Coercive control tactics used against children experiencing domestic violence and areas of future 1mprovement Shaz Bukhari¹, Katreena Scott², Julie Poon²

BACKGROUND

Coercion: "the use of force or threats to compel or dispel a particular response" (Stark, 2007)

Control refers to "structural forms of deprivation, exploitation, and command that compel obedience indirectly" (2007)

Coercion + Control = Condition of "unfreedom" experienced as entrapment

Past research has disregarded children as active participants, and labeled them as witnesses to the abuse, rather than primary victims, alongside the victimized adult

Children were not seen as credible to relay accurate descriptions In most cases of domestic abuse and family disturbances, children were either willingly, or unwillingly assuming active roles within the abuse (Stark, 2018)

Recent research has focused on children's accounts of their experiences with coercive control, but lacks descriptive exploration of methods targeting children, especially within a Canadian context. Research has also not accounted for child survivors describing actions and methods of improvement based on their experiences

Research Question: What types of manipulation and coercive control tactics are used against children while experiencing domestic violence and abuse? And what do survivors advise for areas of improvement to aid individuals in similar circumstances?

METHODS

7 interviews of adults reflecting on childhood experiences with domestic violence Sample included Indigenous, Rural/Remote/Northern, Immigrant/Refugee

- and/or children exposed or killed in domestic violence context
- Part of study by Canadian Domestic Homicide Prevention Initiative (CDHPI) with vulnerable populations funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC)
- Recruitment based on whether the survivor ever feared for their life during their experience

Interviews took on a narrative-style approach

NVIVO- organizing and analyzing important factors using coding files

- Emotional and Psychological Abuse (Absence & Neglect, Threats, Corruption, and Verbal Abuse)
- Physical Abuse
- Abusing Others
- Advice/ Areas of Improvement
- Helpful Actions



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Figure 1: Areas of Improvement and Helpful Actions (Balloons) and Forms of Non-Physical Abuse (Boulders)

Collaboration **Between Services**

"police actually photographed the bruises on your shoulders and stuff, but yet CPS was never called"

"child services were never involved"

"... weren't any kind of supports offered to my brother and I"

Victims **Speaking Out**

"...first thing is to not be afraid of seeking help"

> "Don't stay quiet, speak up. And, again'

Witnessing **Familial Abuse**

 \dots my brother was asleep, and he just beat the shit out of him. Gave him a third degree concussion"

"... I opened the door and he was on top of [my mom] on the bed strangling her"

"Quand on était plus jeune, un des jeux de moi et mes sœurs c'était aller sauver maman quand papa l'a battait."

DISCUSSION

Education

Enhance Resources

The themes and excerpts provide insight into gaps in our systems Primary goal \rightarrow Educating the public and identifying issues of domestic violence present in society Secondary goal \rightarrow Ensuring appropriate steps and measures are taken to protect survivors

Understanding underlying goals and objectives of coercion tactics and corresponding behaviors used against children will aid in early identification and intervention

- Identify early warning signs of the various forms of child abuse in circumstances of domestic violence
- experiences with domestic violence
- Earlier intervention will assist in mitigating long-term effects of child abuse

RESULTS

Reaching Out to Victims of Abuse

"....I always tell people to be nosy when it comes to these situations"

Social Services

"... better funding for crisis shelters" "... there's still no mental health supports in town"

Aid from Law

"... none of them actually talked to us." "... they had all of the evidence they could ever need and didn't do anything with it"

Forced into Adult Roles

Threats of Physical Abuse

"... he was going to hurt us first and then himself"

Risk Assessment & Management

Mitigate Long-**Term Effects**

This study is being conducted by a master's student enrolled in an OISE program. This study is not run by or affiliated with OISE and OISE does not endorse this poster.

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Enhancing and creating resources so service providers are better equipped to intervene and assist minors in their

Enforcement

Education & Training

"... provide better training for police force, specifically in rural areas"

"You need to know what to recognize and what to do and the more that's repeated, the more comfortable you'll be when you have to do it."



Emotional & Psychological Manipulation

... he stopped the truck in the middle of the road ... pushed me out of the truck, closed the door and drove away ... He never checked to see if I was okay, he didn't check to see if I made it home, if I was safe, if I was alive, anything"

REFERENCES



Applied Psychology & Human Development UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

Canadian Domestic Homicide Prevention Initiative