



Newsletter

FAMILY SUPPORT C E N T E R

Winter 2009

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Economic Crisis

Financial Stress Contributing Factor of Domestic Violence

As news of our national economic crisis worsens, at the Family Support Center, our concern is how this will affect the people we serve, specifically those who are affected by domestic abuse.

The National Institute of Justice has recently put together a fact sheet on this very issue gathered from a variety of research studies conducted over the last several years. The information from this fact sheet is no surprise. The conclusions we can draw from it are that the number of women who will become victims of domestic violence will probably increase, and for those women who are already in an abusive relationship, the abuse may get worse.

While most experts agree that the root causes of domestic violence are power and control, other aspects, such as financial stress can be contributing factors. While we have always known that financial problems and stress can exacerbate domestic abuse, this is extremely relevant now, as we face an economic crisis greater than most of us today have ever seen.

The number of women who will become victims of domestic violence will probably increase.

The study showed that:

- Employment instability and subjective financial strain are both strong risk factors for domestic abuse.
- For couples where the male was always employed, when men experienced two or more periods of unemployment, the rate for domestic abuse rose 8%.
- When couples feel high levels of subjective financial strain, the rate of domestic abuse rose 7%.
- Financial strain may keep women in abusive relationships. The choice to stay or leave violent relationships may be based in part or wholly on the decision that a partner's economic contribution to the relationship outweighs the risk of violence, and many compel women to live with men's violent behavior rather than seek help or take other steps to leave violent relationships.

Another study shows the impact that domestic abuse has on stable employment. Women with an abusive partner work fewer months,

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Not my Favorite Month

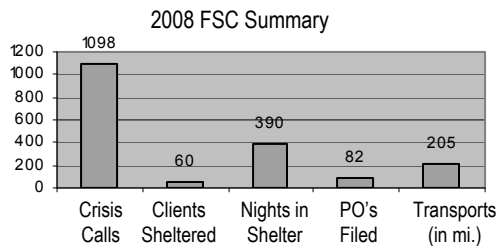
A Look Back at 2008

January is not my favorite month. Along with the normal workday activities, year-end reports are due. Statistics must be compiled for different grants. There is, however, an upside to this time consuming process.

Early in every new year, I look back over the past year and wonder "Did I accomplish anything last year?" Some days, if I'm feeling discouraged, the answer may feel like "No, I haven't accomplished a thing." Year end reports help me answer this question objectively. Reports force me to acknowledge that yes, indeed, we have done a lot.

In 2008, 1,098 crisis calls were answered. Another 100 callers simply wanted information about our agency services or community resources. Questions were answered, connections

were made and people, who may not have had anywhere else to turn, were heard. In 2008, we sheltered 60 people who were in danger. Half of those



were children. We provided 390 nights of shelter. That is the highest number of requests to date and none were turned away. We assisted with filing 82 protective orders. We drove our clients 205 miles, mostly short trips to the court house, to shelter and to Salvation Army for food. For us and those we've been able to help, 2008 was a good year.

-Ellen, Domestic Abuse Program Director

Economic Crisis, Cont. from Page 1

because of physical and mental health related concerns. The stress related physical and mental health problems that result from domestic abuse last even after the abuse has occurred. These health problems decrease women's ability to hold stable employment even as long as two years after the abuse has occurred.

Another significant reality is while domestic abuse will probably become more frequent and more serious through this economic crisis, the ability of non-profit agencies such as ours who help victims of domestic abuse may be hampered. Our funding and that of our sister agencies is obtained through government grants, private foundations, United Ways and individual contributions. State, county and

the federal government are all under financial strain too. We are unsure if decisions will be made that adversely impact funding to domestic violence advocacy agencies. Some private foundations are potentially also hurt by the economic crisis, as they may have lost significant amounts of income in their investments.

If individuals are under financial strain and are experiencing economic instability, they may not be able to give as much money to Family Support Center or United Way as in the past. While we empathize with the real economic hardships we are all facing, we hope that you will continue to do whatever you can as we continue to help the most vulnerable members of our community.

-Geri, Executive Director

Make a Difference

The Safe Exchange Program offers a safe and nurturing place for any parents who feel that they need a secure and less stressful environment to exchange their children. By using both sides of the Family Support Center building, families are able to switch visitation without having any direct contact with the other parent. This way, the children are able to be exchanged without seeing, hearing, or feeling the stress and anxiety of parents fighting or arguing.

This program works with volunteers who are responsible for safely exchanging children and are trained to watch for any unsafe or inappropriate behaviors from the parents. Safety precautions are in place to ensure that during each exchange, the building and families are safe. The children's safety is our number one priority in the Safe Exchange Program. Anyone interested in volunteering or in using this program should contact Becce at 723-1138. You can make a difference in a child's life.

-Becce, Safe Exchange Coordinator

Bring Back the Lemonade Stand

Teaching Children Good Finances

Selling lemonade on the corner may not be the only answer for adults when teaching children about earning money, but it is a start. Since parents are the primary teachers of their children, especially during the early years, they need to be the ones to instill them with the principles of good finances.

Did you know that many children think there is a “Money Store” or “Money Tree,” where parents can get money if they run out? How many times have you told a child that something can not be bought because there is no money and they reply, “Well, go get some”?

Generally, parents spend from 18 to 22 years preparing their children for life and adulthood. However, they usually spend only a few hours teaching them the value and use of the money they will use throughout their lives.

It is important, from a young age on, to communicate with your children about finances to help them develop healthy earning and spending habits.

Through communication we give our children, in age appropriate ways, the tools they will need to become wise consumers.

Teaching a basic “language” about saving and spending can include the following steps.

Allowance

If your child is old enough to say, “Buy me this” and can perform small household chores they are old enough to earn money and/or have an allowance.

Setting up a chore chart, where jobs completed can be rewarded with small purchased items or freedoms, can be very motivational. Communication relays to them the importance of work and saving toward a goal.

Delayed Gratification

It’s natural behavior for young children to beg for items they see in a store, but how a parent responds to a child’s demands can have long lasting effects on how the child will look at money. If parents give in to their child’s begging, the child develops a pattern of instant gratification. This has in part lead

Americans into their obsession with credit cards.

Income and Budget

If children see their parents checking the price tag on items before the purchase or putting something back because it is too expensive for the price this can have a positive effect on the child’s attitudes toward money and teach them comparison shopping.

Also, consider setting limits when shopping. Communicate that the trip is to buy groceries that are needed, then have them help with the shopping. Help children recognize the difference between wants and needs.

Saving and Giving

Introduce your child to the bank where you save. Help them open an account where a percentage of all money earned and given to them is deposited. Talk to them about saving for educational goals or even a new bike or skate board.

Teach your child altruism, giving to others. If it is giving money, time or of themselves your child’s feelings of self-worth will be enhanced.

So, it may not be an actual lemonade stand that is the teaching tool, but guidance and discussion will head your child in the right direction financially.

It is important to communicate with your children about finances to help them develop healthy earning and spending habits.

-Marilyn, Parent Services Provider



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WISH LIST...

We are in need of the following items. ANYTHING you can donate would be gratefully appreciated.

- New or gently used children's books for kids up to age 14
- Puzzles, activity books
- Dish soap
- Laundry detergent
- Fabric softener
- Fabric sheets
- Hair care products
- Comet
- Fantastic
- Latex-free plastic gloves
- 33 gal. garbage bags
- Paper towel
- Fabric softener
- Laundry detergent
- Gas cards, specifically for client transport to group

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