Understanding and Preventing Violence

Presented by Lisa Firestone, Ph.D.
In this Webinar we will answer the questions:

• What causes violence?
• How can we understand violence?
• What are the risk factors for violence?
• What can you do to prevent violence?
Definition of Violence

According to the World Health Organization violence is:

“The intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community that either results or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment, or deprivation.”
Youth Violence Statistics

- The U.S. has the fourth highest rate of youth firearm homicides in the world.

- American children are more at risk from firearms than the children of any other industrialized nation.

- Violence associated with gangs is more lethal now than ever because of the increased use of firearms.

- In 2006, more than 720,000 young people were treated in emergency rooms for injuries sustained from violence.

- Persons under the age of 25 accounted for 52% of those arrested for murder in 2006.

- Homicide is the 2nd leading cause of death for young people ages 10-24 years old.

- An estimated 30% of 6th-10th graders in the U.S. were either a bully, a target of bullying, or both.
Research demonstrates that exposure to violence can have serious negative effects on children’s development. Witnessing violence between one’s parents or caretakers is the strongest risk factor for transmitting violent behavior from one generation to the next.

- Studies suggest that at least 3.3 million children witness domestic violence each year.
- Annually, an estimated 1.3 million children and adolescents are injured as a result of serious neglect.
- Annually, an estimated 166,000 children and adolescents are injured as a result of sexual abuse.
- An estimated 226,000 children are injured as a result of emotional abuse every year.
- Each year an estimated 299,000 children and adolescents are injured as a result of physical abuse.
Children who experience child abuse & neglect are 59% more likely to be arrested as a juvenile, and 30% more likely to commit violent crime.
67% of violent crimes in the US involve alcohol or drugs.
Domestic and Sexual Violence Statistics

- Nearly 25% of women have been raped and/or physically assaulted by an intimate partner during their lives.

- 25%-45% of all women who are battered are battered during pregnancy.

- 1 in 5 high school girls has been physically or sexually abused by a dating partner.

- Almost one-third of female homicide victims that are reported in police records are killed by an intimate partner.
Imprisonment rate, 1980-2008
Number of offenders per 100,000 population
Poll #1

How many of you have been personally impacted by violence?
Our Approach to Understanding Violence

Each person is divided:
One part wants to live and is goal directed and life affirming.

And one part is self-critical, self-hating and hostile and cynical toward others. At its extreme could lead to suicide or violence.

Real Self - Positive

Anti-Self – Critical/ Other-Critical
Definition of the Voice

The critical inner voice refers to a well-integrated pattern of destructive thoughts toward our selves and others. The “voices” that make up this internalized dialogue are at the root of much of our maladaptive behavior. This internal enemy fosters inwardness, distrust, paranoia, self-criticism, self-denial, addictions and a retreat from goal-directed activities. The critical inner voice effects every aspect of our lives: our self-esteem and confidence, our personal and intimate relationships and our likelihood of engaging in destructive behavior.
Our Approach to Understanding Violence

The negative thoughts that lead to violence

Get him before he gets you.
They want to humiliate you.
You better take care of yourself; no one else will
You're special; How could he talk to you like that?
Just smash him; It will be such a relief

Suspicious/Paranoid
Persecuted Misfit
Pseudoindependent Self-Deprecation
Self-Aggrandizing Thoughts
Overtly Violent Thoughts
Our Approach to Understanding Violence

There is a relationship between how a person is thinking and how he or she is likely to behave.
Poll #2
How many of you are familiar with Attachment Theory?
Patterns of Attachment

Category of Attachment

- Secure
- Insecure – avoidant
- Insecure- anxious/ambivalent
- Insecure - disorganized

Parental Interactive Pattern

- Emotionally available, perceptive, responsive
- Emotionally unavailable, imperceptive, unresponsive and rejecting
- Inconsistently available, perceptive and responsive and intrusive
- Frightening, frightened, disorienting, alarming
Attachment Figures

• Low Risk Non-Clinical Populations
  – Secure 55-65%
  – Ambivalent 5-15%
  – Avoidant 20-30%
  – Disorganized 20-40%
  • (Given a Best Fit Alternative)

• High Risk, Parentally maltreated
  – Disorganized 80%
What causes insecure attachment?

