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Elder Abuse - Ash Bobbie

Violence-Free Relationships: Statement of Problem and Subsequent Policy Recommendations

Background

Over the past decade, violence has increasingly been recognized among the biggest health threats in the US. In the media, the emphasis is commonly on the random and senseless acts of violence. We hear about who is affected, how you can protect yourself, who is at fault. Young people are frequently the focus of violence, as victims and as perpetrators. The emphasis is generally reactive, responding to violence after it has occurred. However, to begin to prevent violence, we must move beyond reactivity and develop an understanding of what violence actually is and why it exists.

The reality is that violence is most often not so random. One thing that is clear is that most violence occurs among people who know each other. Homicide, sexual assault, family violence, workplace and school violence --over 90 percent of all violence -- is not committed by strangers, but by friends, family members, schoolmates, co-workers, and neighbors. Furthermore, more than 90% percent of all physical violence and sexual violence is committed by males. Basically, most acts of violence involve men hurting women, each other, and children whom they know.

Violence between intimates is intricately tied to societal mores and attitudes about the acceptance of violence as a power strategy in relationship between "loved ones", the traditional roles of men and women in our society and a tolerance for violence against women and children in general. **Historically, men were allowed to treat their wives and children as personal property resulting in attitudes that tolerated, if not encouraged, violence and abuse. These attitudes and behaviors, often learned within the family and silently supported by the society at large must be challenged and changed in order to stop family and relationship violence.**

To reduce and prevent violence it is essential that we address gender role socialization. An essential violence prevention strategy is that we change the gender-role training that teaches young men to use violence to establish power and control over others. To counter or at least balance these aspects of power and control, young boys must be taught skills that enable them to develop and sustain positive, equal, nonviolent and nurturing relationships.

We must also look to the gender-role training of young girls that socializes them with the concepts of submissiveness, passivity and pleasing others (often at the expense of themselves), and assuming blame for what happens in relationships. A sense of independence, positive self-esteem, healthy personal boundaries, and assertiveness and leadership skills can enable young girls to take care of themselves and develop and sustain positive, equal, and nonviolent relationships.

Planning Process of Violence-Free Subcommittee

To date, the Subcommittee has met three times to formulate policy recommendations. Specific recommendations made here are based on the research the committees reviewed and the collective discussion that ensued.

These recommendations are focused on primary prevention strategies. The subcommittee plans to meet at least one more time to review/finalize our recommendations (July 28, 9-11am).

The subcommittee acknowledges that while there was committee expertise available on issues of child abuse, domestic violence and youth violence, much less was known about the dimensions, scope, causes or effects of elder abuse. This will be addressed over the next month.

For the purposes of the Subcommittee, the definition of violence-free relationships goes beyond family violence to include all significant or intimate relationships (i.e., friends, neighbors and schools, co-workers and other acquaintances), (see Figure 1.)

Subcommittee Participants (Partial List)

