

Batterer Accountability



**Working with Perpetrators of Coercive Control
to Improve Child Welfare**

Credits

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- Research and outline by Beth Collins, Domestic Violence Specialist (DVS).
- Editing and presentation layout by Kathy Jones, DVS.
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**Part I: Why should I work with the abuser?
*How does this help children?***

When Domestic Violence and Child Protection Merge:
Best Practice Series for CPSWs

Part 5 of 7



The Batterer: Review

➤ ***Uses a pattern***
of multiple
coercive and
controlling
behaviors

➤ To gain ***power
and control
over*** intimate
partner

➤ **May include:**

- *Verbal abuse*
- *Emotional control*
- *Medical neglect*
- *Economic control*
- *Legal intimidation*
- *Stalking/monitoring/
isolation*

➤ **Punctuated by:**

- *Credible psychological
threats and intimidation*
- *Sexual assault*
- *Physical violence*



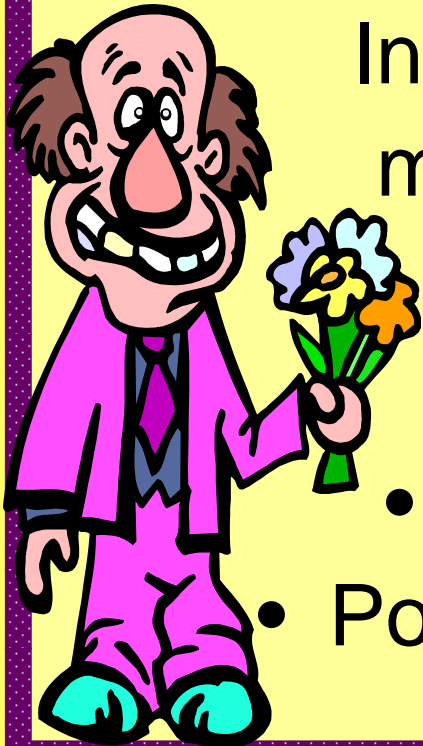
The Challenge



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The Batterer as Parent Profile



Internally,
may feel:

- Fearful
- Powerless

Externally, may present:

- Defensive, aggressive and challenging
- Superficially compliant, “charming”
- Avoidant or “nice,” but reactive

- Often holds culturally-based parenting ideals



What We Have Here Is a Failure to Connect



Passive CPSW:

- “So much to do, so little time”
- Abuser’s intimidation, aggression may cause discomfort, fear
- Results:
 - Failure to engage
 - Failure to include in case plans

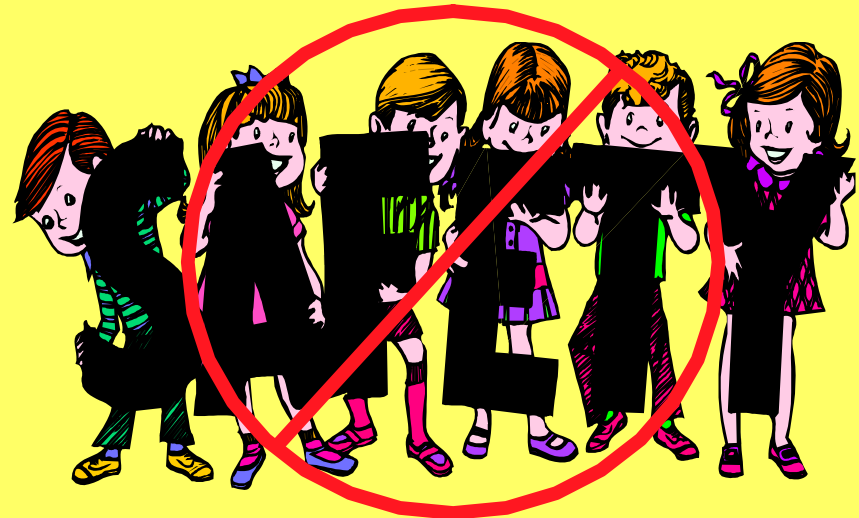
Aggressive CPSW:


- Opportunity to punish, humiliate abuser
- Force a first-hand confession
- Results:
 - Alienates batterer
 - Antagonizes batterer; children/partner at risk



The Problem

- These responses:
 - Failure to engage
 - Making minimal demands
 - Trying to punish
 - Forcing admissions of guilt
- Do not allow the CPSW to build improved safety for children
- Leave children at continued risk

