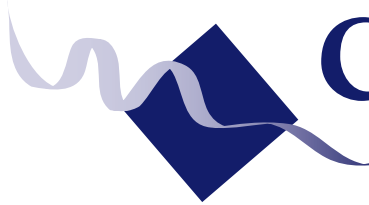


Australian Domestic & Family Violence CLEARINGHOUSE



ISSUES PAPER

Children, young people and domestic violence

Dr Lesley Laing

Domestic violence is an abuse of power perpetrated mainly (but not only) by men against women in a relationship or after separation. It occurs when one partner attempts physically or psychologically to dominate and control the other. Domestic violence takes a number of forms. The most commonly acknowledged forms are physical and sexual violence, threats and intimidation, emotional and social abuse and economic deprivation. Many forms of domestic violence are against the law. For many Indigenous people the term family violence is preferred as it encompasses all forms of violence in intimate, family and other relationships of mutual obligation and support.

(Partnerships Against Domestic Violence)

Domestic violence is the patterned and repeated use of coercive and controlling behavior to limit, direct, and shape a partner's thoughts, feelings and actions. An array of power and control tactics is used along a continuum in concert with one another.

(Almeida & Durkin 1999, p. 313)

Introduction

THIS PAPER explores the issue of children, young people and domestic violence. It comprises five sections. The introduction describes the ways in which children and young people experience domestic violence and outlines the available data on the prevalence of this issue in the lives of Australian children and young people. The second section, impact on children and young people, provides an overview of research about the impact of domestic violence on children and young people, and discusses frameworks within which these impacts are being understood. Section three describes efforts to improve ways of working with children and young people in counselling, support and prevention, with an emphasis on Australian initiatives. Section four argues that the problems documented cannot be addressed solely through counselling, and that a

'multi-system response' (Peled, Jaffe & Edleson 1995) is required. A multi-system response monitors the impact of a broad range of social systems on outcomes for children and young people who have experienced domestic violence. The child protection and Family Law systems are discussed as examples of two such systems which are grappling with the issue of children and domestic violence. The final section of the paper identifies current challenges posed by our growing knowledge about children, young people and domestic violence.

Naming the problem

The different terminology used to discuss the issue of children, young people and domestic violence reflects both growing understanding of the issue, and the complexity and diversity of children and young people's experiences. Earlier literature, for example, frequently referred to children who 'witness' violence, with the portrayal of children as 'silent witnesses' quite common. Recently, the term 'exposed to' violence has more frequently been used, because it is 'more inclusive and does not make assumptions about the specific nature of the children's experiences' (Fantuzzo & Mohr 1999, p. 22). In Australia, the terms 'experiencing,' (Cavanagh, Hewitt & Anderson 1999) 'affected by,' (Kneale 1999) and 'living with' violence have increasingly been used. These terms emphasise that children are very much affected by domestic violence and indicate that the impacts pervade many aspects of their lives. What is increasingly clear, particularly from qualitative studies, is that children and young people are not merely passive onlookers in families where there is domestic violence: they are actively involved in seeking to make meaning of their experiences and in dealing with the difficult and terrifying situations which confront them (Blanchard 1993; Mullender et al. 2000).

Children's experiences of domestic violence

Children experience domestic violence in myriad ways. Some of these may result in direct physical harm to the child. For example, violence may begin



THE UNIVERSITY OF
NEW SOUTH WALES

or escalate during a woman's pregnancy, with women frequently reporting that the abuser deliberately directed blows at their breasts, abdomen and genital area while pregnant (e.g. Queensland Domestic Violence Task Force 1988). A woman may be assaulted while holding an infant in her arms, or when trying to protect her child from abuse by her partner. A child or young person may be injured when they try to intervene to protect a parent who is being assaulted. One-third of the children in a Western Australian study (Blanchard, Molloy & Brown 1992, p. 12) reported having been hit by their fathers while trying to defend their mother or to stop the violence.

A file review of children seen in the emergency department of a US children's hospital with injuries resulting from family violence (excluding children who were victims of direct physical abuse) over a ten year period provides some insight into the types and patterns of injury to children who 'witness' violence (Christian et al. 1997). The study identified 139 children and young people, ranging in age from two weeks to 17 years. Although the average age of children identified was five years, almost half (48 per cent) of the children were under two years of age; 10 per cent were younger than one month; and 33 per cent were younger than one year. Twenty-four per cent of the children received their injuries while attempting to intervene in a fight. For 57 per cent of the children, injuries were minor, while for forty per cent, they were moderately severe. Nine percent required hospital admission. The authors comment that since the majority of injuries were minor ones to the head or extremities, many such cases with injuries due to family violence may be overlooked in the absence of direct disclosure because such injuries are common in children.

Children and young people may directly observe violence or they may become aware of it in a variety of ways: they may be in another room and hear what occurs; they may be woken and hear part of the violence; they may see the bruising and distress of their mothers and the broken and damaged property when they return from school or wake up in the morning. Children and young people also live with the effects of violence on the health and parenting capacity of their mothers. For example, domestic violence has been associated with increased risk for women developing substance abuse problems (Clark & Foy 2000), mental ill health (Holtzworth-Munroe, Smutzler & Sandin 1997; Roberts et al. 1988) and suicidality (Stark & Flitcraft 1995).

Children may also be involved in the violence in ways which encourage a sense of responsibility for the violence (Parkinson & Humphreys 1998). For example, the violent incident may occur in the context of arguments about the children (Fantuzzo et al. 1997) or the abuser may use the children to coerce the mother to return home:

He locked the door and said I had to stay. He said I had to stay with him until mum decided to live with him again but she won't. Mum managed to call the police. She grabbed me and we ran to the car but he ran after us and jumped on the car to stop us getting away. I was so scared and crying. (Blanchard, Molloy & Brown 1992, p. 12)

If a woman separates from her abuser, the children may live with the continuing fear that he will return and that the violence will start again (Mullender et al. 2000). After separation, the children may find that, through issues of contact arrangements, they move from the periphery to the centre of the conflict (McMahon & Pence 1995; Peled 1997).

Much of the foregoing relates to the experience by children of physical violence towards their mothers: less is known about the impact on children of the other aspects of domestic violence such as verbal and emotional abuse, social isolation, and economic deprivation. Herman (1992, p. 100) points out that the well recognised isolation of families in which violence occurs does not 'simply happen', but is enforced by the abuser as a tactic to maintain control over family members. As a consequence, 'the social lives of abused children are also profoundly limited by the need to keep up appearances and preserve secrecy.' (1992, p. 100)

The dynamic of secrecy pervades the lives of children living with domestic violence (Eisikovits, Winstok & Enosh 1998; Peled 1996). Living with secrecy can be a source of shame for children (Margolin 1998) and can be a barrier to the development of relationships with peers. Not only is the secret of violence to be kept from those outside the family: Peled (1998) found that the violence was typically not discussed by family members until outside agencies became involved. If women separate from an abusive partner, the secrecy around the violence in the home 'may be exchanged for secrecy concerning the family's new address' (Stanley 1997, p. 137).

Children and young people may also experience the effects of interventions, such as the involvement of the police, movement to a refuge or to a relative's house. In Australia in 1997/98, 34,663 children and young people accompanied victims of domestic violence to Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP) services (Women's Services Network 2000). Sudden, rushed upheavals and changes in accommodation bring with them disruption of schooling and significant losses, such as friends, pets, toys, surroundings, activities and sports (Irwin & Wilkinson 1997; Kneale 1999; Mullender et al. 2000). Peled (1998) found from interviews with pre-adolescent children that the intervention of police and other outside agencies who labelled their father a criminal marked a major turning point in children's understanding of their situations.

Prevalence

Research on children who witness family violence is a special case of counting the hard-to-count and measuring the hard-to-measure... (Fantuzzo et al. 1997, p. 121)

The well documented methodological problems in measuring the prevalence of domestic violence (Bagshaw & Chung 2000; Ferrante et al. 1996) similarly affect our ability to estimate the number of children and young people affected. In addition, most studies rely on reports by caregivers. Studies in which both mothers and children are interviewed invariably indicate that children and young people have a higher level of awareness of the violence than their mothers report (Edleson 1999a; Jaffe, Wolfe & Wilson 1990; Mullender et al. 2000). The following Australian studies paint a picture of the number of children and young people living with domestic violence.

The first national study of the prevalence of domestic violence in Australia (Australian Bureau of Statistics 1996) found that 61 per cent of women who reported violence by a current partner had children in their care at some time during the relationship. Thirty-eight per cent of these women reported that their children had witnessed the violence (132,400 women in population projections from this sample). A larger number of women reported violence in a previous relationship and 46 per cent of this group (461,200 women in population projections from this sample) said that their children witnessed the violence.

An early study of domestic violence using a sample of women approaching chamber magistrates (Johnson, Ross & Vinson 1982) found that, where the couple had children, in 56 per cent of cases the children had witnessed the assault/s on their mother. Dependent children were members of the households of 88 per cent of the 856 callers to a Queensland domestic violence phone survey (Queensland Domestic Violence Task Force 1988); in 80 per cent of these cases, there were two or more dependent children; and in 90 per cent of these cases, the women reported that children had witnessed the violence.

Police reports provide a source of data independent of caregivers' reports. In Armadale, Western Australia, as part of pilot Domestic Violence Intervention Project, police adopted a more thorough domestic and family violence data collection system, the Family Incident Report. Over a 12-month period in 1993/94, 176 Family Incident Reports were completed. Children were present during 66.4 per cent of incidents, and not present in 8.5 per cent of incidents. However, data about the presence of children was not available for 25 per cent of incidents (Ferrante et al. 1996). In 1997/98,

according to Victoria Police statistics, 10,442 children were present at incidents of family violence attended by police (Victoria Police 2000).

Many Indigenous communities suffer high rates of family violence (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women's Task Force on Violence 2000; Apunipima Cape York Health Council 1999; Ferrante et al. 1996). A recent study of Indigenous Australians' attitudes to family violence found a very high level of awareness and concern about the effects on children (Cultural Perspectives 2000). The NSW Aboriginal Children's Service has estimated that over 30 per cent of placements it provides involve domestic violence (Ardler 1990). The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women's Task Force on Violence (2000, p. 33) makes the point that the trauma of witnessing family violence is compounded for many Aboriginal children who experience multiple traumatic situations such as witnessing community violence, death of loved ones, displacement from home and extreme poverty.