Wiggy Sivertsen, San Jose State University Domestic Violence Council

Jennifer Niklaus, YWCA Child Abuse Council

Edesa Bitadal - Assemblywoman Elaine Alquist

David Lee, Support Network for Battered Women

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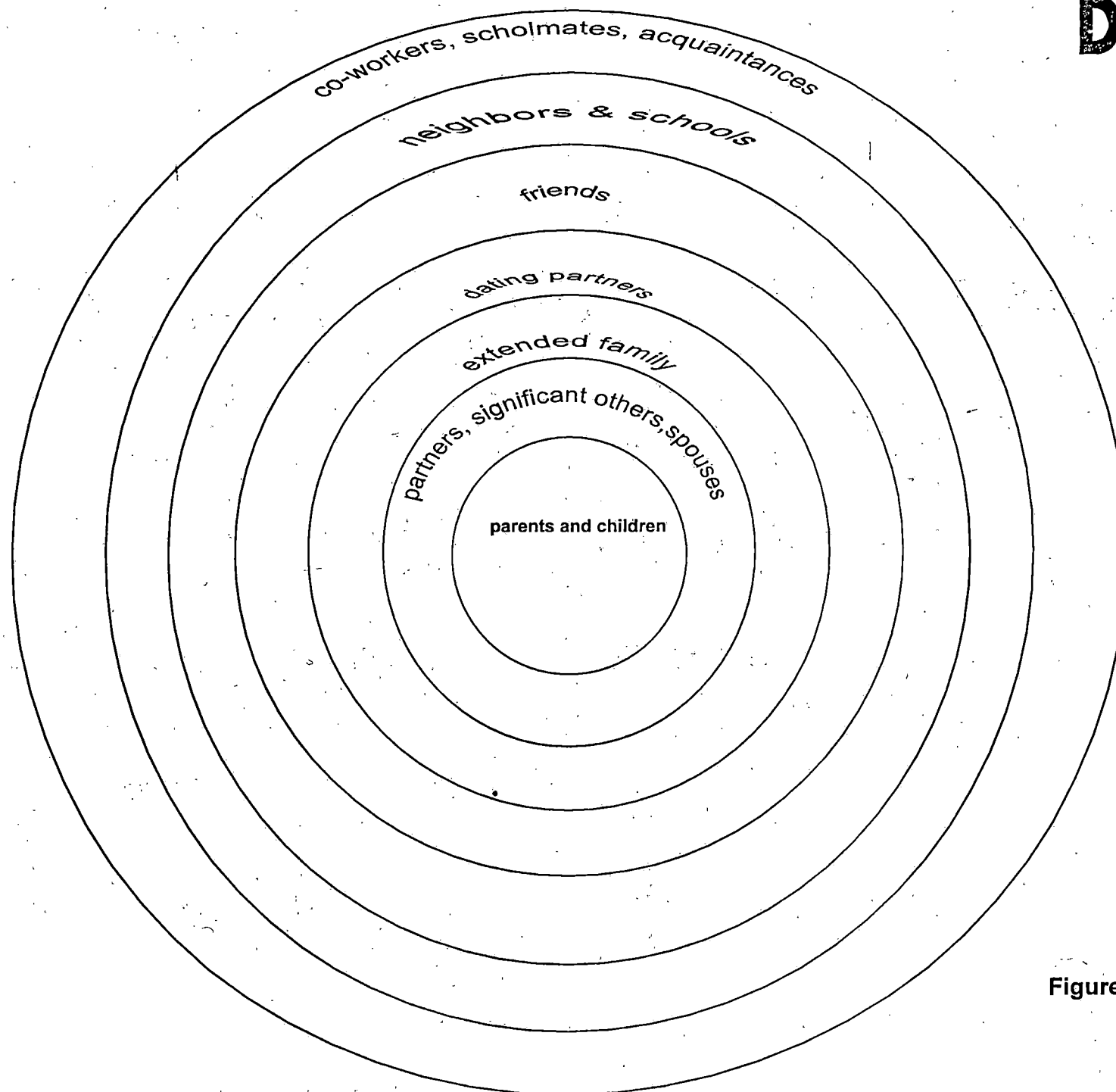


Figure 1: Relationships

Statistics on Relationship Violence

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Child Abuse

A total of **21,227 cases of child abuse** were reported to the Santa Clara County Child Abuse and Neglect Referral and Reporting Center in 1997.

Domestic Violence

A woman is beaten by her husband or boyfriend every **nine-fifteen seconds** in this country.

In 1996, there were **8 deaths (homicides and suicides)** as a result of domestic violence, of which 4 occurred in the presence of children.

In 1996, **7,818 domestic violence calls for assistance** were made to law enforcement agencies in Santa Clara County. Of those, **83% (6,450)** involved weapons.

More women are murdered by their husbands or boyfriends than by strangers.

A recent National Crime Victimization's survey found that **women were 6 times more likely** than men to experience violence at the hands of an intimate partner.

Dating Violence

Data from a study of **8th and 9th grade female and male students** indicated that **25%** had been victims of nonsexual dating violence and **8%** had been victims of sexual dating violence.

Sexual assault/Rape

Nearly half of the 500,000 rapes and sexual assaults reported to the police by women of all ages were committed by friends or acquaintances.

In Santa Clara County **544 forcible rapes** were reported in 1996.

Youth Violence

Santa Clara County schools experienced **669 cases of battery, 89 cases of assault with a deadly weapon, 36 sex offenses, and 265 cases of possession of weapon**, in the 1995-1996 academic year.

Juvenile Hall admissions for rape increased from 9 in 1995 to 26 in 1996, an increase of **189%**.

Hate Crime

San Jose Police Department data indicate **21 hate crimes** for both 1996 and 1997.

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Policy Subcommittee: Violence Free Relationship and Violence Recommended Actions We Can Address Now

Existing Problems	Recommended Actions	Lead Responsible Party / Others
<p>1. Family violence is a health crisis in the lives of women and children. A prerequisite to effective intervention in domestic violence is that women who are assaulted be accurately identified. Early identification, assessment and intervention is crucial for the health and safety of women and children.</p>	<p>1. All health care practitioners, social service workers, criminal justice personnel and other county workers providing services to children and families should receive appropriate continuing education to improve their knowledge and skills in universal screening, identification, assessment, intervention and prevention of domestic violence, child abuse, elder abuse and sexual assault.</p> <p>The Family Violence Prevention Fund has developed a national model curriculum which should be incorporated into existing training which has begun at the Social Service agencies.</p> <p>County should require all county funded contractors to provide education in universal screening, identification, assessment, intervention and prevention of domestic violence, child abuse, elder abuse and sexual assault to all workers providing service delivery.</p>	<p>1. Social Services Agency Public Health Department Mental Health Department</p>

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Existing Problems	Recommended Actions	Lead Responsible Party / Others
2. Adults need to understand the pervasiveness of violence-supportive attitudes and violent behavior before they can promote non violent behavior to their students. Teachers need more training in child abuse and domestic violence identification and prevention. In addition, teachers need training in understanding the need for a comprehensive approach to violence prevention K-12.	2. Establish time limited Community Task Force to meet with the Teacher Preparation Program at SJSU to define and plan for improved teacher training in violence prevention education.	2. Counseling office, San Jose State University Violence Prevention Council San Jose Domestic Violence Task Force