• Unresolved trauma/loss in the life of the parents statistically predict attachment style far more than
  – Maternal Sensitivity
  – Child Temperament
  – Social Status
  – Culture
Transgenerational Passage of Disorganization

- Implicit memory of terrifying experiences may create:
  - Impulsive behaviors
  - Distorted perceptions
  - Rigid thoughts and impaired decision making patterns
  - Difficulty tolerating a range of emotions
“Type D” Attachment
Disorganized/Disoriented

• Predicts later chronic disturbances of:
  – affect regulation
  – stress management
  – hostile-aggressive behavior
Abuse and Neglect

- Expose the immature infant to threatening experiences
- Deprive the developing brain/mind/body of interpersonal experiences necessary for developing a conscience
Poll #3

How many of you are familiar with Dr. Dan Siegel’s work in Interpersonal Neurobiology?
The Brain in the Palm of Your Hand

Daniel Siegel, M.D. – Interpersonal Neurobiology

- ORBITOFRONTAL CORTEX
  - LIMBIC REGIONS:
    - Anterior cingulate
    - Hippocampus
    - Amygdala

- CEREBRAL CORTEX
  - Orbital frontal
  - Part of the prefrontal cortex

Place your thumb in the middle of your palm as in this figure.

Now fold your fingers over your thumb as the cortex is raised over the limbic areas of the brain.
The Low Road: 
An Example of Dis-Integration

- Temporarily Disengaging the Prefrontal Cortex

- Dissolves the nine functions of the PFC
9 Important Functions of the Pre-Frontal Cortex

1. Body Regulation
2. Attunement
3. Emotional Balance
4. Response Flexibility
5. Empathy
6. Self-Knowing Awareness (Insight)
7. Fear Modulation
8. Intuition
9. Morality
Emotional Regulation

“Experiences in infancy which result in the child’s *inability to regulate strong emotions* are too often the overlooked source of violence in children and adults.”

(Brazelton, 1997)
Poll #4

Do you believe all violent individuals lack a conscience?
Types of Aggression: Affective-Impulsive

- Reactive Violence
- Affective-reactive rage
- Abuse
- Heightened Affect
- High Arousal
- Biased toward seeing anger in faces
- Dissociation under stress
- Increased skin reactivity
- Increased heart-rate
Types of Aggression: Predatory-Stalking

Psychopathy

- Predatory Violence
- Proactive rage
- Neglect
- Flattened Affect
- Low Arousal
- Difficulty in recognizing fear, sadness or disgust in faces
- Dissociation
- Decreased skin reactivity
- Decreased heart-rate
A. Beck and Pretzer (2005) stated the hypothesis of thoughts influence on behavior in this way:

*Our seminal insight was the observation that the content of individuals’ thoughts influences their emotional and behavioral response.... Thoughts of being wronged or mistreated produce anger and an impulse to retaliate. (p. 68) ...When the adversary is demonized (viewed as different, alien, subhuman, and evil), this intensifies the sense that violence is justified and reduces inhibitions about violence and killing. (p. 72) ...The greater the extent to which additional cognitions legitimize a violent response, the greater the likelihood of violence. (p. 71)*
Firestone Assessment of Violent Thoughts (FAVT)

Level 1: Paranoid/ Suspicious

“They are out to get you.”

You can never trust a woman (man).

You can’t trust anyone.
Firestone Assessment of Violent Thoughts (FAVT)

Level 2: Persecuted Misfit

“They are going to make a fool of you.”
How can they talk to you like that?
They’re just doing this to make you get upset.
Firestone Assessment of Violent Thoughts (FAVT)

Level 3: Self-Depreciating/Pseudo-Independent

“You have to take care of yourself.”

Nobody understands you.