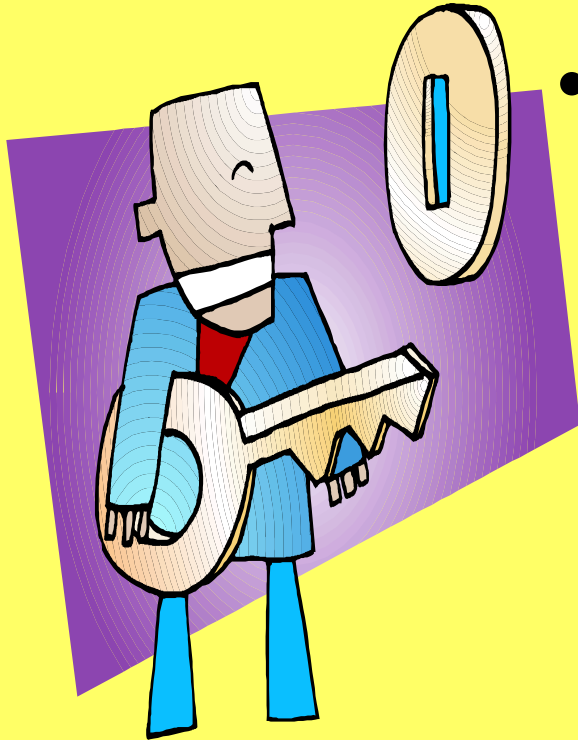




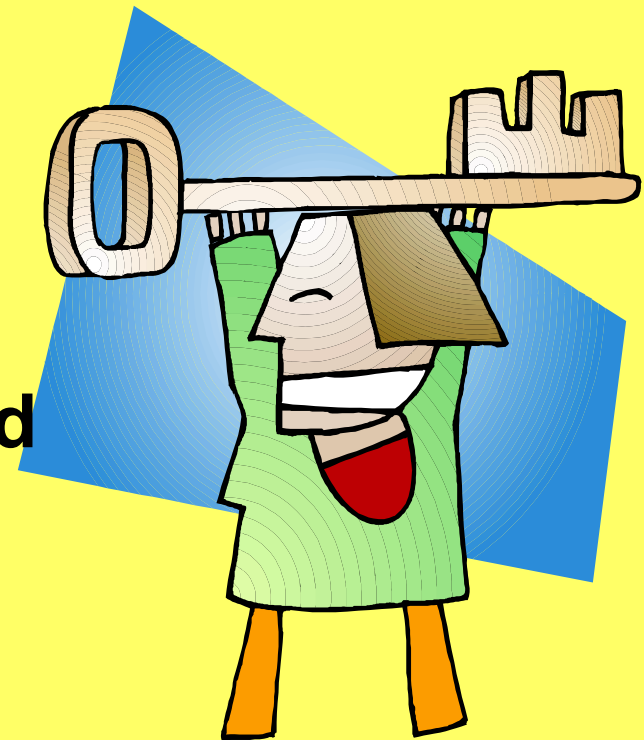
**Most abusive
partners will continue
to have contact with
their children...**