While the foregoing Australian studies demonstrate that exposure to domestic violence is a problem for many Australian children and young people, the available data frequently does not provide information about the ages of the children and young people affected. An exception is data on children and young people accompanying their mothers to SAAP services. In Australia in 1997/98, 46 per cent of the children and young people accompanying victims of domestic violence to SAAP services were children aged under five years; 43.6 per cent were aged between five and 12 years; and 10.1 per cent were aged 13-16 years (Women's Services Network 2000, p. 11). By collecting data from both police and battered women, US researchers (Fantuzzo et al. 1997) obtained information about the ages of children affected by domestic violence, and the nature of their experiences. Researchers interviewed women within weeks of a police response to a domestic violence call and a second time six months after the incident. The study found that 'children were disproportionately present in households where there was a substantiated incident of adult female assault' and that children under five years of age 'were disproportionately represented among these witnessing children' (Fantuzzo et al. 1997, p. 120). A further finding was that 'children aged five years and under were more likely than older children to be exposed to multiple incidents of domestic violence over a six month period' (Fantuzzo & Mohr 1999, p. 25). The households in which domestic violence occurred also 'included high levels of additional developmental risk factors' such as poverty and parental substance abuse. Because they found that many children were caught up in the violence in a range of ways, including calling for help and being physically abused by the perpetrator, the authors conclude that '...children in households with family

violence are not just “witnessing” a tragedy; they are involved in various ways in the violent incident’ (Fantuzzo et al. 1997, p. 120).

The impact on children and young people

Quantitative studies

...the sequelae of exposure to marital violence are multifaceted and diverse, leading to the conclusion that the disruptive effects of this stressor do not follow a common pathway. Virtually all types of childhood symptoms have been associated with exposure to marital abuse. (Margolin 1998, p. 62)

Short and medium term effects

There is a rapidly growing body of empirical literature which explores the impact of domestic violence on children and young people. The foregoing discussion of the ways in which children and young people experience domestic violence demonstrates the complexity and variety of children’s and young people’s experiences, and signals the difficulty of studying its impact. A major methodological issue is that of sampling, with many studies using samples of children residing in women’s refuges. Since only a small proportion of women experiencing domestic violence use these services (Office of the Status of Women 1998), this group of children is not representative of children exposed to domestic violence. Furthermore, these children face particular co-occurring stressors such as loss of home, disruption of schooling and friendships, adjustment to refuge living and the public ‘breaking of secrecy’ concerning the violence. A further methodological issue is that mothers have most frequently been the source of data about the impact on their children (Edleson 1999a). Until recently, few studies have sought the perceptions of both the children, young people and their mothers (Levendosky, Lynch & Graham-Bermann 2000). The Child Behaviour Checklist (Achenbach & Edelbrock 1983) is used in the majority of studies. This tool has limitations for assessing the impact of domestic violence on children since it is a measure of general functioning and was not developed to assess ‘the unique impacts of witnessing violence’ (Edleson 1999a, p. 860). Tools such as this may be also be ‘culturally biased and unrepresentative of low-income children from highly stressed families.’ (Fantuzzo & Mohr 1999, p. 29)

Research attention has focussed to date primarily on identifying the symptomatology associated with children’s exposure to domestic violence (Margolin 1998). A number of comprehensive reviews of this literature have been published over the last five years (Edleson 1999a; Fantuzzo & Mohr 1999; Holtzworth-Munroe, Smutzler & Sandin 1997;

Kolbo, Blakely & Engleman 1996; Margolin 1998; Margolin & Gordis 2000; Peled & Davis 1995a). The area of greatest consensus in the literature concerns the impact of exposure to domestic violence on children’s behavioural and emotional functioning:

Overall, these studies indicate a consistent finding across various samples and differing methodologies that child witnesses of domestic violence exhibit a host of behavioural and emotional problems, when compared to other children. (Edleson 1999a, p.846)

Because much of this research uses the Child Behaviour Checklist (Achenbach & Edelbrock 1983) as the standardised measurement tool, much of the literature refers to these difficulties as either ‘externalising’ behaviours (e.g. aggressive and antisocial behaviours) or ‘internalising’ behaviours (e.g. anxiety, depression).

There is less consensus in the literature about the association between exposure to violence and impairment of cognitive and social development (Edleson 1999a; Kolbo, Blakely & Engleman 1996), with some studies showing a relationship (e.g. Montminy-Danna cited in Humphreys 2000) and others not finding such a relationship (e.g. Bookless-Pratz & Mertin 1990).

An important caveat regarding this body of research is that it can show only an association between witnessing violence and problems in certain types of functioning: ‘Conclusions about causation in this field are limited by the inability to manipulate experimentally the presence and dosage of violence.’ (Margolin & Gordis 2000, p.453-454). Thus, to speak of the ‘effects’ of violence on children is not strictly accurate, although commonly used (Edleson 1999a).

Increasingly, research in this field is more effectively addressing the many methodological challenges involved (Kolbo, Blakely & Engleman 1996). Nevertheless, Edleson (1999a, p. 866) concludes his review of the literature with the observation that ‘a great deal of work lies ahead in the development of a more sophisticated understanding of how children are affected by their exposure to adult domestic violence’.

Longer term impacts

In assessing the longer term effects of living with domestic violence, the theoretical notion of the ‘cycle of violence’ is commonly invoked to explain the intergenerational transmission of violent behaviour. Drawing on social learning theory, parents are seen to teach violent behaviour through modelling and to fail to teach skills in resolving conflict without recourse to violence (Holtzworth-Munroe, Smutzler & Sandin 1997). Proponents of this theory suggest that it will result in gender based differences: boys will go on to become perpetrators of violence, and girls, victims (Jaffe, Wolfe & Wilson 1990). However,

It is important to keep in mind that the majority of children exposed to domestic violence do not become either perpetrators or victims of domestic violence in their adult relationships.

the research evidence on the relationship between gender, domestic violence and the development of aggression is equivocal (Margolin 1998).

Moreover, it is important to keep in mind that the majority of children exposed to domestic violence do not become either perpetrators or victims of domestic violence in their adult relationships (Humphreys & Mullender 2000). As with all complex social issues, there are considerable methodological difficulties in exploring the long term effects of exposure to domestic violence. Probably the major issue is the co-occurrence of exposure to domestic violence with other forms of abuse such as child sexual abuse (Goddard & Hiller 1993; Margolin 1998), child physical abuse (Edleson 1999a) and other stressors such as poverty and substance abuse (Fantuzzo et al. 1997; Margolin & Gordis 2000). This presents considerable challenges for identifying the unique effects of witnessing domestic violence (Fantuzzo & Mohr 1999), both in the short and in the longer term. Edleson (1999a) notes that much of the earlier research failed to address whether children who were 'witnesses' and were studied were also victims of child abuse. He cites as an example a study by Rosenbaum and O'Leary (1981) which found an association between witnessing violence and perpetrating domestic violence. However, as eighty-two per cent of the perpetrators who were studied also reported having been physically abused, teasing out the particular contribution of witnessing violence to later perpetration is difficult. The same study did not find an association for women between witnessing violence and being victimised in adulthood.

Other methodological issues which make it difficult to study the intergenerational transmission of violence are the reliance on retrospective studies, which carry the risk of memory bias; reliance on self report (given the propensity of perpetrators to both under-report their violence and to formulate excuses for it); and non-representative samples such as participants in perpetrator treatment programs. In their review of the victim-to-offender literature, Falshaw, Browne and Hollin (1996, p. 398) caution:

Even with the evidence provided by the majority of (this) research work, it is imperative that progression of victim to offender not be unquestionably accepted.

While most theorists have focussed on the learning

of aggression which occurs with exposure to domestic violence, Peled (1998, p. 425) comes from a different angle in suggesting that learning about 'survivorship' also occurs between mothers and children. Not only is aggression modelled by the abuser: mothers can also model 'assertive and non-violent responses to violence' (Peled 1998, p. 426). Jackson (1999) points out that peers provide an additional learning context to parents and cites evidence that male dating violence is influenced by male peer support (e.g. DeKeseredy 1990).

Mediating factors

Since the majority of children exposed to domestic violence do not demonstrate adverse impacts, considerable research effort has been directed towards identifying factors – whether characteristics of the child or the nature of the exposure to domestic violence – which mediate the extent to which children are affected by witnessing violence.

Co-occurrence of exposure to domestic violence and other stressors

A consistent finding is that the combination of being both a victim of child abuse and witnessing violence is associated with more severe impacts (Edleson 1999a; Falshaw, Browne & Hollin 1996; Margolin & Gordis 2000; O'Keefe 1995). Hughes (1988) has termed this the 'double whammy'. The high rates of co-existence of domestic violence and child abuse – estimated to be between 30 and 60 per cent (Edleson 1998) – make this a finding of concern, which is discussed later in the section on child protection. In a non-clinical sample of high school students (O'Keefe 1996), a different interaction between witnessing violence and experiencing abuse was identified:

When parent-child violence was low, the witnessing of interparental violence had a significant and adverse effect on adjustment. However... the effects of witnessing interparental violence were found to be negligible when the level of parent-child violence was high. (p.65)

Gender

While significant gender effects have been found in a number of studies, these effects have been 'neither consistent nor clear cut' (Mathias, Mertin & Murray 1995, p. 48). Some studies have found greater problems for boys, while others have found this for girls (Margolin 1998; Mathias, Mertin & Murray 1995). In an Australian study of the medium-term psychological consequences of children's exposure to domestic violence, no gender differences were found in the number of behaviour problems or social competence of six- to 12-year-old boys and girls (Mathias, Mertin & Murray 1995). O'Keefe's (1996,

p.64) study of adolescents aged between 14 and 20 years found no gender effects, leading her to question: 'a simple gender role modeling explanation for the effects of children's adjustment.'

In a review of the research findings regarding the differential gender effects of observing family of origin violence on dating violence, Jackson (1999, p. 240) finds that these are 'mixed but suggest that observing or experiencing violence in the family of origin impacts more significantly on men's use of violence in dating relationships than it does for women'.

Family Relationships

It is frequently assumed that being victimised will have significant and deleterious effects on women's parenting capacity. However, Levendosky, Lynch, and Graham-Bermann (2000) cite several studies with children and adolescents as reporters in which the young people do not see their abused mothers as limited in their parenting capacity. This finding is supported by some qualitative studies in which children and young people have identified their mothers as a source of support (e.g. Blanchard, Molloy & Brown 1992; Mullender et al. 2000). Levendosky, Lynch and Graham-Bermann (2000) interviewed battered women about their perceptions of the impact of domestic violence on their parenting. They found that:

...the majority were aware of and attempting to address the negative effects of the violence on their parenting as well as the direct effects of the violence on the child. The desire to prevent a repetition of the violence and to provide a more nurturing and safe environment was prevalent throughout the women's comments. Many of these women seemed to be actively working to compensate for the negative effects of the violence on their children. (Levendosky, Lynch & Graham-Bermann 2000, p. 257)

The authors caution against pathologising women because they are being abused and suggest that it would be more helpful to intervene in ways which support women in the actions they are already taking to assist their children, rather than 'presuming ignorance or incompetence' (p. 258) because the women are abused.

While considerable research attention has focussed on the mother's stress as a mediating factor in the impact for children of living with violence, the contribution of the perpetrator has largely been ignored (Peled 2000). A recent study of children's resilience looked both at the abuser's relationship to the children (biological father/step father/non-father figure) and his treatment of the children (Sullivan et al. 2000). The study found that perpetrators who were children's biological fathers were more abusive to the children's mothers than were non-father

figures. No significant differences were found on either mother or child report of the amount the men physically abused the children. The study found that biological fathers were the most emotionally available to the children, while stepfathers were more verbally abusive to the children and instilled more fear in them. Children reported the lowest self-competency when their mother's abusers were either their biological fathers or stepfathers. The authors note that this study 'raises more questions than it answers' (p. 599), and argue that it highlights the urgent need for research which redresses the neglect of the impact of the perpetrator of domestic violence on outcomes for children.

