

VAW and CAS Collaboration: Keeping Children and Mothers Safe and Engaging Men who use Abusive Behaviours

September 19, 2013

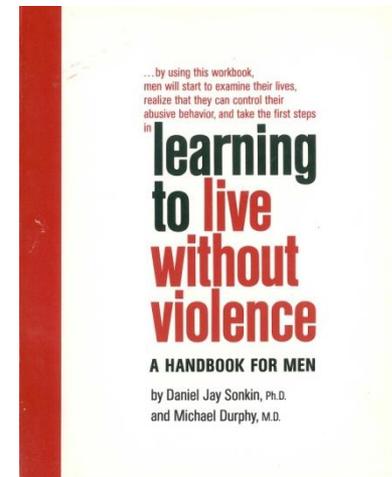
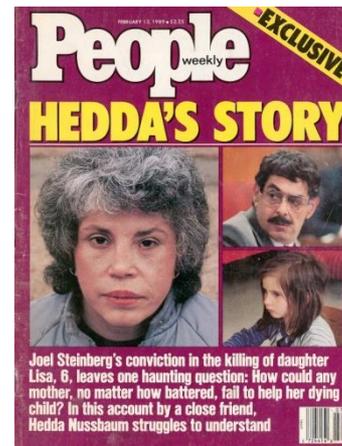
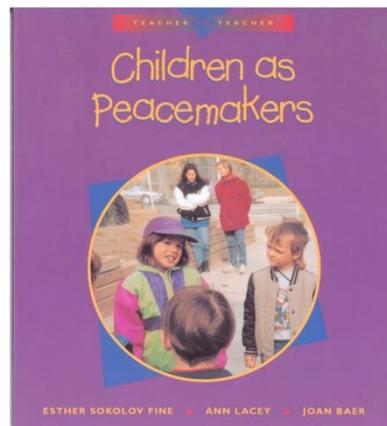
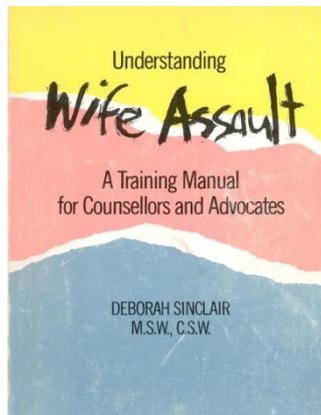
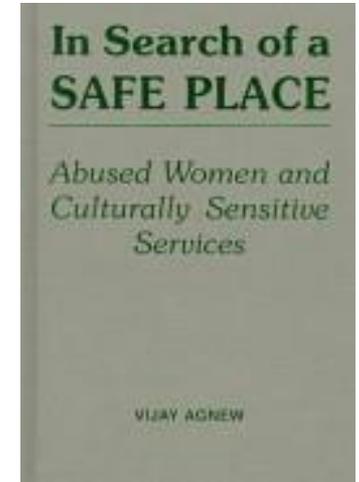
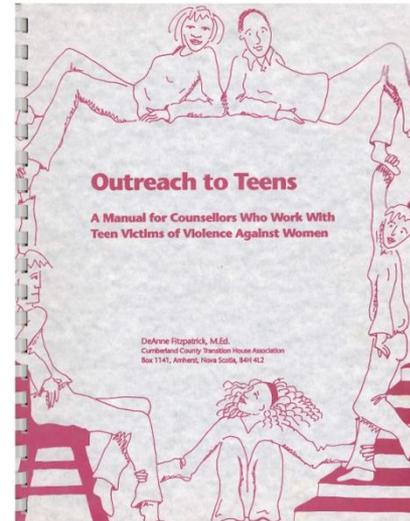
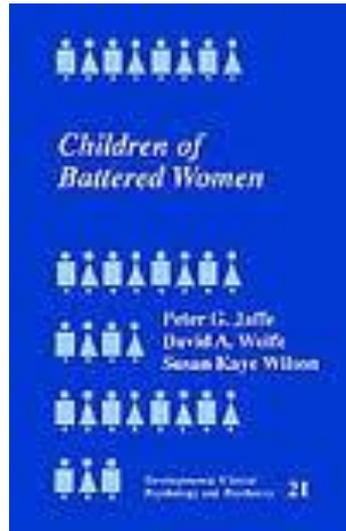
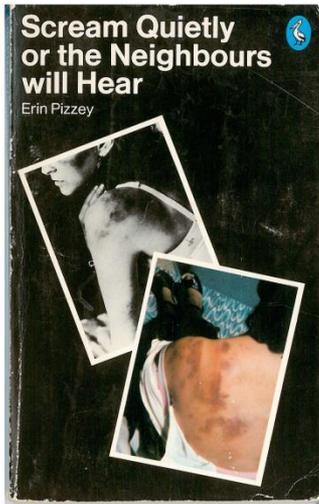


