

CONNECTIONS

A NEWSLETTER ABOUT FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS & PERSONAL GROWTH

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"Many people need to relearn how to love, in order to love more maturely. Your capacity to love others is closely related to your capacity to love yourself. And learning to love yourself is not selfish and conceited. In fact, it is the most mentally healthy thing you can do."

*Bruce Fisher &
Robert Alberti*

PRACTICAL SOLUTIONS



10 Signs of a 'Power and Control' Abusive Marriage

An unhealthy marital relationship that has elements of abuse may be caused by common couple violence in which both partners have low impulse control and feed off each other, unleashing anger that spirals out of control and both may get abusive. Other abusive marriages result when one partner intentionally asserts power and control to manipulate and control the other. The research literature speaks to both types of abuse. Since the power differential is much greater in the latter type and can evolve into long term physical and emotional harm for the partner with little power, this information relates to the 'power and control' type of marital abuse. In our Extension educational programming, if couples reveal definite abuse issues, that is the time to refer them to counseling or another appropriate community resource.

10 Controlling Money

Giving the spouse an allowance against that person's wishes, keeping money in order to keep the spouse in the relationship, giving less money than needed for bills or clothes when one has more than enough.



9 Controlling Time

Having to know where the spouse is at all times, only allowing the spouse to leave the house with the other partner, checking up on spouse often to make sure that that person is doing "what he/she is supposed to do."

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FROM THE DESK OF

Charlotte Shoup Olsen



Understanding Relationships

This issue of *Connections* is designed to increase your understanding of the reality of some marital relationships. Several years ago, Elaine M. Johannes prepared a set of Extension resources on violence in the home that are still available through K-State Research and Extension and are listed in this issue's resource section.

However, Extension agents need to be well aware of the boundaries between

couples' education and therapeutic intervention. We are not therapists and need to steer workshop conversations back to educational issues and refer couples to an appropriate community resource if necessary. Hopefully, this issue will give you clues for families that need referral.

Charlotte Shoup Olsen, Ph.D.
W. Jared DuPree, M.S.

Answers to Questions from Kansas County Extension Agents

Question:

What are your suggestions for content in future *Connections* newsletter?

Answer:

As you can see, this question and answer is in reverse to previous *Connections* newsletters. If you would like to see a *relationship* topic covered that we have not done, please let us know.

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Examining Our Thoughts Regarding...

- I am having a hard time with this task. However, I am improving just like I've improved with other tasks that I have found difficult.
- Gender gives me no right to speak in a negative manner.
- My brother, John, seems to perform this task better than me; however, I can do some things that John can't do as well as me. Maybe, over time I'll be able to learn how to perform this task like John does.
- Just because I am a woman does not mean I will always get my way.

Each of the egalitarian statements tries not to generalize or stereotype. These statements help us look at where we are at, how we can improve, and judge ourselves more fairly and equally.

Hopefully, we can avoid making statements or thinking in manners that pigeon hole ourselves or others. Focusing on each individual's strengths and limitations as well as each of our rights to be treated fairly with respect can reduce power and control relationships that can lead to hurtful relationships.

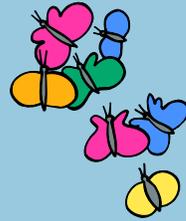
Extension Spotlight

Donna Krug

Donna Krug has been the Family and Consumer Sciences agent in Barton County for a total of 16 years. Following her graduation from K-State in 1977 with a bachelor of science degree in vocational home economics education, Donna served as a 4-H agent in Fort Bend county Texas for four years. Following that Extension job, Donna worked for eight years in her husband's chiropractic office before joining Barton County Extension in July, 1989. Throughout those years she continued her education by completing some graduate hours first at University of Houston and later at K-State.

Donna's favorite educational programs are parenting and budgeting that she regularly offers to Barton County residents. However in the future, she is looking forward to giving leadership to a caregiving program in her county. One of the more challenging aspects of her job is finding enough hours in the day to carry out all the programs that she would like to present. Since the county staff size has decreased, she indicates that "more program areas have found their way to my plate."

In order to teach as many programs as possible, she collaborates with community partners to help team teach various programs. For example, she has invited an independent financial advisor to present *Protecting Your Nest Egg*, a family counselor to



"I especially enjoy my work in parenting and budgeting classes as well as teaching "charitable sewing" in our after school programs. Having county residents look to me as a resource in many subject areas is the most rewarding aspect of my job."

Donna Krug

present *PeopleTalk*, and a caregiver to help present *Tenderhearts*. In the future, she would like to continue supporting the afterschool program, teaching "charitable sewing" even after she retires.

On a more personal note, Donna has been married to John Krug for 27 years and has three children, Kristen (24) who is married and living in Great Bend, Adam (21), a college senior, and Matt (13) who is in eighth grade. Her favorite hobbies are riding a tandem bike with her husband, quilting, and playing the piano. A personal goal of hers is to participate in *Bike Across Kansas* sometime in the future.