Ethnicity

Few studies have addressed the role of ethnicity and culture (Margolin & Gordis 2000). O'Keefe's study (1996) is one of the few to have a large racially/ethnically and socio-economically diverse sample. Using the Child Behaviour Checklist, O'Keefe (O'Keefe 1996, p. 65) found that 'Asian-Americans reported significantly higher internalising scores compared to whites and (that) African-Americans reported significantly lower internalising scores compared to whites'. In another study (O'Keefe 1994 cited in Edleson 1999a), the only difference found between white, Latino and African-American children was that African-American mothers rated their children more socially competent than did the other mothers. In their U.K. study of children's coping strategies, Mullender et al. (2000) obtained a sample of young people from a range of ethnically and culturally diverse backgrounds. They found that children from a minority cultural group who remained in their community with the support of extended family fared better than those whose mothers were no longer accepted by the extended family and community. However, the study also found that for this group of children, racial harassment and abuse were added burdens.

Yoshihama's study (2000) of women of Japanese descent in Los Angeles County explored the ways in which socio-cultural factors influenced their responses to their partners' violence towards themselves and their children. While cultural factors were found to constrain women in responding to their partners' violence, they were also a source of strength in coping with the violence.

Nature and extent of the violence

Margolin (1998) suggests that the more severe impacts on children reported by women in refuge samples when compared with community samples reflect differences in the nature and extent of the domestic violence to which the children have been exposed. However, she notes that few studies have examined the relationship between children's

problems and the severity of the violence witnessed, and similarly, that the variable of the length of the child's exposure to violence has largely been ignored.

Dating violence

Violence within dating relationships is postulated by some as the 'mediating link' between childhood exposure to violence and the perpetration of domestic violence (Makepeace cited in Jackson 1999, p. 233). Bagshaw et al. (2000) make the point that, while the literature on dating violence has frequently made use of the 'Conflicts Tactics Scale', a measurement tool developed for use in domestic violence research, it has generally failed to draw on domestic violence theories to explain dating violence. In a recent review of the dating violence research, Jackson (1999, p. 235) draws attention to the 'narrowness of its scope, arising from a preoccupation with physical violence, then measuring it only in terms of acts, without reference to intent or consequences'. This lack of 'fit' between the two bodies of literature – dating and domestic violence – limits current understanding of dating violence as a mediating factor.

Resilience

Despite the association between exposure to violence and diagnosable problems, it is consistently found that the majority of those exposed to violence do not exhibit these negative effects (Magen 1999). In fact, some children and young people demonstrate above average social competence and adjustment (Jaffe, Wolfe & Wilson 1990). Findings such as these have encouraged the study of factors which may contribute to children's resilience:

The current literature offers only glimpses of children's resilience and the factors in their environments that lessen or heighten the impact of the violent events swirling around them. It is these protective factors—about which we know little—that may lead us to design more effective interventions to minimize the impact of violence on children. (Edleson 1999a, p. 865)

Jaffe, Wolfe and Wilson (1990) divide protective factors into three types: attributes of the child; support within the family, such as a good relationship with one parent; and support figures outside the family, such as relatives, peers or teachers. The studies described earlier about the impact of the abuser's relationship with the child, the ways in which women's parenting is affected by violence and cultural influences on women's responses to violence, represent part of this move to better understand resiliency. At this stage, however, 'relatively little is known regarding why some children are intensely affected by exposure to marital violence while others survive relatively unscathed' (Margolin 1998, p. 57).

While agreeing with other authors on the importance of further study of factors contributing to resilience, Margolin and Gordis (2000) also add a cautionary note in pointing out that some initial responses to exposure to violence, which at the time appear to indicate resilience, may be problematic in the longer term or in other situations. They cite examples such as hypervigilance, which may be protective of children living with violence, but which is problematic in other situations such as school.

The studies discussed in this section have employed a quantitative research approach, involving the testing of hypotheses against evidence collected by quantitative and experimental methods. This approach emphasises sampling methods which mean that results can be generalised to the larger population. Qualitative research, the other common research approach, tends to use smaller samples and explores in depth the experiences of research participants. A strength of qualitative studies, which are discussed next in this paper, is their capacity to tease out factors which enhance the resilience of children and young people. This research approach, which moves beyond 'measuring effects', is recommended by a recent Australian report (Bagshaw et al. 2000, p. 79) as an important next step in developing more effective responses to children and young people affected by domestic violence.

Qualitative studies

Children's words have not been believed when sensitive issues like child abuse have come to the fore, and in the case of domestic violence, children have been ignored. (Blanchard 1993, p. 31)

In a landmark Western Australian study, Blanchard, Molloy and Brown (1992) interviewed 18 children and young people aged between six and 15 years. Those interviewed described a range of actions used to cope with the violence, including hiding, trying to intervene, trying to sleep, and caring for and reassuring younger siblings. They described emotional impacts (fear, helplessness, despair, depression) and other impacts, such as impaired participation in school. In discussing a range of formal and informal sources of help, a majority (11 of 18) mentioned their mothers as a good source of support, suggesting that despite their own victimisation, many women were nevertheless able to assist their children. The importance of community resources was seen in the finding that 12 of the children went to neighbours who helped both by calling the police and by comforting and caring for the children. Children identified that a reliable, sympathetic and capable adult within walking distance would be a useful support, highlighting the important role for informal networks in assisting victims of domestic violence (Holder 1998).

In a recent Australian qualitative study, Bagshaw et al. (2000) interviewed women about the experiences and needs of their children, and also conducted a focus group interview with young people aged 16-22 years. Neither the women nor their children were reported to be satisfied with the counselling assistance received. The young people in this study described impacts on their self esteem, suicidal feelings and difficulties in trusting others in both friendship and intimate relationships. The violence affected their educational performance, and often the only solution was to leave home, both factors affecting future life chances. Having someone caring and trustworthy to talk to was identified as a desired support.

A strength of qualitative studies such as this is that they also provide information about young people's help-seeking behaviour, the barriers to seeking help and the types of responses which are in fact helpful. For example, the finding that mandatory notification may deter help-seeking raises important policy and practice considerations (Bagshaw et al. 2000). However, the older age group of those interviewed in this study (mid-teens to early 20s) means that further exploration of the issue of mandatory notification is necessary, as younger children have more limited access to people and resources outside the family.

In a U.K. study, Mullender et al. (2000) explored with 45 children and young people aged between eight and sixteen years how they made sense of the experience of living with domestic violence, and the type of help they needed. While the younger children's understanding of the violence emphasised situational factors (e.g. father's drinking or gambling), older respondents demonstrated understanding of the context of intentionality, entitlement and control. For example:

He controlled her. He thought it was OK to treat her like shit and hit her and beat her all the time. He didn't think it was wrong. (15-year-old young woman cited in Mullender et al. 2000, p. 10)

The researchers stress that the results of this study demonstrate that children are not passive 'victims' of violence but that, on the contrary, children of all ages were quite active in how they responded to and coped with their situations. In terms of the support they wanted and had received, the children and young people in this study 'wanted to be told what was going on wherever possible and to be involved in making decisions', and 'to have their views and opinions taken seriously' (Mullender et al. 2000, p. 14). As with the Australian studies, they said it would be useful to have a trusted person to talk to 'on their own terms'.

Peled (1998) interviewed a group of children aged 10-13 years an average of four times in a study which sought to develop an in-depth understanding

of the experience of exposure to violence. From the children's narratives, Peled identified five main themes reflecting different phases of children's experiences of living with violence: 'living with ordinary fights'; 'witnessing violent events'; 'being challenged by mothers' public confrontation of the violence'; 'adjusting to new realities in the long-term aftermath of violence'; and 'living with violence as a history'. This study showed not just that children are affected by exposure to violence, but that they also respond in a variety of ways in different phases of their exposure. It also identified the struggles which the children faced in dealing with their relationships with their fathers in the aftermath of violence:

Very few of the children learned to accept and live with both seemingly contradictory sides of their fathers—the good, loving father and the bad abusive father. Rather, they chose to either see their fathers as “bad” or found ways to contain, excuse, and reframe the fathers’ abusive behaviors. (Peled 1998, p. 418)

Maxwell and Carroll-Lind (1998) interviewed 259 children aged between 11 and 13 years to understand their perspectives on what is violent and the impact violent events have on their lives. Parents fighting and separating were identified as among the worst things which had happened to the children. The study identified a number of factors that give an event the “character of violence” for children. These are: when the person hurt is someone they love; when events happen in the child's home; when the hurt is intentional; when the perpetrator is a trusted person; when the child feels partly responsible; when the child has no control; and when other bad things are happening. The salience of these factors when children live with domestic violence is striking.

The strength of qualitative studies such as these is their move beyond measuring and documenting effects to suggesting ways forward in providing counselling and other forms of support which are sensitive to the range of children's and young people's reactions and experiences and which build on their coping capacities. Some of these issues are taken up in the concluding sections of this paper.

A developmental view

Exposure to domestic violence impacts on each of the developmental stages from *in utero* to young adulthood. In this section some of the major findings illustrating these developmental impacts will be presented.

Margolin and Gordis (2000) place a developmental focus at the centre of their review of the impacts on children of exposure to three types of violence: child abuse, community and interparental violence. These authors draw on literature which points to impacts beyond the development of symptomatology:

It (violence) affects children's views of the world and of themselves, their ideas about the meaning and purpose of life, their expectations for future happiness, and their moral development. (Margolin & Gordis 2000, p. 446)

The authors point out that children's vulnerability to exposure to violence extends beyond the initial effects such as anxiety or depression, because these initial reactions can disrupt 'children's progression through age-appropriate developmental tasks' (p. 449).

Pregnancy

He would squeeze and twist my pregnant tummy until I screamed out in pain. It was like he was trying to bash the unborn baby. He couldn't wait until the child was born. (Queensland Domestic Violence Task Force 1988, p. 105)

According to the Australian Women's Safety Survey (Australian Bureau of Statistics 1996, p. 52), 701,200 women¹ were pregnant at some time to a previous partner who had been violent. Forty-two per cent of these women – 292,100 – experienced violence during the pregnancy. Twenty per cent experienced violence for the first time while pregnant. Jamieson and Hart (1999) report findings from the 1993 Canadian Violence Against Women Survey that women abused in pregnancy were four times as likely as other abused women to say that they experienced 'very serious' violence, defined as beatings, choking, gun/knife threats and sexual assaults. Some impacts of violence during pregnancy such as placental abruption, preterm labour and delivery, foetal death and direct foetal injury can be attributed to trauma; others, such as substance misuse and failure to obtain adequate nutrition, rest and medical care, are due to the stress of living with violence and abuse (Jamieson & Hart 1999). It is possible that some children are affected by domestic violence by being disabled before birth when their mother is assaulted (Stanley 1997). This has been identified as an area requiring further research (Humphreys & Mullender 2000), such as the Australian research which is exploring the impact of stress on foetal growth (Quinlivan 2000).

