



Newsletter

FAMILY SUPPORT C E N T E R

Winter 2010

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Domestic Violence in the Extreme

Each fall, the Wisconsin Coalition Against Domestic Violence (WCADV), releases its Wisconsin Domestic Violence Homicide Report for the previous year. While the details of the report are tragic, it provides an opportunity to grieve the loss of domestic violence victims, reflect on the impact of domestic violence in our communities and focus on preventing domestic violence in the future.

**33 domestic
violence
homicide
incidents
resulted
in 46 deaths**

In 2008 in Wisconsin there were 33 domestic violence homicide incidents resulting in 46 deaths: 36 homicides and ten perpetrator suicides. There was an average of three domestic violence homicide deaths per month in Wisconsin. Perpetrators of domestic violence homicide incidents were overwhelmingly male (97%). Half of the homicides involved a victim or someone close to the victim who had left the relationship or was taking action to leave the relationship, such as moving out or filing for divorce. Victims were from 18 counties across all regions of the state.

While the report is a severe reminder of the seriousness of domestic abuse, we should also remember that over 40,000 individuals receive services from domestic violence agencies in Wisconsin, such as the Family Support Center. Our agency, as well as our sister agencies throughout the state help keep victims safe and provide the assistance needed as they transition to lives free of violence.

-Geri, Executive Director

Unprecedented Increases of Services

Family Support Center's Demand for Services up 50%

For quite some time, emails received from domestic violence program directors across the state allude to programs having unprecedented increases of clients seeking services. In fact, agencies in the southern part of the state are reporting increases as high as 100% and all too often domestic violence program directors statewide contend that these dramatic increases are directly correlated to the economic collapse our country has witnessed.

While I have no data to prove or disprove this, I do believe the Family Support Center's dramatic 50% increase in clients in the first two months of this reporting year

period compared to the past two years, does support other state agencies' conclusions. Typically, the Family Support Center's numbers increase slightly every year and often these nominal increases are due to improved awareness of domestic violence issues and networking efforts with other local agencies.

Articles in numerous publications illustrate the correlation of an increase in domestic violence to the downturn in economy. In talking with clients, it is the loss of jobs and lack of money along with the considerable amount of time people spend together that can be seen as factors in higher

incidents of domestic violence. Domestic violence is about control and a person with abusive tendencies may feel that a loss of a job signals a significant loss of control. The forced fallout of this loss may include curtailing Christmas, letting insurance lapse or even the loss of a home. When an abuser loses control in one area of his life, he often looks to compensate in another area and to the abuser that may mean through controlling his family. While I do not believe the economy causes domestic violence it certainly is a stressor that impacts the families we serve.

-Ellen, Domestic Abuse Program Director

Steps to "Stressing Out"

10 Successful Ways to Sustain Stress

With the holidays behind us and a new year in front of us it is time to take a deep breath. The stress of shopping, buying presents, spending time with relatives and eating are working their way into our memories. **HOWEVER**, if you feel so inclined to hang on to a *little more stress*, here are some suggestions:

1. Be a perfectionist. Never accept less than perfection.
2. Work at least 10 hours a day. Work as many holidays as possible.
3. Adhere to a diet of "fast food", candy bars and fried foods.
4. Adhere to inflexible idealism.
5. Assume the responsibility for solving problems of all your friends, family and coworkers.
6. Never delegate responsibility.
7. Never say NO! Try pleasing all of the people ALL of the time.
8. Never waste time relaxing.
9. Never exercise.
10. Never take any time off for yourself. If you are forced to do so, feel as guilty as possible.
11. You must remember everyone else first, your needs last.
12. Above all, get **EMOTIONALLY**

involved in everything you do. Learn to empathize in ALL aspects of your life.

This is certainly meant as a bit of humor—a stress reliever in itself. As parents there are ways to lighten the stress load when we take the time to enjoy the "simple pleasures" life offers. By spending time with our children whether it be coloring, watching a movie, cooking or being outdoors our stress and burdens can be lifted. Take time to "goof off". It will be time well spent and appreciated by our children.

