THE INVISIBILITY OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Sandy Bromley
Fairfax County-Wide Domestic Violence Coordinator
National Statistics

- 1 in 4 women will experience DV in their lifetime
- 85% of victims are women; 15% men
- Sexual assault occurs in ~45% of all DV relationships
- 1 in 12 women will experience stalking in their lifetime
- 1 in 3 girls will be victims of teen dating violence
Every month in Fairfax County...

- Domestic violence hotlines receive almost 260 calls
- Victims request 65 family abuse protective orders
- 14 families escape to an emergency domestic violence shelter
- Over 160 domestic violence arrests are made

- Domestic violence is the leading cause of homicide in our county (routinely about 50% of all homicides each year)
Domestic Violence

- A pattern of coercive behaviors used by an individual to gain and/or maintain power and control over another individual in the context of an intimate/dating relationship.
Forms Of Abuse

- Physical
- Emotional
- Sexual
- Children and Abuse
- Spiritual
- Verbal and Non-verbal
- Financial
Looks can be deceiving
Victim Behavior

What do you think a victim’s intuition would tell her/him about DV?
Counterintuitive Victim Behavior

- Going back to the Offender
- Maintaining a Relationship with the Offender
- Encouraging the Offender as Parent
- Victim’s Use of Violence (particularly in front of us)
- Victim’s Anger toward the System
- Victim Recantation
Understanding Counterintuitive Behavior

Cycle/Spiral of Violence
Understanding Counterintuitive Behavior

Cost-Benefit Analysis of Staying in a Bad Relationship
Victim Behavior

- Reasons to stay:
  - Safety
  - Children
  - Shame/Guilt
  - Fear
  - Financial
  - Religious
  - Cultural
  - Family
  - Inadequate/unknown resources
  - Isolation
  - Love

- Reasons to leave:
  - Safety
  - Children
  - Fear
  - Exhaustion
  - The ‘last straw’

- Exposure to resources
DV Fatality Review Team

- Multi-disciplinary team of professionals

- Goals:
  - *Identify* the circumstances leading up to intimate partner homicides and homicide-suicides;
  - *Determine* indicators that promote early identification, intervention, education, and prevention efforts in similar cases; and
  - *Improve* communication in all systems that serve persons involved in domestic violence in an effort to diminish the likelihood of future intimate partner homicides.
### Reviews of 2009/2010 Cases

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>DV Homicides (+ Suicides)</th>
<th>Total Homicides</th>
<th>DV Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>8 (+4)</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>7 (+2)</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Combined</strong></td>
<td><strong>15 (+6)</strong></td>
<td><strong>30</strong></td>
<td><strong>50%</strong></td>
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</tbody>
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- 2009: 8 DV homicides (+4 suicides), 14 total homicides, 57% DV
- 2010: 7 DV homicides (+2 suicides), 16 total homicides, 44% DV
- Combined: 15 DV homicides (+6 suicides), 30 total homicides, 50% DV
2009/2010 Interventions

- Ever reported to law enforcement (4/15): 27%
- Ever obtained a protective order (3/15): 20%
- Ever sought domestic court interventions (1/15): 7%
- Ever sought mental health services (1/15): 7%
- Ever sought domestic violence advocacy services: 0
Bystanders

- 47% of 09/10 homicides involved bystanders
  - People (family, friends, adult children) who either directly heard threats to kill or knew about ongoing violence in the relationship but felt they could not intervene

- 2009: 3/8 (38%)
- 2010: 4/7 (57%)
Bridging the Gap

Victim

Community Bystanders

Criminal Justice

Civil Justice

Advocacy/Shelter

DVAC (Domestic Violence Action Council)
How You Can Help

- **Believe someone** who discloses an abusive relationship, sexual assault, or stalking experience.
  - Tell them there is help and share the county’s 24-hour Domestic & Sexual Violence Hotline number (703-360-7273; TTY 703-435-1235).

- **Watch out for your friends, neighbors and co-workers** – if you see someone who looks like they are in trouble, ask if they are okay.
  - If you see a friend doing or saying something that concerns you, speak up.
How You Can Help

- **Report crime to the police**
  - Emergencies: 911
  - Non-emergencies: 703-691-2131
  - Anonymous text messages: “TIP187” plus your message to CRIMES [274637]

- **Get involved**
  - Apply to be a volunteer at one of the domestic and sexual violence programs in the county.
  - Implement policies in your house of worship, corporations, etc.
  - Post materials in conspicuous places.
Questions?

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- www.fairfaxcounty.gov/domesticviolence
- www.fairfaxdvcommunity.org
Domestic Violence Testimony

Christi Adams

http://www.savefairfax.org/
Opportunities for Intervention

Small Group Activity
Opportunities for Intervention

- Thanks to the following members of the Fairfax County Domestic Violence Fatality Review Team:
  - Teresa Belcher, Advocacy Supervisor & DVAC Project Manager, Office for Women & Domestic and Sexual Violence Services
  - Paola Cabrera, FCPD
  - Dani Colon, Director, Artemis House
  - Saly Fayez, Director, Victim Services Section, FCPD
  - Jessica Greis Edwardson, Assistant Commonwealth Attorney
  - Laura Harris, Director, Domestic Relations Services, Juvenile & Domestic Relations District Court
  - Lt. Col. Thomas Ryan, Deputy Chief, FCPD
Community Approach to Domestic Violence
Panel Discussion
Community Approach to Domestic Violence

- Supervisor John C. Cook
  - Member, Fairfax County Domestic Violence Prevention, Policy & Coordinating Council (DVPPCC)

- Joe Meyer
  - Executive Director, Shelter House Inc. (Artemis House)

- David Ginsberg
  - Fairfax Divorce Attorney, Cooper Ginsberg Gray PLLC