Infants

Domestic violence may commence in the post partum period (Hedin 2000). One Canadian study found that women abused before or during their pregnancies are at increased risk of abuse when the baby is born (Stewart 1994 cited in Jamieson & Hart 1999). In the hospital emergency study cited previously, fifty-nine per cent of the injured children who were younger than two years were injured while being held by a parent (Christian et al. 1997). The care of the infant and development of the mother/child relationship (Irwin & Wilkinson 1997) may be

Children and young people are not merely passive onlookers... they are actively involved in seeking to make meaning of their experiences and in dealing with the difficult and terrifying situations which confront them.

compromised by abuse experienced in this period. Jamieson and Hart (1999) provide numerous examples of the forms which abuse may take in the post partum period, including denying the woman access to her newborn baby, withholding money for formula and nappies, blaming her for the baby's crying, forbidding or coercing breast feeding, or putting down her parenting ability.

School-aged children

School-aged children face the developmental challenges of adapting to the school environment and establishing relations with peers. These tasks require the ability to regulate emotions, show empathy and attend to increasingly complex cognitive material. (Margolin & Gordis 2000, p. 450)

Such tasks are best supported by safe, secure relationships with parents. In 1997/98, over half of the 34,663 children and young people accompanying their mothers to SAAP services were school-aged (Women's Services Network 2000). While the research data on impacts of exposure to domestic violence on school performance is equivocal (Edleson 1999a), many children and young people report in qualitative studies that the violence adversely affected their school performance (Bagshaw et al. 2000; Blanchard, Molloy & Brown 1992). Maxwell and Carroll-Lind (1998, p. 187) describe the impact of violence on children's educational opportunity:

...violence also disables children's ability to learn... One can compare the loss of liberty for an adult who is imprisoned with the loss of education for a child for whom learning is the key to their whole future.

Adolescence

One thirteen-year-old girl said that she tried to escape the pressure by 'getting out of it' on an overdose of prescribed medication. (Blanchard, Molloy & Brown 1992 p.12)

Adolescents may attempt to intervene in interparental violence. In the hospital study cited previously, seventy-eight per cent of adolescents received their injuries in this way (Christian et al. 1997). Family violence is one of a range of factors

including unemployment, poverty, and physical and sexual abuse which increase the risk that young people will become homeless. Many young people using youth accommodation services funded under the SAAP program report domestic violence in their families (Department of Education Training and Youth Affairs 2000). Homelessness exposes young people to increased risk of victimisation, such as physical and sexual assault and to other risks such as substance abuse, self-injurious behaviours, involvement in unsafe sexual practices and neglect of medical and self-care needs (National Crime Prevention 1999a). An Australian participatory action research project into young mothers' experiences of violence (Healy 1995) identified the contribution of abuse in childhood, poverty, inadequate housing and negative stereotypes about young mothers to the prevalence of violence experienced by young parenting women.

Considerable concern about the impact of domestic violence on children and young people focuses on the possibility of the transmission of violent behaviour from one generation to the next. Violence by adolescents towards parents is frequently attributed to the young person modelling this behaviour on a parent who has perpetrated domestic violence (Howard 1995; McInnes 1995). In a sample of 60 families presenting for counselling because of adolescent violence towards a parent, Sheehan (1997) found that only 11 of the 60 young people had no history of exposure to some form of family violence: 16 had witnessed domestic violence; 27 were survivors of physical abuse and six were survivors of both physical and sexual abuse. Again, teasing out the contribution of domestic violence when there are high rates of direct child abuse is difficult and suggests that processes more complex than simple modelling of violent behaviour are involved.

In summary, children of different ages and developmental stages exhibit differing responses to witnessing domestic violence. However, as Margolin concludes, there are no clear patterns regarding the specific effects of exposure for specific ages:

...it is not clear whether the differences noted across developmental stages are a function of developmental stage, of amount of total exposure, of age at initial exposure, or of a combination of these factors. (Margolin 1998, p. 78)

'Witnessing' domestic violence as trauma

The developing field of psychological trauma provides another way of understanding the impact on children of witnessing the abuse of their mothers. While earlier studies focussed on the impact of witnessing the murder or rape of a parent, more recently research interest has turned to the impact

of witnessing less extreme forms of violence on a chronic basis (Lehman 2000). It is suggested that the fact that the perpetrator is known to the child (and charged with the child's protection) will intensify the child's traumatic response (Lehman 2000). Trauma in childhood is thought to create additional harm because it overwhelms the child's developing sense of self and coping mechanisms (Herman 1992). Feelings of helplessness, fear of death and a state of constant alertness are the daily burden of children living with chronic violence and abuse:

I often thought my father might kill us when he was drunk. He held me and my mother and my brother at gunpoint once. It went on for hours. I remember the wall we were standing against. I tried to be good and do what I was supposed to do. (survivor cited in Herman 1992, p. 98)

Graham-Bermann and Levendosky (1998) studied 64 children aged between seven and 12 years who had witnessed the physical and emotional abuse of their mother by their father during the past year. They found that while only 13 per cent qualified for a full PTSD diagnosis, larger numbers suffered from traumatic symptoms which included intrusive and unwanted remembering of the traumatic events (52 per cent); traumatic avoidance (19 per cent); and traumatic arousal symptoms (42 per cent).

Another body of emerging research explores the impact of exposure to trauma during infancy on the development of the brain. Perry et al. (1995) propose that, because the brain is most 'plastic' (receptive to environmental input) in early childhood, the child is most vulnerable to the impact of traumatic experiences during this time. Exposure to extreme trauma at this stage is thought to change the organisation of the brain (Schwarz & Perry 1994), resulting in difficulties in dealing with stressors later in life. While this work posits a biological basis for the 'victim to offender' cycle, Perry (1997, p. 139) notes that the majority of traumatised children do not become 'remorselessly violent', and cautions that violence needs to be understood within a context which acknowledges the role of cultural supports for violence.

Current responses

Counselling and support

A common finding of many Australian studies is the lack of specialist counselling services to respond to the needs of children and young people exposed to domestic violence (Bagshaw et al. 2000; Blanchard 1993; Smith, O'Connor & Bethelsen 1996). However, in recent years there has been an extensive amount of work across Australia aimed at developing and improving counselling and therapeutic responses. Much innovative practice, for example, is

documented in the proceedings of the two national conferences on children and domestic violence (e.g. Domestic Violence Resource Centre 1998) and the recent forum on this subject (Office of the Status of Women 2000). These developments are occurring in a broad range of settings including refuges, schools, health services, community based agencies and child protection services.

Working with children and young people is one of the key themes of the Commonwealth/State/Territory *Partnerships Against Domestic Violence* initiative. Many of the projects funded under stage one of this initiative are now publishing their results, providing a range of resources for those working with children and young people. One of these publications², (Families Youth and Community Care Queensland 1999c) outlines practice standards for the provision of services to children and young people affected by domestic violence, whether in a specialist service or as part of a larger service. The practice standards were developed in consultation with service providers across Australia, and promote service provision which addresses cultural diversity. Together with a companion volume on evaluating service delivery (Families Youth and Community Care Queensland 1999a), these are useful resources for both specialist and generalist services to establish and monitor programs for children and young people affected by domestic violence. A third publication from this project provides an overview of a range of models of service delivery and examples of programs (Families Youth and Community Care Queensland 1999b).

Groupwork is recognised as an effective intervention with children and young people affected by domestic violence (Peled & Davis 1995b). Three Victorian good practice project reports (Atkins 1999; Bunston & Crean 1999; Cavanagh, Hewitt & Anderson 1999) document approaches to groupwork with children affected by domestic violence, each approach offering a concurrent groupwork program for carers. These reports are useful for practitioners because they clearly identify their theoretical and philosophical underpinnings and explicate their principles of practice. The 'Shaping a New Future' program, for example, is based on the belief that women and children can free themselves from violence with 'empowering supports' (Atkins 1999). It specifically addresses the 'good mother myth', addresses loyalty issues and provides a model for interagency collaboration in order to harness the resources required to offer a comprehensive and effective service. The involvement of siblings into a multi-age group is a unique feature of this program:

The use of a sibling approach effectively addresses issues of loyalty, ownership, respect for difference and importantly the need to address issues of secrecy and isolation. (Atkins 1999, p 18)

The PARKAS program (Bunston & Crean 1999) is based on awareness of the potential link between childhood trauma and severe behavioural, social and psychiatric problems. 'The overall aim of the program is to create a psychologically safe space for children to begin to acknowledge and process their grief, loss and pain.' (Bunston & Crean 1999, p. 4). The issue of children's relationship with the perpetrator of violence has been identified as an area which causes children considerable distress and sadness (Peled 1997; Peled 1998). The PARKAS program explicitly acknowledges the significance of the father/perpetrator in the lives of the children, and assists them to address issues about this relationship, including the conflict of loyalties with which the children often struggle.

Developing a partnership with parents is important in all three programs. Through concurrent mothers' groups, each program works with women on parenting issues arising from having lived with violence. While working with children and young people affected by domestic violence is a relatively new endeavour, each program has a commitment to evaluation (Berry Street 1997; Hewitt & Cavanagh 1998). A small body of literature suggests that such intervention with children and young people can assist with the problems experienced by children and their carers who have experienced violence (Peled & Edleson 1995; Shepherd & Maxwell 2000). However, such specialist intervention is accessed by only a small minority of children and young people (Peled & Edleson 1999).

One gap which has been identified in the research literature is the impact of men's use of violence on the mother/child relationship (Irwin & Wilkinson 1997). This is reflected in current practice which, for the most part, works separately with women and children in attempting to overcome the impacts of living with violence and abuse. An exception is an approach which uses exercises for mother/child dyads with the aim of rebuilding broken bonds and damaged attachments between mother and child (Worth & Mertin 1997). In the allied field of child sexual assault, conjoint work with mothers and their children is commonly used to break patterns of secrecy and strengthen the mother/child relationship which has been undermined by the perpetrator's tactics of abuse (Laing & Kamsler 1990). It has been suggested that a similar approach could assist women and their children whose relationship has similarly been disrupted and undermined by the abuser whose tactics such as verbal abuse, criticism and putdowns have been actively employed to shape the child/young person's view of their mother, and of her capacities. Conjoint work can address these relationship issues:

We may then more effectively intervene in ways which help to break the secrecy about violence, not just between this family and the outside world, but

between the victimised members of the family; and in ways which offer the victims of the violence – mothers and children – the opportunity to debrief together about the abuse they have endured and to re-connect around shared stories of strength and survival. (Laing 2000, p.174)

In developing therapeutic interventions in this new field, the theoretical framework developed by Eisikovits, Winstok and Enosh (1998) offers a useful guide. They identify four constructs used by children to make sense of their experience of living with violence – ‘living with the secret’; ‘living in a conflict of loyalties’; ‘living in terror and fear’; and ‘living in an aggressive and dominance-oriented context’ – and analyse the world views underlying these constructs. The theoretical model which they have developed provides guidance for practitioners in providing assistance which will be ‘more consistent with the differential needs of children who are exposed to parental violence’ (Eisikovits, Winstok & Enosh 1998, p. 565).

While Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP) programs have at times been criticised for failing to adequately address the needs of children who use their services (e.g. Thomson & Goodall cited in McNamara & McClelland 1999), a number of agencies providing both crisis and medium term accommodation services to women and children affected by violence have developed service components which specifically address the needs of children (Child Support Workers Brisbane 1999; Kneale 1999; McNamara & McClelland 1999). For example, Annie North Refuge views children ‘as service users in their own right’. This service recognises that crisis accommodation, though time-limited, provides an opportunity for intensive work with children and young people as issues associated with having lived with violence arise in the course of everyday activities (Kneale 1999). Rendell (2000, p. 144) suggests that much of the work in supporting children and building positive mother/child relationships which occurs in refuges is ‘largely invisible to the outside world’. She notes that it may also be less highly valued than specialist therapeutic interventions which are often seen as more ‘scientific’. Yet sessional work with children does not provide the unique perspective of the ‘child in context’ which the residential setting provides.

While there is growing concern about violence towards parents by young people who have experienced domestic violence (e.g. Hastie 1998), there is little Australian research or practice documented. An exception is a paper by Sheehan (1997) which outlines the clinical approach of the Melbourne Mediation and Family Therapy Service (MATTERS). Drawing on both psychodynamic theory and family therapy, violence is viewed through the socio-political lens of culture, gender and power. Their

approach to helping families free themselves from violence involves:

...making space for the young person to take responsibility for their behaviour; and for parents and caregivers to stand up to the young person’s violence without feeling blamed or responsible for that behaviour. (Sheehan 1997, p.80)

Prevention

A second major component of current responses to domestic violence comprises efforts to prevent its occurrence. Drawing on a public health model, prevention activities can be categorised as primary, secondary or tertiary (Wolfe & Jaffe 1999). Primary prevention attempts to prevent the incidence of a problem in a population before it occurs. Such approaches are typically described as ‘universal’ because they target the whole population:

Primary prevention strategies can introduce to particular population groups new values, thinking processes, and relationship skills that are incompatible with violence and that promote healthy, nonviolent relationships. (Wolfe & Jaffe 1999, p. 136)

Secondary prevention approaches target groups ‘at risk’ for developing the social problem being addressed. In the case of domestic violence prevention, this includes children and young people who have been exposed to domestic violence in their family. Tertiary prevention involves those who have already experienced domestic violence, either as perpetrators or victims. All of the counselling programs for children and mothers previously discussed can be understood as incorporating elements of both secondary and tertiary prevention. Each of the programs addresses the impact of the violence experienced by the children (tertiary prevention) as well as teaching children made vulnerable by living with violence some non-violent ways of relating to others (secondary prevention):

The work with children is regarded as our most important initiative for preventing family violence. The focus is on redressing the impact of adult violence and providing the children with alternative learning and skills for problem and conflict resolution. (Cavanagh, Hewitt & Anderson 1999, p. vi)

A commonly debated issue in violence prevention is whether to adopt a universal or a targeted approach (Strategic Partners 2000). Some argue for a universal approach because all children and young people are ‘at risk of being abused or abusive’ (Gamache & Snapp 1995, p. 214) and because universal programs do not stigmatise participants. Further support for a universal approach lies in research findings that children and young people indicate that they would talk to friends if they were dealing with domestic violence (Bagshaw et al. 2000;

Northern Territory Office of Women's Policy 1999). Such programs therefore resource the informal networks which have been identified as playing a key role in responding to victims of domestic violence (Holder 1998). Universal interventions have the potential to reach that group of children termed by Peled the 'socially invisible child witnesses of violence' (1997, p. 292), for whom the secret of the violence with which they live has not been broken. On the other hand, it is argued that targeted programs represent a better use of limited resources (Department of Education Training and Youth Affairs 2000). Those who argue for universal interventions agree that prevention programs need to be linked to other community resources so that children and young people identified as requiring more intensive assistance can receive appropriate referrals (Gamache & Snapp 1995). The emphasis preferred tends to reflect underlying beliefs about the causes of violence. For example, those who emphasise the 'cycle of violence' and who stress a social learning theory of causation will emphasise intervention with 'at risk' young people as a key preventive strategy. Others who see the causes of violence in gender inequity and societal attitudes supportive of violence will stress universal prevention efforts. Increasingly, multi-faceted interventions are recommended, in recognition of the complexity of violence prevention (Indermaur, Atkinson & Blagg 1998b).

Prevention targeting adolescents

A considerable amount of primary and secondary domestic violence prevention activity in Australia has targeted adolescents. This reflects the belief that adolescence, as a developmental period of change and the point at which intimate relationships are being formed, represents a key transition point (National Crime Prevention 1999b) and hence presents an opportunity for preventive intervention, both within dating relationships, and in later adult relationships:

Domestic, family and relationship violence can have their first manifestations in adolescence, as young men and women begin to develop and express values, beliefs, expectations and attitudes regarding relationships and the use of violence in them. What happens in regard to the use of violence in these relationships is critical in reinforcing beliefs and attitudes that either support or detract from the acceptability of relationship violence. (Indermaur, Atkinson & Blagg 1998b, p. 11)

The importance of preventive interventions is emphasised by studies showing high rates of sexual and physical violence in adolescent dating relationships (Hird 2000; National Crime Prevention 2000). Further, a recent survey of Australian young people's attitudes to domestic violence found that 37 per cent of males and 12 per cent of females agreed with the

A strength of qualitative studies is that they also provide information about young people's help-seeking behaviour, the barriers to seeking help and the types of responses which are in fact helpful.

statement that 'men should take control and be head of the household'. Those who held such views were likely to reveal pro-violence attitudes (National Crime Prevention 2000).

Prevention activity targeting adolescents has been initiated in both the non-government (e.g. Emergency Accommodation and Support Enterprise Inc. 2000; Gulbin 1996; Zuchowski 1999) and government sectors. Examples of Federal government initiatives include the 'gender and violence' project which developed a curriculum addressing gender based violence in schools and a joint NCAVAC (National Campaign Against Violence and Crime) and NACS (National Anti-Crime Strategy) project working with adolescents to prevent domestic violence. The latter involved a comprehensive literature review, an audit of Australian violence prevention programs, and the design of pilot rural town and Indigenous prevention models (Indermaur, Atkinson & Blagg 1998a; Indermaur, Atkinson & Blagg 1998b). This comprehensive report critically reviews the relevant literature, and argues against views of violence as individual pathology:

... violence is an expression of cultural values and is manifest in some individuals, situations and groups of people more than others. The distribution of violence reflects important tensions in the social structure. (Indermaur, Atkinson & Blagg 1998b, p. 11)

The audit identified that there are very few prevention programs specifically addressing Aboriginal communities, and a lack of resources for use in prevention programs with young women (Indermaur, Atkinson & Blagg 1998b). These gaps have been addressed in some recent initiatives such as the production of a video – *Sharon's Story* – which provides young Aboriginal women with information about violence and sexual assault within relationships and about seeking help through community support and legal remedies. Examples of other community education initiatives targeting young women include the booklet 'Living With Love?' (Centacare Geraldton 2000), developed as part of a community education campaign which included local radio and television spots; and the fold-out booklet 'Free?' (Relationships Australia South Australia 1999). Based on consultation with young women, these resources emphasise the qualities of healthy

relationships. In another approach, the Domestic Violence Incest and Resource Centre in Victoria has developed a website specifically for young women³ (McKenzie 1998).

In late 1997, the Commonwealth Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs (2000) funded a series of domestic violence prevention workshops for young people aged 12 to 25 years. These were conducted with up to 13,500 young people in 40 locations. These projects were directed towards both young people in the mainstream of society and young people identified as 'at risk'. The evaluation of these projects found that preventive programs with young people can have an impact on their knowledge, skills and attitudes. The importance of the organisational context in contributing to successful programs was also highlighted (Department of Education Training and Youth Affairs 2000). The resources generated from the projects have been collated and made available to others working with young people to prevent violence (Strategic Partners 2000).

Peer education is an approach which has been popular in prevention efforts with young people. It utilises 'a naturally occurring process whereby young people learn a lot from one another as part of their everyday lives' (Shiner 1999, p. 555). Young people with personal experience of domestic violence are trained and supported in offering information about relationship violence to other young people in a variety of settings (e.g. Friedman 1999; Young Mothers for Young Women 1999).

The Northern Territory's 'Captain Harley Be Cool...Not Cruel' community education campaign targets children and young people rather than adults and involved young people as the primary consultants at all stages of the development and implementation of the campaign:

...the perceptions, views, and attitudes of the target audience were what drove the campaign and its development. The views of adults were treated as an important but secondary source of advice. (Northern Territory Office of Women's Policy 1999, p. 7)

An attitudinal survey of high school students provided baseline information on young people's knowledge about domestic violence, and about their attitudes to domestic violence and sexual abuse.

Enthusiasm for prevention strategies aimed at adolescents and young adults, however, needs to be tempered with findings from the literature on the development of aggression which, Indermaur et al. (1998, p. 21) note 'consistently points to the early years (prior to twelve years of age) as critical in the establishment of aggressive and violent response styles'. Hence, some programs (e.g. Zuchowski 1999) are increasingly involving children in primary schools and kindergarten in prevention activities.

School Based Programs

There is a wealth of creative, school based prevention programs being implemented across the country. Schools are seen as key locations for violence prevention because they provide regular access to young people (Indermaur, Atkinson & Blagg 1998b) and because of their critical role in imparting culture and transmitting key learning skills (Department of Education Training and Youth Affairs 2000). However, unless school based programs are based within a 'whole of school strategy', they are unlikely to be successful:

School based approaches need to be highly integrated with other community resources and developments. Furthermore, a community development approach is encouraged, where non-violent values and behaviours are part of every day activities within the whole school community. (Department of Education Training and Youth Affairs 2000, p. 21)

School based programs both assist students to acquire skills in developing respectful relationships, and let children and young people living with the secret of violence in their home know that help is available (Silver 1999; Zuchowski 1999). When initiated by agencies outside the school, all key stakeholders must be involved (Sudermann, Jaffe & Hastings 1995). The *Solving the Jigsaw Program* (Silver 1999) is an example of a school based program which is offered by an external organisation but which is strategically integrated into the school system. This program seeks to change the 'culture of violence' and build a 'culture of well-being'. It is premised on understanding the connections between the 'culture of violence', the 'culture of bullying' and 'the culture of domestic violence'. It encompasses primary and secondary prevention levels through classroom programs (universal targets), targeted therapeutic groups for 'at risk' students, and linked parenting programs (Emergency Accommodation and Support Enterprise Inc. 2000).