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Existing Problems	Recommended Actions	Lead Responsible Party / Others
3. Athletics are a major influence in the lives of many youth often seen as an arena for promoting violence and gender biased attitudes. Can become an ideal place to promote non-violence.	3. Convene task force to develop ways to minimize violence in athletics . Involve coaches and other sports professionals to develop non violence training programs	

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**Policy Subcommittee: Violence Free Relationship and Violence
Recommended Actions
We Can Address With Additional Resources**

Existing Problems	Recommended Actions	Lead Responsible Party / Others
1. Every 15 seconds an American woman is battered. More than one in three Americans have witnessed an incident of domestic violence, according to a survey released by the Family Violence Prevention Fund. It is estimated that 3 million U.S. children live in a violent home. There is a critical need to change societal attitudes about family violence in order to prevent or at least reduce its recurrence. Educational campaigns have proven successful at raising awareness and altering behavior, as seen by the effective campaigns vs smoking, and drinking and driving.	1. County government should join with business, entertainment and advertising industries, criminal justice, social service and health agencies to develop and support comprehensive multimedia educational campaigns. They communicate the message of "zero tolerance for family violence".	1. Violence Prevention Council, Child Abuse Council and Domestic Violence Council.

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Existing Problems	Recommended Actions	Lead Responsible Party / Others
3. The family is the first and most influential factor in the socialization of a child. Children imitate what they see and children in abusive households learn that violent behavior is the way to deal with anger, and frustration. Early childhood parenting education initiatives are an ideal venue to promote prevention of violence and develop emotionally healthy families.	Support the expansion of parent education programs that teaches child development, appropriate discipline and how to build strong families. Make programs available to all high risk families in the county.	

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Existing Problems	Recommended Actions	Lead Responsible Party / Others
<p>2. Many researches believe that power and dominance are the core of our socialization process and that they contribute to the acceptance of violence against those with less power. In our dominance-based culture, men are socialized to be aggressive and devaluing women and women are socialized to be passive and accept male dominance. A primary prevention model demands that we intervene in the earliest socialization process of boys and girls and train boys and girls to create and sustain equal healthy non violent relationships.</p>	<p>All school in Santa Clara County should adopt a curriculum for junior and high school teens that deals with developing healthy relationships and preventing relationship dating violence and domestic violence.</p> <p>County leadership should support the expansion of programs in the community that build independence, self esteem, and leadership skills among young women and girls.</p> <p>County leadership should support expansion of program in the community that teaches boys and men how to develop and maintain nurturing non violent relationships.</p>	<p>Violence Prevention Council in partnership with :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Office of Women Advocate • Commission on the Status of Women • Domestic Violence Council

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Existing Problems	Recommended Actions	Lead Responsible Party / Others
<p>4. 75% of battered women report that their children were sexually or physically abused by the father and 90% reported that their children were present when they were beaten. Research indicates that children of battered women suffer adverse effects such as somatic complaints and psychological disorders.</p> <p>Half of children who live in a violent home will become violent adults and three quarters will have behavioral problems..</p>	<p>Board of Supervisors should advocate for an increase in state funding for domestic violence and victim service programs to provide counseling to children who witness domestic violence and other violence incidents.</p>	<p>Board of Supervisors</p>

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Existing Problems	Recommended Actions	Lead Responsible Party / Others
<p>5. Evidence demonstrates a significant causal relationship between media violence and aggression in society. In particular, substantial research has indicated that heavy exposure to televised violence is one of the causes of aggressive behavior in children.</p> <p>In the average American household, by the time children leave elementary school, they have seen 8,000 murders and more than 100,000 other acts of television violence. The media often glamorizes and portrays violence as a means of settling problems. In addition, the media often promotes social misconceptions about culture, genders or age groups. In particular, youth are often exposed to negative messages regarding violence against women.</p> <p>The media industry must be called upon to adopt more responsible programming. This effort will require significant effort and resources. In the meantime, the Board of Supervisors can promote policies which help educate the community, especially parents, about the effects of media violence so that they can make more informed and responsible choices about their own children's viewing habits</p>	<p>Media literacy training should be as a part of all county supported parent education programs so that parents can better understand and mitigate the possible influence of media on their children attitudes and behaviors.</p>	

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**Policy Subcommittee: Violence Free Relationship and Violence
Recommended Actions
We Can Work Differently**

Existing Problems	Recommended Actions	Lead Responsible Party / Others
1. The most effective violence prevention strategies involve supporting and building on our most basic societal institutions - family and community. To obtain a peaceful and thriving society, each individual needs to be involved in working to prevent and reduce violence. To promote community building and social responsibility, the County Board of Supervisors should provide county employees with incentives for participation in community service efforts in one's neighborhood, school or community.	In support of the concept of "community-based" government, Santa Clara County should develop a policy which allows county employees up to ____ hours of release paid time per fiscal year for volunteer activities in the schools and/or community.	1. County Employee Services Board of Supervisors