sup>	8.7 <sup>†</sup>	9.7	16.5 <sup>†</sup>	11.1	9.3
	530-	4.9 <sup>†</sup>	5.3 <sup>†</sup>	5.0	--	8.6 <sup>†</sup>	†	5.9
	49,999						7.8 <sup>†</sup>	
	\$50,000 +							
Any severe physical, (including sexual)	50-	10.0 <sup>†</sup>	7.8 <sup>†</sup>	9.9 <sup>†</sup>	16.0	14.5 <sup>†</sup>	11.5	10.2
	29,999	3.6 <sup>†</sup>	3.0 <sup>†</sup>	4.7 <sup>†</sup>	7.4	--	†	4.4
	530-	--	--	2.8 <sup>†</sup>	--	4.0 <sup>†</sup>	4.3 <sup>†</sup>	2.6
	49,999						--	
	\$50,000 +							
Any violence (severe or non- severe)	50-	13.6	12.5	13.0	20.7	18.9 <sup>†</sup>	19.1	14.7
	29,999	6.6 <sup>†</sup>	8.1 <sup>†</sup>	9.0 <sup>†</sup>	10.1	16.6 <sup>†</sup>	11.2	9.5
	530-	4.9 <sup>†</sup>	5.8 <sup>†</sup>	5.0	--	8.6 <sup>†</sup>	†	6.0
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	\$50,000 +							

## Methods -Neighborhood Study

- Merged data drawn from Waves 1 and 2 of the National Survey of Families and Households (NSFH) a nationally representative sample of American households, with census tract level data from the 1990 U. S. Census.
- From the NSFH, data on
  - conflict and violence
  - economic resources and well being,
  - the composition of the household
  - a large number of socio-demographic characteristics
- From Census, abstracted tract level data on the characteristics of tracts where NSFH respondents lived.
  - Reflected the aggregate social, demographic, and economic characteristics of the tracts.
- Merging the census tract data with the NSFH survey data enabled us to investigate contextual variation in and correlates of domestic violence.

**Concentrated Disadvantage, Economic Distress, and Violence Against Women in Intimate Relationships**

By Michael L. Benson and Greer L. Fox

## Methods-neighborhood study

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- Created index of concentrated disadvantage
  - percent of single parents,
  - percent non-white,
  - percent unemployed,
  - percent of families on public assistance and
  - percent below the poverty line in a census tract.
- Each couple received the index score for the census tract in which they were located.
- Based on their index scores, divided into two groups:
  - the 30 percent who resided in the most disadvantaged census tracts versus the remaining
  - **70** percent of couples who resided in more advantaged tracts.
- Calculated the rates of intimate violence against women for the two groups.

## Neighborhood and Partner Violence

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- Neighborhood disadvantage
  - 8.7 to 4.3 (Benson and Fox)
  - “Serious” 5.8 to 2.4

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## Economic distress and partner violence

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- Strong relationship between subjective feelings of financial strain and the likelihood of violence against a woman in an intimate relationship.
  - Rate of violence among couples with high levels of subjective financial strain is roughly three and a half times as high as it is among couples with low subjective strain (9.5 versus 2.7 percent).

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## Unemployment

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- Rate of violence increases as the number of periods of male unemployment increases.
  - In couples in which the male is always employed, the rate of violence is 4.7 percent.
  - The rate rises to 7.5 percent when the male experiences one period of unemployment and
  - to 12.3 percent when he experiences two or more periods of unemployment between waves.

## Race and Ethnicity and Intimate Violence

- Correlations of race and ethnicity with violence are confounded with neighborhood context
  - When controls for community context, the association between race/ethnicity and violence weakens or disappears.
  - Effect of race and ethnicity on intimate violence is in large part a function of the greater likelihood of Black and Hispanic couples to reside in neighborhoods with concentrated economic disadvantage.
- Economic and contextual explanations of intimate violence are likely to be more informative than are culturally or race-based explanations.
- Need to understand and change the social dynamics that lead to patterns of race and ethnic residential concentration in the economically and socially most impoverished neighborhoods will shed light on the commonly found link between race/ethnicity and intimate violence.

### **Concentrated Disadvantage, Economic Distress, and Violence Against Women in Intimate Relationships**

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## Neighborhood Study Findings

- Intimate violence is more prevalent and more severe in disadvantaged neighborhoods.
- It occurs more in households facing economic distress.
- When the economically distressed household is located in a disadvantaged neighborhood, the prevalence of intimate violence jumps dramatically:
  - women living in these circumstances are most at risk.
  - Because a higher percentage of African-Americans live in disadvantaged neighborhoods and face economic distress, they experience higher rates of intimate violence compared with whites.
- When comparing African-Americans and whites of similar income levels, the levels of intimate violence are similar.

## Physical Violence

<u>Physical violence</u>	<u>Lifetime</u>	<u>12 month</u>
Slapped, kicked or bit you	34.0	8.8
Pushed, grabbed or shoved you	55.4	20.1
Hit you with his fist	31.3	7.8
Hit you with an object that could hurt you	25.4	5.8
Beaten you	28.6	5.4
Choked you	31.5	6.4
Threatened to or used a weapon	25.8	7.0
Forced into any sexual activity against your will	19.3	2.1
Any physical violence	62.8	23.2
Any severe physical violence	51.0	14.9

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## Women's Employment Study

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- Random sample of 753 recipients
- Age
  - 18-25            28%
  - 25-34            46%
  - 35 and older 26%
- 57% African-American
- 24% cohabitating
- 43% with children 0-2
- 57% working 20 hours or more

## Why reluctance to acknowledge?

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- Worried that it would prevent widespread concern about d.v.
- Worried it would stigmatize d.v. victims
- Worried it would shift responsibility off of batterers
- In welfare policy, fear of scuttling "welfare reform."