The child protection education curriculum which has been introduced to students in all stages from Kindergarten to Year 10 in NSW government schools is a school based primary prevention initiative. Forms of abuse addressed include abuse between peers, such as harassment, bullying and dating violence; physical, sexual and emotional abuse; neglect; and domestic violence. An important goal of this initiative is assisting students to develop skills in establishing and maintaining non-coercive relationships and strengthening attitudes and values related to equality, respect and responsibility (NSW Department of School Education 1997). Resources for teachers and parents are also part of this strategy.

Other prevention approaches

Much work being undertaken in related fields is very relevant to the prevention of domestic violence. For example, a recent Australian project (National Crime Prevention 1999b) outlined a developmental approach to crime prevention, proposing a model in which:

... the development of children is seen as progressing along various developmental pathways that are influenced by the characteristics of the child and the environment the child grows up in... The model takes into account the characteristics of the child's family, social network, community and the wider society in which children live, and the links among those different levels. These characteristics comprise a number of factors at the different levels which can either increase the risk of adverse outcomes (risk factors) or factors that protect against adverse outcomes or promote positive developmental outcomes (protective factors). (Cashmore 2000, p. 59)

Since the same risk and protective factors are associated with a range of social problems including crime, substance misuse, mental health issues, and domestic violence, it is argued that it is more productive to co-ordinate programs across departments and agencies and across different fields and social problems rather than developing separate early intervention programs.

Developing a multi-system response

EFFECTIVE RESPONSES to children and young people affected by domestic violence require, in addition to counselling and support services, what Peled, Jaffe and Edleson (1995) term a 'co-ordinated, multi-system response':

A multi-system community response to children witnessing violence starts with an understanding of the roots of violence in our cultures and the complex social structures which mirror and reproduce it... maintains a perspective that situates the child within his or her family and larger social networks... a multi-system response must attempt to change society's attitude towards violence, and help victims/survivors within a multitude of relevant social settings. (Peled, Jaffe & Edleson 1995 pp. 285-286)

Through the lens of a multi-system approach, the impact of domestic violence on women, children and young people can be exacerbated or ameliorated by the structures, policies and procedures of a broad range of social and legal systems including housing, immigration (Hansen & Le Sueur 1996), health and social security. For example, many women become involved for the first time with the social security system to support their children after leaving an

abusive relationship; others have their attempts to re-enter the workforce undermined or are forced to give up work and return to relying on social security payments because of the physical and mental health impacts of violence and the tactics of their abusers, such as stalking (Brandwein & Filiano 2000; Sable et al. 1999). Women parenting children with disabilities may face diminished choices in securing safety for themselves and their children if they risk losing health and educational support services which have taken years to establish (Humphreys & Mullender 2000). These examples illustrate the diversity of social systems where awareness of the impact of domestic violence on women and their children is required. The following section will outline current challenges emerging in the involvement of children and young people who have experienced domestic violence with two such systems, child protection and Family Law.

Domestic violence and the child protection system

The association between exposure to domestic violence and negative impacts on children's health and development, together with a body of international and Australian research which finds that domestic violence and child abuse frequently co-exist (Bowker, Arbitell & McFerron 1990; Hughes 1988; McKernan McKay 1994; Rosenbaum & O'Leary 1981; Stark & Flitcraft 1988; Tomison 1995), present formidable challenges for the child protection system. In cases where children 'only' witness violence, but are not themselves directly abused, decisions have to be made about whether 'witnessing' violence should be included in the definition of child abuse. This is the source of much current debate, with some arguing that witnessing domestic violence is a form of psychological child abuse (e.g. Margolin 1998; Somer & Braunstein 1999) and others arguing against automatically defining all child witnesses as victims of child abuse (Edleson 1999a; Fleck-Henderson 2000; Magen 1999). In cases where families become involved in the child protection system because of child abuse or neglect, interventions which are sensitive to the role of domestic violence in creating the conditions of risk to children need to be developed. This section of the paper discusses the challenges facing the child protection system, and some of the strategies which are being developed to respond to these challenges.

The co-existence of domestic violence and other forms of child abuse

The evidence for the frequent co-existence of child abuse and domestic violence comes from several types of studies: those which look for evidence of domestic violence in families where child abuse has been identified; those which look for child abuse in

samples of women who are known to be victims of domestic violence; and retrospective studies of adult populations (Edleson 1999b). From the available research, it is currently estimated that child abuse and domestic violence co-exist in between 30 and 60 per cent of cases (Edleson 1999b). This is consistent with the picture which emerges from the Australian research. For example, an exploratory study of 20 child protection cases (Stanley & Goddard 1993) found domestic violence in 60 per cent of cases, together with multiple forms of family violence. Goddard and Hiller (1993) found domestic violence in the families of forty per cent of cases of child sexual assault presenting to a city Children's Hospital. A significant gap in knowledge, identified by Aron and Olsen (1997), is a lack of studies which explore the relationship between domestic violence and the neglect of children.

Edleson (1999b) points out that, while the co-existence of child abuse and domestic violence is now widely recognised, less is known about the ways in which these forms of abuse are interconnected. However, evidence is emerging that cases where both domestic violence and child abuse occur represent the greatest risk to children's safety (DePanfilis & Zuravin 1999; Miller, Fox & Garcia-Beckwith 1999; Stanley 1997) and that large numbers of cases in which children are killed have histories of domestic violence (Edleson 1999b; Fleck-Henderson 2000; Wilczynski 1996). Child abuse prevention programs, such as nurse home visiting, have been found to be less effective when domestic violence is present (Eckenrode et al. 2000). In the United States, where domestic violence consultants have been employed in child protection services, they report that the cases involving domestic violence in the child protection system are 'much more complex and dangerous than those they had encountered in battered women's shelters.' (Aron & Olson 1997, p. 11).

An example of research attempting to better understand the nature of the interaction between domestic violence and child maltreatment is a Brisbane study (Cadzow, Armstrong & Fraser 1999) which examined the relationship between a range of potentially adverse psychosocial and demographic characteristics identified in the immediate postpartum period and child physical abuse potential at seven months. Domestic violence, characterised by social and verbal abuse, emerged as a significant indicator of risk. Other factors commonly associated with increased risk, such as sole parenthood, poverty, young maternal age and history of childhood abuse, did not.

While children may be abused by the perpetrator of violence towards their mother, women who are being victimised may also abuse their children (Aron & Olson 1997; O'Keefe 1995; Peled 1996). Mills (2000) suggests that women who are experiencing domestic

violence may abuse their children in an attempt to control their behaviour in order to prevent their partner from abusing themselves or the children, and that in some cases victimised women abuse their children in response to frustration at their own abuse.

Herman's (1992) analysis of the process by which battered women are held captive, emotionally and physically tortured, and forced to betray their beliefs (for example in their protective role as mothers) provides a theoretical understanding of the dynamics of families in which both spouse and child abuse are occurring:

But the final step in the psychological control of the victim is not completed until she has been forced to betray her own moral principles and to betray her basic human attachments ... It is at this point, when the victim under duress participates in the sacrifice of others, that she is truly 'broken' ... Although many women who do not dare to defend themselves will defend their children, others are so thoroughly cowed that they fail to intervene even when they see their children mistreated ... At this point, the demoralization of the battered woman is complete. (Herman 1992, p. 83)

Challenges in developing child protection responses to domestic violence

The separate histories and development of the child protection and domestic violence systems in all areas - policy, research and practice - pose particular challenges for the development of child protection responses to children and young people affected by domestic violence (Berliner 1998; Findlater & Kelly 1999; Mills 2000). Women's refuges, the first specialist domestic violence services, grew out of second wave feminism. They provide community based services on a voluntary basis to women and their children escaping domestic violence and stress the empowerment of women through respecting their choices and providing information and support. In contrast, child protection services have a statutory base and deal largely with involuntary clients:

Child protection is fast-paced and high pressure work. CPS workers must investigate reports of abuse quickly and assess extremely complex family situations. Multiple risk factors such as poverty, substance abuse, mental illness and domestic violence may be present in the families being investigated. (Findlater & Kelly 1999, p. 86)

A largely medical model dominated the child protection field, until the increased identification of child sexual assault during the late 1970s and 1980s brought a feminist presence to the field. With this came the first recognition of the frequent coexistence of incest and domestic violence (Herman 1981).

Feminist researchers and practitioners challenged child protection practice which held mothers accountable for 'failing to protect' children while failing to hold offenders accountable for the sexual abuse they perpetrated (Wattenberg 1985). Prior to this, the 'gender bias' (Burke 1994) in child protection practice had gone largely unremarked. Although men are estimated to be responsible for around half of the incidents of physical abuse of children, and for the majority of the most serious physical abuse (Aron & Olson 1997; Edleson 1999b; Lowenthal 1996), both the child abuse literature and treatment programs focus almost exclusively on women. An example of this gender bias in operation is demonstrated in an Australian study which found that men were frequently not interviewed when children were notified to the statutory child protection service because of domestic violence (Heward-Belle 1996).

Similarly, bias and discrimination have been identified in child protection interventions with clients from minority cultural groups (Humphreys 1999a; Mills 2000). Few studies have addressed the challenges of culturally sensitive child protection intervention in families where there is domestic violence. Yoshihama (2000, p. 322) explored the ways in which a woman's 'cultural interpretation of what is in the best interests of her child' may bring her into conflict with child protection agencies and warns against intervention which does not seek to understand the woman's socio-cultural context.

A pattern of holding women accountable for 'failing to protect' their children from the actions of men who use violence against them has emerged with the increasing recognition of the overlap between child abuse and domestic violence (Burke 1999; Mills 2000, p. 200). Stark and Flitcraft (1988, p. 101) were the first to raise the issue of 'responsible mothers and invisible men' in relation to child abuse in the context of domestic violence. A decade later, this issue was debated in a leading journal (Berliner 1998). Wilson (1998) discusses the dilemma of child protection workers who understand the philosophy of domestic violence services to respect women's rights to self-determination but who 'may not be free to stand idly by' (p. 290) if her choices are judged to put her child at risk. He argues that the issue is less about responsibility and blame, than about willingness and capacity to provide protection. In reply, Edleson (1998) argues that this continued focus on the mother, rather than on the man who is violent, is unfair. He urges action by a variety of systems to hold the perpetrator of violence accountable, rather than to focus on the mother's 'failure to protect' her children. Too often, he argues, women are held accountable for systemic failure to deal with violent men:

Strategies implemented by these mothers may fail in the face of persistent abuse and communities

One of the main reasons for women finding it difficult to seek help and disclose their experience of domestic violence ... is their fear that their children will be removed.

unwilling to offer realistic safety and economic alternatives, but it is unfair to characterize our collective failure to rein in abusive men as battered mothers' failure to act. (Edleson 1998, p. 295) Emphasis added.

One of the main reasons for women finding it difficult to seek help and disclose their experience of domestic violence to professionals is their fear that their children will be removed (Parkinson 1996; Stanley 1997), these fears feeding into the secrecy about the violence, further isolating the woman and increasing the risk to the woman and her children (Stanley 1997). Clearly, new ways of addressing the overlap of child abuse and domestic violence are required.