They shouldn’t have done that to you. They knew better.
Firestone Assessment of Violent Thoughts (FAVT)

**Level 4: Overtly Aggressive**

“Violence is the ticket.”
Look at all these people here that you could hurt and blow away.
You’re somebody if you have a gun. You have control. You get respect.
Sometime it feels so good just to explode.
Level 5: Self-Aggrandizing

“You are #1.”
You deserve better than this!
You can do anything you set your mind to.
You’re strong. You don’t really need them in your life.
Poll #5

Do you believe violent individuals can change?
Violent individuals can be treated. Effective programs reduce re-offending by 80%, making our society safer for all of us.
Effective Treatment Programs Include:

- Education
- Job Training
- Cognitive Therapy Techniques
- Intensive Individualized Therapy
- Breaking the Punishment Cycle
- Emotional Regulation Skills

Treat prisoners humanely as worthwhile individuals
Poll #6
Do you believe it is ever acceptable/appropriate to be violent?
What you need to know about violent behavior

It’s normal to feel angry or frustrated when you’ve been let down or betrayed. But anger and frustration don’t justify violent action. Anger is a strong emotion that can be difficult to keep in check, but the right response is always stay cool. Anger is part of life, but you can free yourself from the cycle of violence by learning to talk about your feelings.
Poll #7

Is there anyone you know who you worry about being violent?
What should I look for?

Risk Factors

- Loss of temper on a regular basis
- Unable to control behavior
- Feeling constantly disrespected
- Failing to acknowledge the feelings or rights of others
- Increased emotional distress and agitation
- Feeling that violence is an acceptable solution
- Thinking a person needs to be tough to get respect
- Expression of violence in writings & drawings
What should I look for?

Risk Factors

• Increase in use of drugs or alcohol
• Making and/or announcing detailed plans for hurting others
• Enjoying hurting animals
• Knowing peers affiliated with gangs
• History of early aggressive behavior
• Antisocial beliefs and attitudes
• Carrying a weapon
• Frequent physical fighting
Standing Up to Violence

One way to escape being a victim is to change your outlook from one of helplessness to one of confidence. Each time you practice an assertive response, fearful and helpless thoughts are replaced by strong and confident ones.

- Take a deep breath and let the air out slowly
- Sit or stand tall, with your head up
- Keep your hands at your sides rather than on your hips or across your chest
- Have a relaxed and purposeful facial expression, not angry or laughing
- Maintain eye contact
- Speak with a calm voice, loud enough to be heard clearly
- Use non-provocative words and avoid name-calling or making threats
- Avoid finger pointing or other threatening gestures
- Reply briefly and directly
- Avoid bringing up past grudges or making generalizations (You always...)
Preventing Violence

Violence is a learned behavior. Like all learned behaviors, it can be changed. This isn’t easy as there is no simple single solution. The best you can do is learn to recognize the warning signs and get help when you see them in your friends or yourself.
Approach violence as an issue involving all ages and socioeconomic, racial and ethnic backgrounds. Question your own attitudes. View yourself and others as empowered bystanders who can confront abusive peers. When you think someone is a victim of violence, reach out.

Don’t look the other way!
Preventing Violence

When you recognize warning signs in someone else, there are things you can do.

• Direct questions should be asked regarding the individual’s history of violent behavior, current thinking, current feelings and plans regarding violence.

• If possible, without putting yourself in danger, remove the person from the situation that’s setting him or her off.

• Tell someone you trust and respect about your concerns and ask for help. This could be a family member, counselor, teacher, coach, clergy member, law enforcement or friend.

• Ask an experienced professional for help. The most important thing to remember is don’t go it alone.

• Be safe. Don’t spend time alone with people who show warning signs.
Dealing with your anger:

• Learn to talk about your feelings—if you’re afraid to talk or if you can’t find the right words to describe what you’re going through, find a trusted friend or family member to help you one-on-one.

• Express yourself calmly—express criticism, disappointment, anger or displeasure without losing your temper or fighting. Ask yourself if your response is safe and reasonable.

• Listen to others—listen carefully and respond without getting upset when someone gives you negative feedback. Ask yourself if you can really see the other person’s point of view.

• Negotiate—work out your problems with someone else by looking at alternative solutions and compromises.

