

**DOMESTIC VIOLENCE  
AND PARENTING**

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■ All cases of DV are not alike, but all are serious and important.

(Ver Steegh, 65 La. Law Rev., 1379, 2005)

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**DEFINITION OF DOMESTIC  
ABUSE**

The use of physical restraint, force or threats of force to compel someone to do something against his or her will.

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## TYPES OF DOMESTIC ABUSE

- Physical assault
- Sexual assault
- Infliction of physical injury
- Harm to pets
- Destruction of property
- Psychological intimidation & control
- Economic control

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When domestic violence is reported, a comprehensive screening for all forms of FAMILY VIOLENCE should be completed.



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## PARADOXES OF FAMILY VIOLENCE

- The victim wants to escape the violence but also to belong to a family.
- Affection and attention may coexist with violence and abuse.

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### PARADOXES OF FAMILY VIOLENCE

- Ongoing family relationships create opportunities for repeat victimization.
- Physical violence may stop while psychological maltreatment continues.

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### SCOPE OF THE PROBLEM

- 22% of women and 7% of men reported assault by intimate partner (2000)
- An intimate killed about 33% of female murder victims and about 4% of male murder victims.

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### SCOPE OF THE PROBLEM

- 3 - 10 million children "witness" DV each year.
- Exposure can be auditory, visual or inferred.
- More than 75% of the children in homes with domestic violence are aware of the abuse.
- 30 - 60% of children exposed to domestic violence are also physically abused
- Children in DV home are 12-14x more likely to be sexually abused in the home and 7x outside the home

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### SCOPE OF THE PROBLEM

- Mothers beaten by their partners have double the rate of child abuse.
- Fathers who frequently and severely abuse their wives are more likely to frequently and more severely abuse their children.
- Adolescents are likely to try to intervene in DV and are highly likely to be injured.
- DV is the single major precursor to child abuse and neglect fatalities.

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### BATTERED MOTHERS AND CHILD ABUSE

- Chances increase if she was abused by own mother to be abused and to abuse
- Mothers not abused by own mothers less likely to abuse own children even if battered

Coohey, 2004, JIV

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### CO-OCCURRENCE OF ACCESS DISPUTES & DV

- Batterers are twice as likely to seek physical custody as nonviolent fathers.
- Assaultive men are more likely to pursue legal action if they don't receive custody.
- Batterers threaten to kidnap children to control their partners.
- Batterers may be violent during exchanges.

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### CO-OCCURRENCE OF ACCESS DISPUTES & DV

- Batterers are twice as likely to seek physical custody than nonviolent fathers.
- Batterers are more likely to dispute custody of sons.
- Assaultive men are more likely to pursue legal action if they don't receive custody.
- Batterers threaten to kidnap children to control their partners.

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### NEWER TYPOLOGY

- Coercive Controlling Violence (Battering)
- Situational Couple Violence
- Separation-Engendered Violence
- Female Initiated Violence & Violence Resistance

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### 5 P MODEL

- Potency
- Pattern
- Primary perpetrator
- Parenting problems
- Preferences & perspective of the child

In the Name of the Child Johnston et al (2009, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed.)

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### POTENCY

- Injury
- Threat of serious harm
- Access to weapons & other lethality indicators

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### PATTERN

- Frequency
- Episodic vs. chronic
- Disregard & contempt for authority
- Jealousy & possessiveness/stalking

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### PRIMARY PERPETRATOR

- Victim and aggressor vs. victim/aggressor
- Victim's account is clear & specific
- Aggressor's account minimizes, justifies, obfuscates
- Victim aware of hurt inflicted, expresses shame/guilt

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### PARENTING PROBLEMS

- Coercive discipline → physical abuse
- Alternately permissive and excessively authoritarian
- Violates child's boundaries
- Emotionally abuses child
- Morally corrupts child
- Abducts child/threatens to

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### PREFERENCES & PERSPECTIVE OF CHILD

- Fearfulness
- Anger
- Emotional constriction
- Loyalty conflicts
- Signs of trauma

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### COERCIVE CONTROLLING VIOLENCE

- Most common pattern is escalating violence
- Intended to intimidate & control
- Typically includes emotional/psychological abuse
- Injuries are more serious than SCV
- Risk high after separation
- About 30% of cases

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**ROOTS OF CCV**

- Control
- Jealousy
- Reactive
- Mental illness

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**EMOTIONAL ABUSE AND BATTERING**