Deborah Sinclair, MSW, RSW
Independent practice

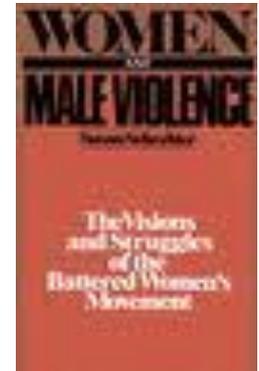
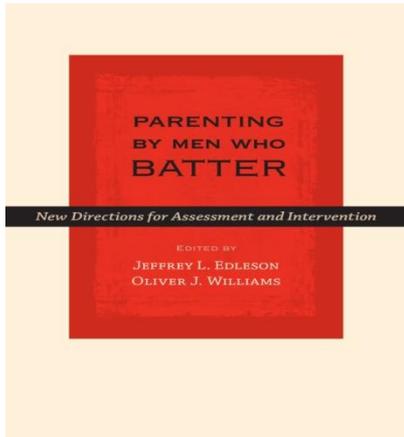
Lisa Tomlinson, BSW
Children's Aid Society of Toronto

Grounding our work in
an historical context

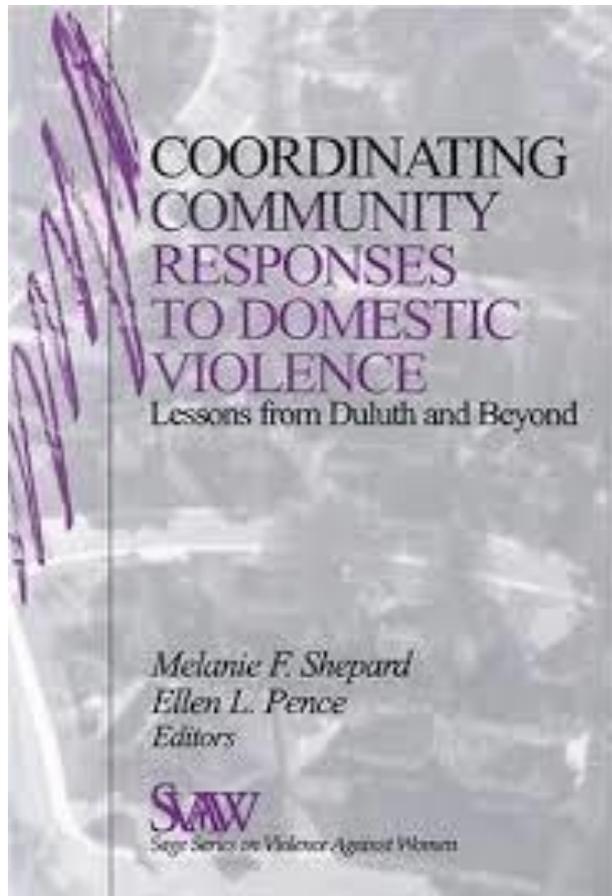
Early influences...



Early Collaborations- the Green Book



Founding Mother of Collaboration



History of CAS/VAW Collaborations

- 1993-1997 – A series of inquests into deaths of children who had been receiving services from children's aid societies
- 1998-2001 – Development phase of CAS/VAW Collaboration Curriculum Training 2001-the first Woman Abuse CAS/VAW Collaborative Curriculum-Mandy Bonisteel and Pat Convery plus CAS/VAW advisory
- Oct. 2000 to June 2002 – CAS/VAW Collaboration Curriculum Training made available to all CAS and VAW front line staff
4,485 workers were trained in 67 different cities and towns across Ontario: 2,185 from the VAW sector and 2,300 from the CAS sector
- 2000 – Preparation of a draft model agreement
- OAITH's Ground breaking report *In the Best Interests of Children and Mothers*- 2003
- CAS/VAW Collaborative agreements of understanding were written around the province

History of CAS/VAW Collaborations

- 2006- 2008- our team (Deborah, Lisa et al) drafted the next iteration
- 2009- Deb Cantrell and a cast of many on the advisory finalized a decade of effort and the Critical Connections: Where woman abuse and child safety intersect- A practical guide for child welfare professional in Ontario was released.
- Current training going on now-how many, where, etc.



Historical Issues for child protection

- Protection workers dealing with competing demands of investigations
- CAST offered minimal training in the area of domestic violence
- Protection workers not addressing dynamics of domestic violence
- Community feedback around domestic violence not positive
- Mandatory reporting 2000

Historical Child Welfare Interventions

- Close file if father/partner out of the home
- Mother forced to go to shelter or have her children removed
- Educate the mother on the impact of violence on her children
- Ongoing work if the belief that she can't protect the children
- Not involved in custody and custody

Our Past

- 2003 implementation of the Intake Domestic Violence Team as a response to:
 - Lack of knowledge and training for workers in Domestic Violence
 - Lack of community engage to effectively deal with the challenges we all faced
 - Re-victimization of women and children

What is Gender Based Analysis (GBA)?

- It is a process that examines the differences in women's and men's lives, their access to resources, and identifies the potential impact of policies and programs in relation to these differences.
- Accordingly, GBA is useful for both women and men, as well as for groups of women and men, by taking into account their diversity. Gender cannot be separated from race, class, ability, sexual orientation. Thus, the importance of using an ARAO oppressive framework.
- Applying GBA is critical in understanding the different patterns of involvement that women and men have in economic, social and legal structures (Sinclair, 2003; CIDA, 2009)

What does the evidence say?