Stop—consider the consequences. Think before you act.
Poll #8
Do you feel you could use some of these suggestions to help prevent violence?
Resources

APA Help Center
www.apahelpcenter.org/
www.centrodeapoyoapa.org/

Centers for Disease Control & Prevention
www.cdc.gov
www.cdc.gov/spanish/

National Crime Prevention Center
www.ncpc.org

National Sexual Violence Resource Center
www.nsvrc.org

Nat’l Youth Violence Prevention Resource Center
www.safeyouth.org

SafeState
www.safestate.org

Stop Bullying Now Campaign
www.stopbullyingnow.org

Eyes on Bullying
www.eyesonbullying.org

National Domestic Violence Hotline
800-799-SAFE (7233)
TTY: 800-787-3224
www.ndvh.org

Boys Town Hotline
800-448-3000 (24/7)
TTY: 800-448-1833
www.boystown.org

Covenant House Nineline
800-999-9999 (24/7)
TTY: 1-800-999-9915
www.covenanthouse.org

National Center for Victims of Crime
800-394-2255
TTY: 800-211-7996
www.ncvc.org

Melissa Institute
http://www.melissainstitute.org/index.html

The Glendon Association
Violence & Suicide Prevention Alliance
Santa Barbara, California
800.663.5281 - www.glendon.org
Resources: Books

Visit [www.psychalive.org](http://www.psychalive.org) for resource links
Assessment Instruments
FAVT and FAVT-A

Visit www.psychalive.org for resource links
Resources: Films

Voices of Violence
A Two Part Series Examining Violence in Our Society
Part I: The Roots of Violence

Understanding and Preventing Suicide

Coming Soon:
Voices of Violence Part II: Effective Treatment of Violent Individuals

Visit [www.psychalive.org](http://www.psychalive.org) for resource links
Upcoming Webinars
Featuring Dr. Dan Siegel

Relationships and the Roots of Resilience (CE)
Tuesday, May 24, 2011
4:00 PM - 5:30 PM PDT
Learn more or register here
https://www1.gotomeeting.com/island/webinar/registration.tmpl?id=423942361

Mindsight: Learning a New Science of Personal Transformation
Tuesday, June 14, 2011
11:00 AM - 12:00 PM PDT
Learn more or register here
https://www1.gotomeeting.com/island/webinar/registration.tmpl?id=220778937

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Upcoming Webinars
Featuring Dr. Pat Love

Love in the Time of Twitter: Relationships and the New Social Media (CE)
Tuesday, August 9, 2011
4:00 PM - 5:30 PM PDT
Learn more or register here - https://www1.gotomeeting.com/island/webinar/registration.tmpl?id=527970448

Love in the Time of Twitter: Keeping Relationships Strong in the Age of Social Media
Tuesday, September 20, 2011
11:00 AM - 12:00 PM PDT
Learn more or register here - https://www1.gotomeeting.com/island/webinar/registration.tmpl?id=699536760

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Upcoming Webinars on Overcoming Depression

Suicide: What Therapists Need to Know (CE)
Tuesday, September 6, 2011
11:00 AM - 12:30 PM PDT
Contact Jina@glendon.org to learn more or register

Understanding and Preventing Suicide
Tuesday, September 27, 2011
11:00 AM - 12:00 PM PDT
Contact Jina@glendon.org to learn more or register

Visit www.psychalive.org for more information or to register for additional webinars.
Upcoming Webinars
Featuring Dr Donald Meichenbaum

Road Map to Resilience: Ways to Bolster Resilience and Well-being
Monday, November 14, 2011
11:00 AM - 12:00 PM PDT
Learn more or register here
https://www1.gotomeeting.com/island/webinar/registration.tmpl?id=665896897

Treatment of Individuals with PTSD, Complex PTSD and Comorbid Disorders: A Life-Span Approach (CE)
Tuesday, November 15, 2011
11:00 AM - 12:30 PM PDT
https://www1.gotomeeting.com/island/webinar/registration.tmpl?id=360061009

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Upcoming Webinars on Overcoming Depression

Innovative Approach to Treating Depression (CE)
Tuesday, October 11, 2011
11:00 AM - 12:30 PM PDT
Contact Jina@glendon.org to learn more or register

The Critical Inner Voice That Causes Depression
Tuesday, December 6, 2011
11:00 AM - 12:00 PM PDT
Contact Jina@glendon.org to learn more or register

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- Upon completion of this webinar, you will receive an email with an evaluation form for you to complete and return to the CE provider PER (PsychoEducational Resources). This form can be emailed, faxed or mailed. Instructions will be given in the email.

- A recording of this webinar will also be available online. Those unable to attend this live webinar may view the recording and complete the evaluation form to receive 1.5 CE Units for $25. A link to this recording will be sent to you as soon as it’s available.