The Intersection of Domestic Violence and Suicide
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Emily Kulow, BA
The Ohio Domestic Violence Network

About the Presenter(s)
Rachel Ramirez, MA, MSW, LISW-S, RA

• The Founder and Director of The Center on Partner-Inflicted Brain Injury
• Been with ODVN for 13 years, doing lots of training and DV programming capacity building, especially on trauma-informed care
• Bilingual licensed independent social worker and registered advocate with senior standing
• FUN FACT....
About the Presenter(s)

Emily Kulow, BA
- Assistant Director of Training and Program Support for the Ohio Domestic Violence Network.
- Coordinates the meaningful access project at ODVN
  - Develops best practices to provide accessible services to survivors from marginalized populations, including individuals who are:
    - LGBTQI
    - Deaf/HOH
    - limited English proficient
    - with physical, mental health or cognitive disabilities.

The Ohio Domestic Violence Network

The Ohio Domestic Violence Network (ODVN) is a statewide coalition of domestic violence programs, supportive agencies, and concerned individuals working together to stop domestic violence through education, information, and training for those who are affected by domestic violence, and by promoting social and systems change.

- Training and program support
- Policy development
- Prevention work
- Legal services outreach
- Linking systems
- Relocation program

- Support for incarcerated survivors
- Center for Partner Inflicted Brain Injury
What are local DV programs?

Provide
• Shelter
• Outreach
• Housing assistance
• Counseling*
• Support
• Case management
To ALL survivors of domestic violence and their families

What is Intimate Partner Violence?

A pattern of assaultive and coercive behaviors

including physical, sexual and psychological attacks, as well as economic coercion

that adults and adolescents use against their intimate partners.
Intimate partner violence or domestic violence?

- Intimate partner violence is used more in academic literature and medical settings
  - Specifically violence between intimate partners
- Domestic violence is more commonly used in the wider society and is historically what this type of violence has been referred to
  - Legally, domestic violence is defined as violence between a household and family member
- Both terms will be used
- Also can be called domestic abuse or coercive control

Dynamics of DV

- Can affect people of any age, race, gender identity, ethnicity or sexual orientation
- Can occur in any relationship regardless of socio-economic status, education level, [or] cultural background
Types of abuse

- **Physical**
  - Severity varies
  - Violence directed at the head, neck and face (such as punches and strangulation) that can cause brain injuries

- **Sexual**
  - Coerced sex
  - Rape
  - Birth control sabotage

**Psychological**
- Threats/intimidation
- Humiliation
- Stalking
- "Gaslighting"
- Isolation

Unhealthy relationships vs. domestic violence

- Not all unhealthy or bad relationships are abusive
- But not always a clear line between unhealthy and abusive
- Many abusive relationships begin as unhealthy ones
- Abuse is characterized by
  - Power, control and coercion
  - Isolation and manipulation
  - Almost always involves fear on the part of the victim
  - Fear can be of many things—violence can be one of them, but isn’t the only one
  - Violence isn’t the only tactic used, and often not the most frequent one or the one with the most impact
Intersection of DV and Suicide

Individuals who call suicide crisis lines who are also experiencing IPV/DV

![Diagram showing the intersection of DV and Suicide]

73% of DV hotline callers reported that their partner did things to make them feel like they were “going crazy,” including:

- Coercing them into overdosing
- Trying to have them committed to a psychiatric unit

*2012 Warshaw et al. 2014

But we might not know it!

- Suicide lines often aren’t prepared to ask about and respond to DV
- Domestic violence hotlines often aren’t prepared to ask about and respond to suicide
How strong is the correlation?

3 to 4 times higher risk for suicide

(Dillon et al., 2013)

Higher for African American women, individuals who are transgendered, bisexual, undocumented, and those who are on public assistance and also experiencing DV**

(Waters/NCAVP, 2015)

DV and the pandemic
Stay at home orders and closure of public spaces

- Huge implications for domestic violence victims
- Can put them and their children in more danger
- Abusers can manipulate this in numerous ways
- Decreases a victim's opportunities for safety and to get help
- Victims have fewer safe spaces
- Increased stress and tension
- Increases control and isolation
- Fear of infection becomes another barrier

Are you experiencing higher DV call volume right now?

The Pandemic and getting help
"Post Disaster" Call

Volume

- Hotlines see an increase in call volume following natural disasters
- Less avenues where people can get help and support—both formally and informally
- Rates of DV can increase
- Rates of suicide may also increase
- Why?
  - Stress
  - Economic impact
  - Greater isolation
  - Lack of resources
  - Harder to get help or services for help are limited

Contact information

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