- In Canada, 1993-2003, 97% of IPV homicides were perpetrated by men against women (Li&Danvergne,2006)
- In ON, there were similar findings from the DVDRC> 144 cases /219 deaths from 2003-2011- 92% were male perpetrators.
- In a Can. review of child welfare data, 73% of fathers and 15% of stepfathers/CLP's are the perpetrators in most substantiated cases of child abuse. (Black, 2010).
- Gender-neutral language hides the truth of oppression....

What does trauma-informed care really mean?

- Trauma-overwhelming, powerless, out of your control
- A Trauma-informed approach necessitates that all goals and supports plans be co-created with or defined by the woman
- Seek to enhance each woman's control over her life wherever possible
- This means every intervention leads to more, not less, control whenever possible
- Think about how each of us intervenes- what will the impact be?
- Why is it so important? We provide an alternative voice...

Best Practice Principles

- Ensuring the safety of children is paramount, as children are most vulnerable and have the least power in our society.
- Increasing the safety of abused women will increase the safety and well-being of children.
- Perpetrators must be held accountable for their abusive behaviour.
- Working together increases safety for women and children and decreases chances for re-victimization.
- Child abuse and woman abuse are the result of abuse of power in family relationships. Neither women nor children can be responsible for changing the abuser's behaviour.
- Working together, we can provide a community leadership role to influence systemic change.

(CAS/VAW Curriculum, 2000)

Holding the big picture while understanding our different mandates

Child Welfare

- Child centered
- Service for eligible children
- Non-voluntary clients
- Children protected under legislation
- Guided by legislation
- Forensic investigation, customized investigations, case management and advocacy

VAW

- Woman and child centered
- Services for abused women and their children
- Voluntary clients
- Women offered community designed services including shelter and safety planning
- Driven by women's advocates including survivors
- Advocacy, information and counselling
- PAR and voluntary work with men

What is Collaboration?

“ a mutually beneficial and well-defined relationship entered into by two or more organizations to achieve results they are more likely to achieve together than alone”

Winer and Ray, 1992

“Collaboration between people with seemingly vast differences can yield powerful and original results”

(Tharp, 2009)



A Good News Story

In order to work together:

- It is not necessary to overcome all our differences
- Sector differences in mandate, philosophy and legislative powers are integral to the ability of each sector to deliver their services
- Different capabilities of each sector can act as resources to each other
- Acknowledging sector differences can allow effective, constructive debate to occur

Lessons Learned

- Can't do this work alone
- Move from incident based to context based
- Complex families with complex problems
- If we don't work with men then we miss an opportunity
- Challenging our practices
- Fierce Compassionate accountability
- Responsibilities and rights cannot be separated
- Supervision and mentoring

Promising Practice

- Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies:
 - Critical Connections: Where Woman Abuse and Child Safety Intersect
 - Working with First Nations, Inuit and Metis Families who have experienced family violence

Provincial training for all child protection workers

Promising Practice

- VAW/CAS (CCAS/CAST) Pilot with Yorktown Women's Shelter, Ernestine's Women's Shelter, Women's Habitat, Catholic Family Services
- Caring Dads – Dr. Katreena Scott
- Old City Hall High Risk Committee
- TPS/Victim Services Project
- National Judicial Institute

Working with men who use violence “holding men accountable”

- Moving CAS workers to assessing risk/parenting/capacity
- Tell me what you know about CAS
- Tell me about your children
- Tell me about your relationship with the children’s mother
- What are you most proud of as a father
- Are there things that you are not proud of?

Challenges for our fields

- Need a paradigm shift from mother blaming and father excusing to
- Engaging abusers as fathers
- Dealing with abuser tactics-intimidation, threats, etc.
- Understanding the multiple risks women face from the abuser and from “everyday” life-generated/social risks
- Dealing with custody and access cases
- What else?

Considerations for the day:

- How does your agency approach collaboration?
- What are the benefits to your clients and your staff?
- What are the benefits to safety of women and their children?
- How do you hold men accountable?
- Who are champions in your organization that can lead this?

Thought for the day

“Coming together is a beginning, staying together is progress, and working together is success” Henry Ford



Howa'a Welálin Mahsi' Cho Pinamaya Wneeweh
"Lada Mikwuk Gwech'in Nakota Meskwik

Nitsiniiyi'taki Walas Gilaxixa Kinana'skotmitin
Blackfoot Bella Bella Cree

Hay ce:p q'ð Guneshcheesh
Musqueam Lingit

Eeshneesh Kukwstsetsemc
Glong Shuswap

Hey chexw Musicho
Squamish Déne

Miigwetch Yokoke ?ul-nu-msh-chxw Yontonwe
Ojibway Chacoew Coast Salish (Sechelt) Huron

Kwkwstumulh kalap Merci Ha'miya Gilakas'la
St'at'imc Mschil (Mstic) Gitksan Kwakwaka'wakw

Wiwni T'ooyaksim nisim Kwas' Hoy Lim Lim
Athabaski Nisga'a (Halq'emeyeth) Okanagan

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