PERSONAL INVOLVEMENT

Examining Our Thoughts Regarding Equality in Self and Others

Inequality is a core principle related to abusive relationships. Often times, people might feel that they are better than someone or can treat someone as a lesser human being. They use power and control to keep the other person down in an unequal relationship.

Equality does not mean everyone does everything 50/50. Equality is a way of looking at people and yourself as equals. It does not mean every person is the same. It suggests that all people deserve the same human rights of being treated with respect, being viewed as someone that can succeed regardless of gender or race, and being loved no matter the income level or background. It suggests we look at each person individually, looking at people's strengths and limitations based on personal experience rather than assumptions or stereotypes. Often times, lack of equality comes from irrational thoughts and/or stereotypes.

The following might be some statements that would encourage inequality in others:

- Women are weak; men are jerks.
- All farmers are ignorant.
- Blacks are always getting into drugs.
- Hispanics are always causing trouble.

The following might be statements that would encourage inequality in ourselves:

- I am never able to get it right.
- I deserve to speak this way because I am a man.

- I can never do it like my brother John.
- I can always get my way because I am a woman.

Let's take the previous statements and turn them into more egalitarian (encouraging equality) statements:

- Both men and women have strengths and limitations. I have met some men that would be considered jerks, but I have met others that are very considerate. We all have limitations; I have met a lot of women I consider to be very strong.
- I have met some farmers that seem to know a lot about farming; I have met other farmers that seem to know a lot about farming as well as other fields and areas of society.
- I have met people from all races that get into drugs. I have met people from all races that do not get into drugs.
- I have met people from all races that cause trouble. I have met people from all races that do not cause trouble.

Each of these statements encourages one to look at individual for who they are rather than based on assumptions or stereotypes regarding gender, race, income level, etc.

Let's take the previous statements about self and turn them into more egalitarian statements.

Psychological and Environmental Factors Associated with Partner Violence

Edna B. Foa, Michele Cascardi, Lori A. Zoellner, and Norah C. Feeny
Trauma, Violence & Abuse, V. 1 (1), January 2000, 67-91

This article presents two models of women's ability to influence intimate partner violence based on a review of theoretical and empirical literature on the topic. The authors explain the need for *sensitive and contextualized* models of domestic violence that are *generally applicable* for understanding the problems of its victims, and for guiding the efforts of both clinicians and researchers. Because intimate partner violence affects as many as two million women in the United States each year, the authors hope that the models presented will not only contribute to the literature on domestic violence, but also improve interventions. Factors that seem to be associated with continued violence and those that appear to enable women to curtail or end partner violence are described.

The authors hypothesized the following:

- Partner violence and psychological difficulties interact in a vicious cycle that hinders victims' ability to act to stop the violence.
- *Resilience*, defined in terms such as good self-esteem, optimism, mental flexibility and generally good physical health, mitigates the effects of violence and serves to help victims act positively to end the violence in their lives.
- Environmental factors can either facilitate domestic violence or serve to protect and help its victims. Specifically, community resources that help separate victims from perpetrators and that enable victims to reestablish lives independent from perpetrators help victims end the violence in their lives.

The Psychological Model

Factors that lead or contribute to psychological difficulties which interfere with ending domestic violence include:

- Psychological problems such as posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), anxiety, depression, dissociation or substance abuse. For many victims of domestic violence, these problems result from violence and contribute to the continuation of violence.
- A past trauma history increases risk of psychological problems.
- Negative schemas: a negative worldview and view of oneself. In particular:
 - The tendency to react with anger to life events. This may hinder healthy recovery from traumatic experiences. Researchers find that being angry and having PTSD symptoms often occur together, but anger seems to get in the way of resolving trauma-related emotional problems in treatment.
 - Guilt feelings may keep women from leaving abusive relationships.
 - Coping methods characterized by denial, avoidance and passivity are related to depression and poor problem-solving behaviors.
- Certain perceptions of the relationship with the batterer make women unwilling to leave. In particular:
 - Women who feel emotionally or economically dependent on their abuser tend to stay in the relationship.
 - Women tend to stay in abusive relationships when they engage in *wishful thinking* about the abuse (e.g., wishing their partner would just stop being abusive, or wishing the violence would just stop without attributing its occurrence to a responsible party or basing it on a realistic assessment of the problem).

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Psychological and Environmental Factors...

- A belief in traditional sex roles seems to be associated with women continuing to stay involved in abusive relationships.

Factors associated with resilience which contribute to victims leaving violent relationships include:

- Positive schemas: mental habits that buffer against the development of psychological problems resulting from stressful life experiences. In particular:
 - A flexible and balanced view of the world including a willingness to see positive and negative aspects of experiences or others. This seems to prevent the development of post-traumatic stress disorder.
 - Active problem-solvers were less likely to stay in abusive relationships than women passive about addressing problems.
 - Perceived control (i.e., internal vs. external locus of control):
 - Mental health is associated with an *internal locus of control* (i.e., "I have the power and ability to change things I want to change in my life.")
 - The sense of having an internal locus of control seemed to moderate the relationship between self-esteem and violence. e.g., women who left violent relationships had stronger perceived control and better self esteem than those who did not. In contrast, longer or more severe violence reduced a victim's perceived control.
- Attitudes and beliefs that decreased victim's attachment to the abuser, such as emotional or economic independence and non-traditional sex role beliefs, improved victim's resilience.