## On the domestic violence side...

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- For too long, some efforts to assist battered women and their children escape from violence have overlooked their basic human needs.
- Legislation, policy, services, and advocacy often focus on physically separating the battered woman and her children from the abusive partner, but do not guarantee that there will be a roof over their heads, food on their table, or health care available when they need it.
- Reducing the risk of physical violence will not make battered women and their children "safe" without also providing opportunity for long-term financial stability.

*Jill Davies, Blueprint for Policy*

## On the poverty policy side

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- Similarly, anti-poverty efforts have often focused on increasing economic resources and access to programs without addressing the impact of violence on a family's financial stability.
- Antipoverty advocacy often seeks to secure a family's basic human needs through temporary government benefits, housing assistance, or job training and employment, but may do little prevent a batterer from attacking his partner or sabotaging her job or program eligibility.
- These anti-poverty efforts don't address the longer-term effects of violence that some women and children face.
- Providing access to financial resources will assure the economic security battered woman only if it also offers her options to reduce the violence and its effects.

*Jill Davies, Blueprint for Policy*

## Poverty and men who batter

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- Link to motivation to batter and poverty
- Societal disrespect leads to increased need for respect in other domains
- Economic exploitation leads to economic exploitation
- Control of partners//vulnerability to perceived disrespect or threats to stability increased
- Lack of resources leads to decreased stability leads to increased opportunity for perceived relationship threats
- Greater risk of trauma throughout the lifespan

## Low income men, cont.

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- Life for low-income men is also difficult.
- Lack of employment, health care, discrimination and other barriers also affect their options and decisions about their families.
- It is clear that most low-income men do not batter their partners and that most have-- or would like to have--meaningful relationships with their children.
- These men also need economic supports and opportunities.
- Responsible father involvement programs, economic empowerment programs important.
- **MUST BE** combined with awareness and intervention for domestic violence

# The BIG Picture

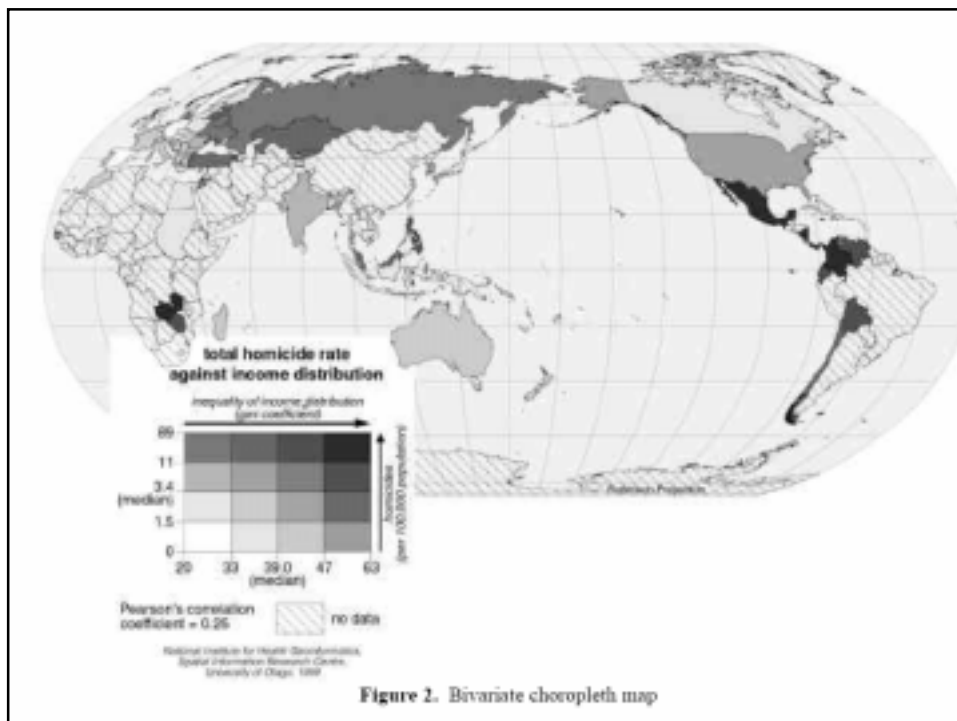


Figure 2. Bivariate choropleth map

## The big picture—its all about equality

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To summarize, the increase in violence associated with greater inequality is part of a broader shift in the nature of social relations. We can make societies more or less hierarchical, stretching them out vertically by making them more unequal, or horizontally by making them more equal. What we do has a profound effect on the quality of social relations. Greater equality makes them less violent, strengthens community life and increases trust, whereas increasing inequality leads to a deterioration in the quality of social relations.

RICHARD WILKINSON (2004) **Why is Violence More Common Where Inequality is Greater?** *Ann. N.Y. Acad. Sci.* 1036: 1–12 (2004).

## Inequality, Justice and Violence

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- “If you want peace, seek justice”
- Neighborhood study indicates we need to eliminate concentrated poverty
- Need to strengthen neighborhoods-collective efficacy research-increase social capital