- Threats
- Degrading comments
- Isolation
- Monitoring
- Accusations
- Blame

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**LETHALITY FACTORS**

- Increase in freq/severity in last year
- Owns a gun
- Used/threatened to use weapon
- Separation in last year
- Threatened to kill
- Believes will kill
- Avoided being arrested for DV
- Forced sex

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### LETHALITY FACTORS

- Tried to choke
- Uses illegal drugs
- Alcohol abuse/dependence
- Controls most of victims daily activities
- Violently & consistently jealous
- Threatened/attempted suicide
- Threatened to harm children
- Stalking
- Destruction of property

Campbell

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### BEST PREDICTORS OF HOMICIDE

- Threat of homicide and woman's belief he will do it



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### ABUSERS

- Feel entitled
- Disrespectful of partner/misogyny
- Portray selves as victims
- Don't take responsibility for behavior
- May express regret but not remorse

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**ABUSERS**

- Expect servitude
- May have co-occurring chemical abuse/dependence
- May have co-occurring affective disorder
- Recent stressor(s)

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**SITUATIONAL COUPLE VIOLENCE**

- Bidirectional
- Injuries not common
- Does not engender same type of fear
- Not primarily intended to control
- Related to poor conflict resolution skills

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**RESULTS VARY BY SAMPLE**

	CCV	SCV
■ Court	68%	29%
■ Survey	11%	89%
■ Women's Shelter	79%	19%

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**SCV**

- One incident, sporadic, ongoing
- 40-75% of custody-disputing parents allege SCV
- > 50% substantiated for one or both parents
- Serious SCV <3%

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**SCV**

- Includes shoving, pushing, etc.
- Unlikely to escalate
- Likely to stop after separation
  - 60% of women, 67% of men report SCV ends after separation

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**SEPARATION-ENGENDERED VIOLENCE**

- No previous history of violence
- In context of traumatic separation/divorce events
- Generally one or a few episodes
- Either partner can initiate
- Children less likely to suffer long-term effects

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**FEMALE VIOLENCE**

- May occur in same sex relationship
- May not be reported by male partner
- Generally less injurious
- Not well studied: 4% Jaffe to 10% Johnston

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**FEMALE VIOLENCE**

- May be self-defense
- May be retaliatory
- May be violent resistance
- May be due to desperation and/or decision to leave
- May include homicide

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“More important than individual acts of violence are patterns of control and domination and consequences of action over time.”

Nielsen

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**CULTURAL ISSUES**

- Check out claims of cultural acceptance
- Consider involvement of extended family when conducting CCE (interview)
- Length of time in US
- Gender-based roles and role modeling

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**AVOID ASSUMPTIONS**

- Gender
- Aggressor vs. victim
- Whether children witnessed the abuse
- If you think you know what happened, you will miss important details.
- Impact of the abuse
  - Lack of emotion = lack of effects

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**WHAT TO LISTEN FOR**

- Minor admissions to enhance credibility
- Unfounded claims of partner's "mental illness"
- "Negative dependency"
- Minimization
- Denial
- Projection

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**WHAT TO LISTEN FOR**

- Details
- Answers to the ? asked
- Ability to clarify
- Verbal presentation is not identical to written
- Affect

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**FALSE & EXAGGERATED CLAIMS - Bala**

- "Victim" reports to police and allegations in family law proceedings may be false or exaggerated
  - Access to services (eg shelter/legal aid/subsidized housing)
  - Tactical gain (possession of home, custody)
  - Psychological needs/perceptions/social supports

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**FALSE & EXAGGERATED CLAIMS - Bala**

- Most allegations are true
- More false denials/minimization by abusers than false claims/exaggeration by spouse abuse victims
- "Recanting" by true victims more common than lying

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**RISK ASSESSMENT -- Alleged Perpetrator**

- Impulsivity vs. premeditated violence
- Intrusion
- Level of obsession/centrality of relationship
- Stalking
- Credible threats, including homicide and suicide
- Destruction of property
- Threats or harm to pets

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**RISK ASSESSMENT -- Alleged Perpetrator**

- Other criminal activity
- Use of chemicals
- Mental health issues, including depression/rage
- Significant events/losses

McFarlane, Campbell, et al. (1999) Stalking and intimate partner femicide. Homicide Studies, 3, 300-316.