The Environmental Model

Factors that lead to increased contact with the abuser lead to psychological problems and in-

creased risk of continued intimate partner violence.

Such factors include:

- The lack of tangible resources. These increase victim dependency on abusers decreasing the likelihood that a battered woman would leave her abusive partner.
- The lack of interpersonal resources increases an abused woman's risk of developing depression and other psychological problems, and in so doing decreases her ability to take positive actions to reduce violence in her life.
- Barriers to legal resources include fear of contacting, dissatisfaction, or humiliation when attempting to get help from the legal system, or increased violence from the abuser as a result of legal system interventions.
- Barriers to institutional resources and institutional interventions themselves could hinder a battered woman's efforts to leave a violent relationship. Barriers include lack of information or fear about using services. When medical or social service personnel blame victims for domestic abuse, or fail to recognize the signs of abuse and give appropriate referrals, victims can be left feeling more isolated, helpless, and distressed. Stopping intimate partner violence is a complex problem that is best understood through the use of conceptual models that include both psychological and environmental factors. Interventions that bolster a woman's ability to become actively engaged in the process of ending the violence are important, but in so doing clinicians are cautioned to avoid implying that victims are to blame for the battering. More exploration into the problem at all levels is warranted.

Factors that increase resilience and decrease psychological difficulties help victims stop intimate partner violence in their lives.

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10 Signs of a 'Power and Control'...

8 Controlling Friendships

Not allowing friendships, controlling time spent with friends, ending spouse's friendships against his/her will.



7 Guilt-Trips

Guilt-tripping the spouse into staying, having sex, staying home, ending a friendship (e.g., "if you only loved me you would...").



6 Humiliation

Embarrassing spouse in front of others by belittling and making that person look *dumb* or *stupid* with the intention to emotionally hurt.

5 Forcing Sex

Expecting sex as a right, making the spouse have sex when the other does not

want to, making the spouse do sexual acts he/she does not want.

4 Pushing/Shoving

Pushing, grabbing, pulling, hitting, biting, slapping, punching with the intent to hurt or control the other.



3 Verbal Abuse

Calling the other person names, criticizing, cursing, etc. with the intent to emotionally hurt.

2 Using Children

Using a child as a middle person, being abusive in front of children, threatening to take or hurt children.



1 Threats

Threats to commit suicide, hurt someone, take children, destroy social image if the spouse leaves or do something the spouse will not like.

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Psychological and Environmental Factors...

These factors include:

- Tangible resources such as housing, child-care, income and employment. These resources improve the likelihood that a victim of domestic violence could become economically independent and capable of leaving an abusive partner.
- Interpersonal resources such as frequent contact with many family members, friends and neighbors to whom victims could talk about problems with abusive partners. These help buffer victims from psychological problems

such as depression.

- Legal resources such as the use of arrest, restraining orders and prosecution. These protect victims by encouraging and enabling them to get help from the criminal justice system, and have been effective in deterring batterers from resuming violent behaviors.
- Institutional resources such as access to quality care from shelters, hospital emergency rooms, social services, mental health and pastoral counselors. These help victims work on resolving problems caused by domestic violence.

Reviewed by Priscilla Schulz, LCSW, Center for Trauma Recovery, University of Missouri—St. Louis, 08/14/2000.



Resources

Resources for Working With Relationships

Publications & Websites

When Words Become Weapons: Verbal Abuse

Publisher: Kansas State University (09/95)
Description: To increase awareness and understanding of verbal abuse in couple relationships. Includes participant and leader guides and other resources.

<http://www.oznet.ksu.edu/library/famlf2>

When Violence Hits Home: Bringing the Facts to Life

Publisher: Kansas State University (11/94)
Description: Deals with the facts of violence on the homefront including individuals leaving abusive relationships, agencies providing services and education, and communities appropriately giving support to families.

<http://www.oznet.ksu.edu/library/FAMLF2>

Domestic Violence and Divorce

Publisher: University of Missouri Extension (2003)
Description: This fact sheet provides a comprehensive overview of domestic violence, its relationship to divorce, the cycles of violence, and suggestions for locating help.

<http://muextension.missouri.edu/explore/hesguide/humanrel/gh6608.htm>

Prevent Violence in the Home

Publisher: Ohio State University Extension (2003)

Description: This fact sheet provides a overview of family violence and suggests ways to prevent it.

<http://ohioline.osu.edu/hyg-fact/5000/5288.html>

Teens and Dating Violence

Publisher: University of Minnesota Extension Service (2003)

Description: This fact sheet is aimed at helping parents talk with their teens about dating violence.

<http://www.extension.umn.edu/info-u/families/BE912.html>