Exploring ways forward

The goal of assisting the child protection system to integrate knowledge about domestic violence into practice is described by Mills et al. in the following way:

The goal is to respond to families where women and children are abused in ways that protect the child, empower the mother, and do not unnecessarily separate children from a non-abusive parent, the person who intimately understands the trauma they face. (Mills et al. 2000, pp. 328-329)

Aron and Olsen (1997) reviewed the approaches taken by child protection services in five sites in the United States to incorporate the issue of domestic violence into their practice. They found that child welfare agencies have initiated changes from different internal organisational points. Two agencies in the study took an agency-wide approach; in another state, the link between child protection and domestic violence services was developed through the state's family preservation program; in another, efforts to incorporate understanding of domestic violence were focussed on the child protection agency's intake staff working closely with the judiciary. Aron and Olsen (1997) describe the approach taken by the state of Massachusetts as an example of a 'whole agency' approach. From collaboration between battered women's organisations and child protection workers in the late 1980s, the child protection service set out to reorient its practice in order to 'protect children by protecting their mothers' (Aron & Olson 1997, p.7). To achieve this agency-wide change, a domestic violence advocate

was employed in 1990 to 'train staff in how to identify domestic violence, explore safe interventions, and find appropriate resources in the community' (Aron & Olson 1997, p. 7). From these beginnings, the Domestic Violence Program has grown into a separate unit of 11 domestic violence specialists. Two additional staff support the advocates and develop domestic violence policy for the organisation. The clinical support provided by the domestic violence specialists is seen as crucial in effective implementation of the domestic violence protocol (Aron & Olson 1997, p. 8).

Aron and Olsen (1997) also describe an alternative approach to developing an agency-wide response which had been developed by San Diego County's Children's Services Bureau. A new unit (the Family Violence Project) was established to respond to families served by both child protection and adult probation services. Strengths of this approach are that it reaches 'some of the CPS's hardest-to-serve families and the most violent perpetrators' and that it uses the offender's probation status to hold him accountable, since 'CPS's service and treatment requirements are explicitly incorporated into the perpetrator's probation terms' (Aron & Olson 1997, p.8). This addresses the limitation faced by child protection services whose leverage is limited to removal of children, as this may not be a concern to the perpetrator (Fleck-Henderson 2000). In fact, a woman's fear of losing her children can be utilised by offenders as part of their coercive control (Aron & Olson 1997). A limitation of this approach is that it serves only a minority of families where there are both child protection and domestic violence concerns. This is being addressed by drawing on this specialist unit's expertise to develop training and protocols for all child protection workers (Aron & Olson 1997).

Mills et al. (2000, p. 321) reviewed the experience gained from four US projects funded to provide training and to 'develop models to integrate domestic violence into CPS practice'. From an analysis of the four programs, Mills et al. (2000) identified two common challenges to integrating domestic violence and child abuse practice. The first was tension between priorities on children or women, with the child protection focus on the best interests of the child at times leading child protection workers to view a woman 'staying' in an abusive relationship as complicit. The second common difficulty encountered by the projects was penetrating the child protection service culture. Participation in training was affected by the crisis nature of child protection work and concern by overtaxed workers that the training would impose increased demands. The review concludes that training is essential to address victim blaming attitudes of protective workers and that both commitment from the top of the child protection agency and collaboration between domestic violence advocates and child protection workers are essential.

The approaches reviewed by Mills et al. (2000) involved external agencies providing training for child protection services, in contrast to the approaches reviewed by Aron and Olson (1997), which were initiated by the child protection agencies themselves.

Fleck-Henderson (2000, p. 333) argues that training alone is 'necessary' but 'insufficient' to respond to the child protection implications of domestic violence, since training alone 'does not erase the contradictions and tensions between the perspectives of child protection and women's advocacy' (Fleck-Henderson 2000, p. 337). She asserts that the different traditions and perspectives of domestic violence and child protection systems cannot be combined, necessitating 'ongoing conversations and consultations' between the two systems to achieve what she terms 'seeing double' (p.333). While acknowledging that training can address attitudes and myths about battered women and perpetrators, Fleck-Henderson argues that the complexity of the issues raised and the newness of the collaboration make ongoing support for child protection workers critical as they struggle with the risks and challenges involved in bringing their growing knowledge about domestic violence to child protection practice. Further, the experience of domestic violence workers does not include dealing with many of the women who come to the attention of the child protection system. For example, women in contact with refuges have usually identified themselves as victims of abuse and have been through 'a complex process that involves balancing hopes and fears, weighing feelings of loyalty and danger, assessing losses and gains' (Fleck-Henderson 2000, p. 346). Women who come into contact with child protection services may not have been through a process such as this. The Massachusetts model of employing domestic violence specialists within the child protection agency is proposed as a useful model. From this program, Fleck-Henderson goes on to outline some of the complex and challenging issues which have been raised by child protection workers through the Domestic Violence Project consultations. These include judging whether to keep cases open or not; assessing risk if people 'deny' or minimise; and knowing when pushing for safety increases the risk of violence. She concludes that, since the issues are so complex and so little is known at this stage, active collaboration between the child protection and domestic violence services is essential on a case by case basis in order to combine the knowledge and experience of each system.

In describing the integration of knowledge about the dynamics of domestic violence into the provision of an Australian specialist child protection service, Burke (1999) describes the practice 'pitfalls' which can occur when assessment and intervention do not reflect an analysis of the 'gendered imbalance of power and responsibility' which is at the heart of

domestic violence. She describes a model of practice which seeks to avoid these pitfalls by maintaining a focus on imbalanced power and responsibility through all stages of intervention, and concludes:

Effective child protection intervention in the context of domestic violence must recognise how the perpetrators of violence shape the beliefs and behaviours of family members. Intervention informed by a socio-political analysis of gender, power and responsibility redresses the balance and ensures safety, protection and justice for women and children. (Burke 1999, p. 267)

Parkinson (1996, p. 11) argues that: 'Women who experience domestic violence need to be empowered by the state, not disempowered.' He explores the ways in which legislation and child protection proceedings could be used to achieve this goal and to hold the perpetrator of violence accountable. For example, he canvasses the possibility of limiting the range of disposition options in Children's Court proceedings so that the most intrusive – placing children in alternate care or making them wards of the state – are not available unless children exposed to domestic violence have also been physically or sexually abused. He also suggests that Court orders be framed mainly in terms of the obligations owed by the perpetrator of violence, rather than the victims.

Domestic violence and Family Law

Concern about the impact of violence on their children is an important factor influencing the decision of many women to separate from a relationship in which they are being abused (Hilton 1992; Office of the Status of Women 1998). However, for these children and their mothers, separation frequently does not end the violence. Rather, 'the site of the struggle shifts and the experience of abuse changes' (McMahon & Pence 1995, p. 194). The months following separation present the period of greatest risk to women of death or serious injury (McMahon & Pence 1995), yet at this time of heightened danger, the victimised woman is expected to negotiate arrangements of contact and residence (Pagelow 1993). This is a context in which abusive spouses can use issues of contact and residence to continue to exercise coercive control over their partners (e.g. Katzen & Kelly 2000). It is also a context in which it is frequently assumed that separating couples can put aside their differences 'for the sake of the children', an assumption which does not reflect understanding of the nature and dynamics of domestic violence, and which can result in an abused woman being labelled as 'implacably hostile' within the legal system (Humphreys 1999b) because of her attempts to protect her children and herself from violence.

An English study (Radford et al. 1997) illustrates the struggle which women experience in attempting

to establish safe contact arrangements in the aftermath of relationships in which they have been subjected to violence. Fifty-three women, recently separated from violent partners, were followed up for between three months and two years. Contrary to popular stereotypes, the majority of the women in this study initially supported continued contact between their ex-partners and the children. However, only seven of the 53 women were eventually able to establish contact in such a way that there was no further violence or harassment. All but three of the women were assaulted by their ex-partners when taking or collecting children from contact visits.

A particular problem for the women and children was the way that fathers used contact with the children as a route to further abuse the mother, either directly, by harming the children, or indirectly, by a proliferation of court cases. Threats to kill, harm or abduct a child, especially when the women tried to leave, appeared often to be primarily designed to hurt the mother. (Radford et al. 1997, p. 477)

Thus post separation violence both places abused women at further risk, and continues the exposure of children and young people to the abuse of their mother, and in some cases, of themselves (Humphreys 1999b).

The issue of domestic violence is being approached differently by different Family Law jurisdictions. For example, the U.K. *Children Act* 1989 does not mention domestic violence and there is a strong presumption of contact in favour of the non-resident parent (Humphreys 1999b). In contrast, amendments in 1996 to the New Zealand *Guardianship Act*, place violence 'at the front of the decision-making process' by setting out in detail how allegations and proven cases of violence are to be treated (Rathus, Lynch & Finn 1998, p.219).

Against this context, there is considerable interest in the impact of the changes introduced in Australia under the *Family Law Reform Act* 1995, which came into operation in June 1996 (Harrison & Graycar 1997). The changes introduced included 'the need to ensure safety from family violence' as one of the guiding principles (Rathus, Lynch & Finn 1998). Changes in terminology – residence and contact rather than custody and access – aimed at emphasising children's rights to contact with both parents rather than parents' rights, were a key part of the reforms. The *Reform Act* also emphasises parents' ongoing 'parental responsibility' for children and contains an objects clause which includes a list of children's rights, including the right of contact with both parents (Harrison & Graycar 1997).

A study (Rhoades 2000; Rhoades, Graycar & Harrison 1999) of the impact of these reforms involved a survey of lawyers, mediators and family

counsellors; interviews with Family Court judges, judicial registrars, solicitors and family court counsellors; observation of interim hearings; and review and comparison of 209 reported and unreported pre- and post-*Reform Act* interim and final judgements. The findings of this study provide an Australian case study on the impact of reforms, some of which directly attempted to address the issue of domestic violence. Among the findings from the comparison of pre- and post-*Reform Act* unreported judgements is that there has been a dramatic decline in the rate of orders refusing contact at interim hearings. (No 'access' in 24.2 per cent of pre-*Reform Act* interim judgements compared with 'no contact' in 3.6 per cent of post-*Reform Act* interim judgements) (Rhoades, Graycar & Harrison 1999). The most common response to allegations of violence in interim hearings was found to be an order for a neutral handover, for example at a Contact Centre, or public place such as McDonalds. With respect to final orders, however, the rate of orders refusing contact does not differ markedly from the 'no access' orders prior to the introduction of the reforms. This pattern is occurring in a context in which the majority of interim court applications 'involve allegations of potential harm to the child, usually because of domestic violence' (Rhoades, Graycar & Harrison 1999, p. 10), and in which there are long delays between interim and final hearings. The evaluators interpret their findings about interim contact orders to indicate that these interim orders are being made in situations 'where contact is not in the child's best interests, and when it may well be unsafe for the child and resident parent.' (Rhoades, Graycar & Harrison 1999, p 65)

The study also found that the 'right to contact' principle appears to have had an effect on relocation, despite a ruling by the Full Court that the Reform Act has not altered the principles involved in relocation decisions (Rhoades 2000). A review of unreported judgements and observation of interim relocation applications found that permission to relocate has rarely been given at an interim hearing and that most injunction applications are successful at the interim stage (Rhoades 2000). The study also found that there were many interim applications for the return of resident parents who had moved without consultation, and that these applications are just as likely to be successful as unsuccessful. However, the review of interim cases found that:

... the resident parent is more likely to be ordered to return with the children where she has moved away because of the contact parent's violence, than where she has relocated to take up a new job or join a new partner. (Rhoades 2000, p. 128)

The study also reported respondents' opinions that reduction in the availability of legal aid funding was contributing to these outcomes, since 'other than in

exceptional cases, women are now unable to obtain legal aid funding to oppose an application for contact, even where there is a history of domestic violence by the applicant father' (Rhoades, Graycar & Harrison 1999, p. 60).