-Marilyn, Parent Services Provider

Safe Exchange

Children in the Middle Workshop

The Safe Exchange Program offers a safe and nurturing place for parents to exchange their children for visitation. This program is free of charge and available to any family who is in need of a safe, neutral place for visitation.

Another component to this program is a parent education class called **Children in the Middle**. It involves a workshop for both child and parent with video and discussion for participants. Parents and children attend these classes on the same night, in the same building, but in separate classrooms.

Parents discuss ways children can feel put in the middle between their parents' conflicts by:

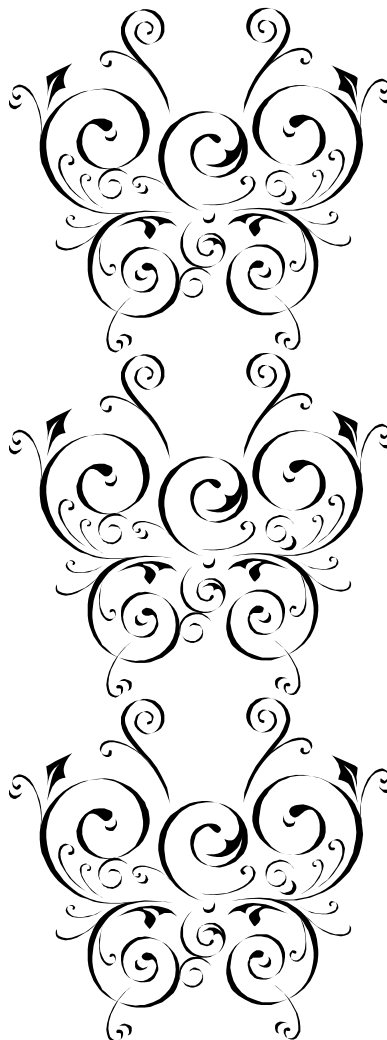
- Asking children to carry inappropriate messages back and forth.
- Saying bad things about the other parent in front of the children.
- Other stressful situations that make children feel confused and torn between parents.

Parents learn tools to help communicate with the other parent and remove their children from the middle.

Children discuss emotions, who they can talk to, and how they can communicate their feelings to their parents. This class leads to an understanding on how parental

conflict can greatly affect children in unhealthy ways. Last year, the Safe Exchange Program held 10 **Children in the Middle** classes in which 108 adults and 32 children participated. Please call Family Support Center for more information on the Safe Exchange Program and/or the **Children in the Middle** classes.

*-Becce, Safe Exchange
Coordinator*



Tips for a Healthier New Year

By

American Academy of Pediatrics

Prevent violence by setting good examples Demonstrate and teach displays of affection, attention, approval, and how to say 'I'm sorry' and how to ask for, give and accept forgiveness. All of these promote love, good will, self-esteem and reduce likelihood of violence, aggression, and negative, destructive words and behaviors. Set limits for your children by letting them know what's expected, and notice when they meet your expectations. Celebrate their successes with them. Avoid hitting, slapping or spanking. Your children may copy you and think that it is OK to hit other people.

Read to your child every day

Start by the age of 6 months. Reading to children shows them the importance of communication and motivates them to become readers. It also provides a context to discuss issues and learn what is on your child's mind.

Make your children feel loved and important

Recognize every effort and increment of 'progress' or 'improvement' they make; don't compare siblings; understand your child's behaviors and emotions; recognize 'hidden agendas' like acting up, may be a cry for attention and help; not doing homework may be a sign of distraction or learning problems. Keep expectations for changes and goals realistic and use 'baby steps.' Celebrate their individuality and tell them what makes them special. Assure them that they are loved and safe.



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WISH LIST...

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

- Dish soap
- Laundry detergent
- Fabric sheets
- Cleaning Disinfecting Wipes
- Latex-free Plastic Gloves
- 33 Gal. Garbage Bags
- Paper Towel
- Toilet Paper
- Handwipes
- Grocery and Gas Gift Cards
- Microwavable Non-frozen Self-contained Meals
- Safety Scissors
- Stickers
- Stencils
- Coloring Books
- Cereal Bowls
- Juice
- Snacks