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**RISK ASSESSMENT – Alleged Victim**

- Does not follow protective order
- Discusses abuse with/in front of the children
- Chemical use
- Mental health issues
- Criminal history
- Access to weapons

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**CONSIDER**

- Context
- Meaning
- Intent
- May not fit single "category"

Austin, Drozd & Flens, AFCC Indianapolis, 2011

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**ABUSE vs. CONFLICT**

- Look for:
  - Attempts to control, dominate, humiliate
  - Sense of entitlement
  - Absence of pressure on children to take sides
  - Mutual mistrust vs. mistrust by one and fear by the other
  - Mutual negative emotion and hostility
  - Cycles of reaction and response

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**ABUSE vs. CONFLICT**

- Batterers tend to blame someone or something else for the violence, and deny or minimize the severity. Victims provide detailed accounts, while batterers are often vague. Victims report fear, batterers do not.

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**POSITIVE SIGNS**

1. Compliance with authority
2. Ability to take responsibility for violence
3. Lack of denial/minimization
4. Presence of shame/guilt
5. Capacity for empathy, esp. w/ child

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**CUSTODY & PARENTING TIME**

- Impact of DA on each parent's parenting
- Impact of DA on each child
- Gatekeeping
  - Protective
  - Restrictive
  - Facilitating

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**CUSTODY**

- Distinguish between battering vs. other forms that are likely to resolve after separation.
- Does custody arrangement provide opportunities for threats, intimidation, abuse?
- Can custody be shared with safeguards?

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## PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

- Interviews
- Record Review
- Collateral sources
- Psychological variables
- Formal risk assessment
- Impact on parenting

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## THERE'S NO PROFILE

- Of a victim
- Of a perpetrator

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## CONFLICT: EXPRESSION & RESOLUTION

- Arguments: how initiated, if resolved, how resolved
- Triggers: identification and ability/willingness to avoid
- Frustration tolerance
- Verbal abuse

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**QUESTIONS**

- Has the violence ended, how long ago?
- What was/is the motivation?
- Do efforts at control continue in absence of violence?
- Does emotional/psychological abuse continue?

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**QUESTIONS**

- Has the primary perp accepted the end of the relationship?
- Are there threats of harm, including kidnapping, to children?
- Has there been a new escalation due to victim starting new relationship?

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**QUESTIONS**

- Admissions
- Lack of denials
- Shift the blame

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### ASSESSING CREDIBILITY OF ALLEGATIONS

- Confirming information
- Disconfirming information
- Affect consistent w/ reports
- Recognition of impact on children

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### IMPACT ON CHILDREN OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

- According to the APA, exposing children to DV is a form of psychological maltreatment.
- All types of adjustment problems are more likely with exposure to DV.
- There is no "minor" incident of DV in terms of impact on children.
- Impact is not mitigated by age or gender.
- Effects are cumulative.

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### IMPACT ON CHILDREN OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

- Young adults and adolescents report more family violence than their parents
- As the level of violence in a home increases, the likelihood a child will grow up to engage in abusive/violent behavior also increases.

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### IMPACT ON CHILDREN OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

- Children (age 6 to 13) report higher rates of maternal violence towards them than their mothers report
- Parents report more mother to father violence than children report

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### WHAT CHILDREN LEARN

- Home is unpredictable & unstable
- Tension is common in relationships
- Force, threats, coercion are effective means to get your way
- Violence establishes status/position
- Being a grown-up doesn't keep you safe

Drozdz, Kuehnle, and Walker

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### WHAT CHILDREN DON'T LEARN

- Empathy
- Problem-solving skills
- Respect
- Logical link between behavior and consequences
- Responsibility for own actions

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### THE POWER OF FEAR

- Children often believe a perpetrator of abuse is the most powerful person in their world
- Children are often informed overtly and covertly about the price of disclosure
- Children often do not believe anyone can or will keep them safe.

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### IMPACT OF DV ON PARENTING

- Adult partner violence significantly increases risk of child neglect, decreased parenting satisfaction, and child physical abuse

Banyard, et al. (2003) The Impact of Complex Trauma and Depression on Parenting, Child Maltreatment

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### VERBAL AGGRESSION vs. CHILDREN

- 89% of parents reported at least one incident in past year
  - ▶ Screaming, threatening to spank, swearing at, calling names, threatening to kick out
- 33% reported using severe form
- 25% reported 33 or more acts
- 21% threatened to spank 0-1 year olds

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### IMPACT OF VERBAL AGGRESSION

- Children's aggression increases
- This effect is separate from the co-occurrence of parent's physical aggression
- Children' s psychosocial problems increase

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### VERBAL ABUSE

- At 10+ incidents/year, the rate is 267/1000 children
- At 25+ incidents/year, the rate is 113/1000 children

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### EFFECTS ON PARENTS

- Mothers
  - Limited emotional availability
  - More punitive child-rearing strategies
  - More aggressive towards their children



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### EFFECTS ON PARENTS

- Fathers
  - Less available to their children
  - Less likely to use rational discussion
  - Less affectionate



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### OTHER EFFECTS ON PARENTS

- Emotional numbing
- Depression
- Irritability
- Anger
- Withdrawal



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When domestic violence is reported, a comprehensive screening for all forms of FAMILY VIOLENCE should be completed.