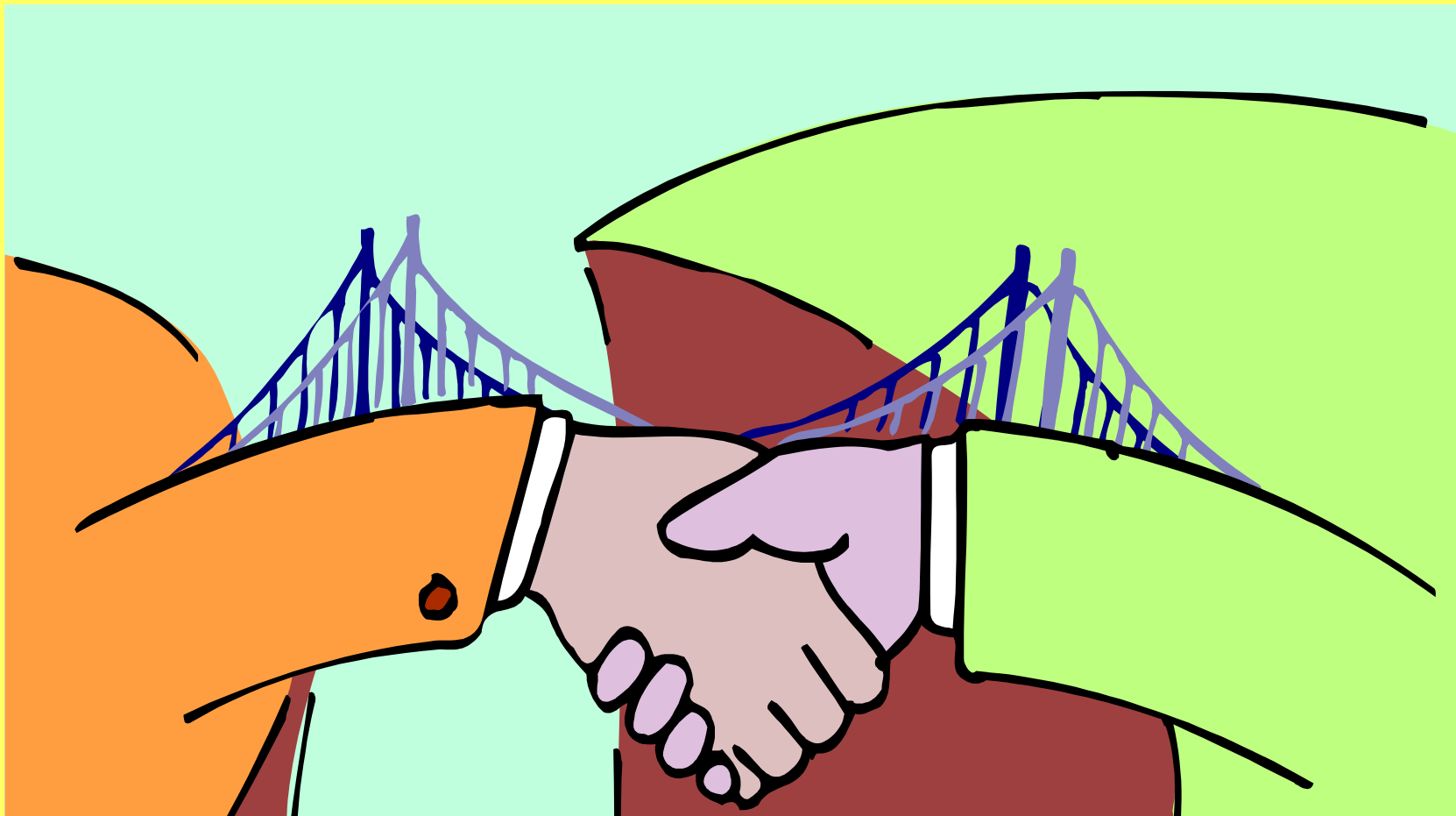
**...Engaging them is in the best
interest of those children.**

Keys for Success



- **Plan and Purpose**
- **Connection and Respect**
- **Education about Impact**
- **Motivation and Involvement**
- **Documentation**
- **Victim Safety and Confidentiality**





Building Connection and Accountability

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Elements of Engagement:
Connection



- Show respect
 - Agree to disagree
 - Help batterer “save face”
- Listen without agreeing
- Try to understand batterer’s perspective
- Be straightforward
- “I want to let you know that your opinions are important to me, and I want your suggestions.”



Elements of Engagement:
Limits



- Discuss safety when batterer uses intimidation
- Respectful limit-setting
- Point out his behavior
- “Do you realize you are (interrupting me, raising your voice, standing over me, etc.)?”



Elements of Engagement:

Consistent, Firm, Unbending Messages



- “You have the responsibility to treat people around you with respect. This can be hard to do, but it is expected.”



Elements of Engagement:

Education Information/Messages



- Define unintended impact on children and partner
- “When people hurt, scare or threaten their family members, it destroys families even when that is not the intention. Men who behave in these ways cause fear and lasting harm, even when they don’t intend to.”



Elements of Engagement:


Assistance/Motivation for Change



- Impact on relationships
- Ideals of manhood
- Ideals of fatherhood
- Ask for behavior change
- Specify behavior change
- Diffuse tension
- “When your children are your age, how do you want them to remember you? What can you do to make that happen?”



Successful Case Planning

- The journey is as important as the destination
 - Clearly defined roadmap for change
 - Batterer's cooperation = willingness to change
 - Ongoing contact!
- 
- Respectful, honest, direct
 - Focused on batterer's responsibility for change
 - Clear limits and expectations regarding children's safety
 - Includes the batterer's thoughts and opinions
 - Includes helpful services and resources to create change
 - Uses clear descriptions of behaviors

Join us next time for...



Why Doesn't She Leave?!?

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