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### FACTORS THAT MITIGATE EXPOSURE TO DV

- Proximity to the violence
- Chronicity and intensity of the violence
- Presence of a supportive adult in child's life
- Economic circumstances
- Problem-solving skills

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### POST-SEPARATION PARENTING ISSUES

- Exposing child to partner abuse in new relationship – (both mother and father)
- Modeling partner abuse techniques: physical and emotional
- Interfering with child therapy
- Neglecting child's needs and interests
- Undermining custodial parent
- Redirecting abuse to child

Nielsen

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### POST-SEPARATION PARENTING ISSUES

- Focus on rights, not responsibilities
- Relationships w/ children undermined, estranged
  - Including extended family relationships

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**OVERALL ASSESMENT OF RISK**

- One or a few incidents vs. chronic
- Single aggressor vs. bidirectional
- Severity of physical harm, threat of harm
- Verbal and/or physical abuse
- Presence of major risk factors
- Child exposed vs. not exposed to violence
- History of allegations
- Likelihood of recurrence
- Likelihood of change

Austin, 2001

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**PARENTING TIME**

- Not a right but a responsibility
- Violations of no contact order?
- Child exposed to/involved in DV?
- Impact on child? Afraid of parent?
- Child attached to parent?
- Require chemical abstinence?
- Remove weapons
- Avoid face-to-face exchanges

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**SAFETY FIRST**

- Protection – child & parent
- Accountability
- Child's preference
- Least restrictive parenting plan

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**STRATEGIES FOR CCE**

- No contact
- Supervised parenting time
- Supervised exchanges
- Monitored parenting time
- Parenting time in therapy only
- Non-parent-to-parent exchanges
- Limited parenting time
- Parallel parenting
- No restrictions

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**NO CONTACT**

- Current risk/threat
- History of severe abuse, attempted/threatened homicide
- Parent suicidal
- Serious MI, CD
- Concurrent CPS investigation
- Violation(s) of no contact order
- No remorse/willingness to change

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**SUPERVISED CONTACT ONLY**

- History of serious abuse
- In treatment for MI, CD
- Concurrent CPS investigation
- Violation(s) of no contact order
- Child distressed/fearful of contact
- Child wants contact

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**SUPERVISED EXCHANGE  
(Or Monitored Parenting Time)**

- Risk of abuse/threats only if parents meet
- SCV or SIV
- Chronic conflict in absence of violence
- Need observer to verify child's reactions
- No current threat of harm

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**LIMITED PARENTING  
TIME**

- Concerns re parenting skills
- Concerns re child's distress
- In treatment but limited progress
- High conflict in absence of violence
- Exchanges in public places

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**PARALLEL PARENTING**

- Chronic high conflict
- "Low level" SCV or SIV in past
- Child needs access to positive parenting resources
- Highly structured plan
- Parents follow court orders
- Curbside exchanges

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### PARALLEL PARENTING

- When parents don't trust each other
- When communication is very poor
- When winning and losing are prominent
- When neither parent is harmful on their own

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### PARALLEL PARENTING

- Parents develop own structure and routine
- Parents don't attempt to co-parent
- Parents don't discuss other's parenting style
- Communication only about major issues
- Limited frequency of communication

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### NO RESTRICTIONS

- High conflict
- "Low level" SIV
- Parents are child-focused
- Child not distressed
- History of competent parenting
- MI, CD in remission

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## STRATEGIES FOR PARENTING PLANS

- Appointment of PC
- Referral for needed services
  - Therapy – indiv, parent-child
  - CD treatment
  - BIP
  - Anger management education
  - Parenting classes

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## DE-BRIEF

- Pay attention to your own reactions.
- Take time to process them before going “back to work”.
- Take care of yourself.

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## REAL NEWS

- British physician, Dr. Stuart Brown, 37, was sentenced only to a small fine after a conviction for brutally beating his wife. Brown had explained the fight by saying a “red mist” had descended in the room, causing him to lose control.

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