With respect to the impact of the reforms on the court's response to domestic violence, the review concludes:

There has also been the development of a right to contact ethos that has displaced the case-law principles about the effects of domestic violence that emerged in the years before the reforms were enacted... the Reform Act treats violence in relationships as an exceptional situation. That approach is at odds with the profile of cases that now find their way into the family law litigation system in Australia, and which are therefore most likely to be affected by the legislation. (Rhoades 2000, pp. 132-133)

This discussion illustrates the difficulties with which women struggle in dealing with violence, and in attempting to protect their children from exposure to violence, complex difficulties not addressed by the 'cultural script' (Baker 1997) which requires them to leave and stay away from abusive partners. In attempting to escape violence, women and their children may be re-victimised by a legal system which fails to recognise the impact of domestic violence on children and young people and so fails to make safety central to decision making about contact and residence (Sudermann & Jaffe 1999).

One initiative which is proposed to address issues of safety is the establishment of visitation, or 'contact' centres. In Australia, 10 pilot contact services were funded by the Federal government in 1995/96 and a comprehensive evaluation and research strategy, including a child impact study, was implemented (Strategic Partners 1998). Additional services have subsequently been established. The role of these services is to facilitate children's contact with non-residential parents, through the provision of both supervised contact and 'changeovers' between residential and non-residential parents (Strategic Partners 1998). An important finding of the evaluation was that: 'To date, contact services have been designed and oriented for parents more than children.' (Strategic Partners 1998, p. x). With regard to safety, the child impact study found that, for a sample of older children:

Three-quarters of these children said they felt safe to visit here. Those who did not were all in supervised contact. None of them were seen by staff to be high vigilance cases, and in each case, staff were unaware that the child was significantly worried by some aspect of the visiting process. (Strategic Partners 1998, p. 78)

This illustrates the challenges involved in ensuring

that such services place the needs of children at the centre of service delivery. In Australia, the decision to implement a research and evaluation strategy over the first two years of the centres' development, provided valuable data for the ongoing development of these services within a framework of good practice.

While contact centres can play an important role in enhancing the safety of some women and children in the aftermath of a violent relationship, the establishment of these centres does not automatically assist children to resolve the impacts of traumatic exposure to domestic violence (McIntosh 2000). McIntosh (2000, p. 16) suggests that staff of contact centres be trained in early identification of children who are distressed by visiting; that court orders which jeopardise children's emotional well being and recovery from violence be challenged; and that contact be based on the perpetrator demonstrating 'understanding of the child's experience of violence and a willingness to work toward a recovery of trust' and the child's readiness. From their experience in establishing and operating a visitation centre in Duluth, Minnesota, McMahon and Pence (1995) caution that the establishment of such centres in itself does not resolve the complex issues surrounding contact and residence, but rather 'makes them more visible and urgent' (p. 202). Hence they saw it as essential that the visitation centre become an 'agent of change', implementing this through the establishment of a visitation and custody interagency committee, which encourages all involved with these issues to be 'self-reflective about their assumptions and practices' (p. 202). They conclude:

Visitation centres can be sites in which gender inequality and its destructive consequences for children are reproduced. Alternatively, they can become opportunities for a broader response to violence that resists reproducing social relations of domination and violence. Understanding the harm done by violence from the standpoint of children is central to this resistance. (McMahon & Pence 1995, p. 204)

Current challenges

Avoiding the creation of a dichotomy between the needs of women and children

AS AWARENESS of the needs of children and young people who live with domestic violence increases, there is a tendency to criticise feminist services – which first brought the issue of domestic violence to social and political attention – for not adequately addressing the needs of children (e.g. Peled 1996; Szirom 2000). Such criticism brings with it the risk of creating a false dichotomy between the needs of women and the needs of children and young people. The women's refuge movement has been at the fore-

A focus on the suffering of children and young people, without placing this in the context of the accountability of the perpetrator of violence, risks exacerbating victim blaming attitudes.

front of efforts to increase recognition of the needs of children and young people exposed to domestic violence (Parkinson 1996). For example, the first studies of the impact of domestic violence on children involved samples of children in refuges (Jaffe, Wolfe & Wilson 1990) and the refuge movement has provided leadership in advocacy for the needs of children (e.g. Steele 1994). Rendell (1998) argues that the commonly held notion that feminism has neglected the needs of children reflects the fact that:

... women are held responsible for meeting the needs of children, and blamed when they are not able to. Feminist services similarly are held responsible for meeting the needs of children and are found wanting when unable to adequately respond. (Rendell 1998, p. 102)

Rendell goes on to argue for avoiding a woman/child dichotomy in favour of engaging in reflective practice, to which feminism, particularly post modern feminism, has important contributions to make. Examples cited by Rendell are its contribution to exploring issues of bias and exclusion, and in challenging practices which pathologise children because of their experiences in living with violence. She suggests that engaging with the complexities of people's lives through reflective practice may provide greater justice for children and their mothers than simplistic notions of 'just listening to children'. As best practice in the child protection field has identified, 'the best interests of children in families with domestic violence cannot be separated from the best interests of their mothers' (Aron & Olson 1997, p.7).

Avoiding stigmatising children and young people who have been exposed to violence

While increasing community awareness of the needs of children and young people exposed to domestic violence provides the opportunity to develop support and counselling services, it can inadvertently bring with it other problems and issues. For example, Peled and Davis (1995a) point out that raising children and young people's experience of domestic violence as a social issue inevitably constructs a socially deviant identity for these young people: in addition to the legacies of the violence, they must

live with the social stigma of this deviant identity. Peled and Davis (1995, p.11) thus caution against the 'misuse of dramatic, generalizing descriptions of child witnesses of domestic violence'. This suggests that community education about this issue needs to be handled with extreme sensitivity. In a similar vein, Fraser (1999) points out the dangers in medicalising and pathologising this group of children because of their experiences, and urges that priority be given to interventions which strengthen resilience. She lists a range of such activities to achieve this. The provision of therapeutic services to assist children to overcome the symptoms of exposure to domestic violence is but one of many broadly based interventions which address the social context in which domestic violence is supported by 'socio-cultural practices which endorse forms of male privilege' (Fraser 1999, p. 39).

Perhaps the most potentially damaging aspect of this 'deviant' identity is the belief that such children and young people will inevitably go on to either perpetrate or suffer violence in their adult intimate relationships via the 'cycle of violence'. It is important that community education activities stress the fact that by far the majority of children exposed to domestic violence do not grow up to be either perpetrators or victims of violence (Humphreys 2000). The difficulty in challenging community beliefs about the inevitability of the 'cycle of violence' is demonstrated by the findings of a number of recent Australian studies. A study of the attitudes and experiences of Australian young people aged 12–25 years, found 'the cycle of violence' to be the most popular explanation for the occurrence of domestic violence (National Crime Prevention 2000). Similarly, women respondents in a recent Australian qualitative study demonstrated awareness of this commonly held belief (Bagshaw et al. 2000). Writing of the allied field of research linking child maltreatment with perpetrating child abuse in adulthood, Falshaw, Browne and Hollin (1996) cite an incident in which a paper challenging the unthinking acceptance of the 'cycle of violence' and citing the evidence that abused children do not necessarily become abusers, received considerable media attention. This was followed by a large amount of mail thanking the authors for giving people hope.

Maintaining a focus on the responsibility of the perpetrator of violence

A focus on the suffering of children and young people, without placing this in the context of the accountability of the perpetrator of violence, risks exacerbating victim blaming attitudes which are prevalent in the community (Office of the Status of Women 1995). If concern for the well being of children results in community members focusing on

'why doesn't the mother leave (for the sake of the children)?', rather than on the issue of why a man uses violence which harms all members of the family, there is a risk of greater injustice for women who are already coping with violence and abuse, and who are trying to protect their children and assist them to overcome the effects of the violence (Levendosky, Lynch & Graham-Bermann 2000). While these issues of mother blame and failure to hold men who use violence accountable come into focus most sharply within the child protection system, they are also extremely important in the ways in which this issue is raised with the community at large. Despite changing social attitudes about families and parenting over recent decades, women continue to be held primarily accountable for the well being of families and children. The 'ideology of motherhood' (Wearing 1984) prescribes standards against which mothers are judged, (and judge themselves). High among these is the belief that mothers are primarily responsible for the welfare of children and family, and for any family difficulties which arise. This is a social context in which the role and responsibility of the perpetrator of violence can become invisible (Burke 1999).

Conclusion

Research evidence now confirms that living with domestic violence can have a range of deleterious effects on many children and young people. The challenge for future research is to provide better understanding of the factors which enhance the resilience and coping of young people, since such knowledge can be incorporated into both preventive and therapeutic efforts. While it is important to increase specialist services to assist children and young people to overcome the problems which they face in recovering from violence, it is equally important to maintain a 'multi-system' perspective which monitors the impacts of a broad range of social systems which have the capacity to either facilitate or hold back this recovery. A delicate balancing act is required, one which both acknowledges the trauma and terror which many children and young people have faced, yet which does not stigmatise and pathologise those who have been victimised. Intervention, prevention and systemic responses to children and young people who have experienced domestic violence must be developed in a framework in which the responsibility of the perpetrator of violence remains central and visible.

References

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women's Task Force on Violence 2000, *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women's task force on violence report*, Dept. of Aboriginal Torres Strait Islander Policy and Development, Brisbane.
- Achenbach, T.M. and Edelbrock, C.S. 1983, *Manual for the Child Behaviour Checklist and Revised Child Behaviour Profile*, University of Vermont Department of Psychiatry, Burlington, V.T.
- Almeida, R.V. and Durkin, T. 1999, 'The Cultural Context Model: Therapy For Couples With Domestic Violence', *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy*, 25, 313-324.
- Apunipima Cape York Health Council 1999, *The state of family violence in Cape York, Apunipima Family Violence Advocacy Project*, Apunipima Cape York Health Council, Cairns, Qld.
- Ardler, W. 1990, 'Service Provision of the Aboriginal Children's Services For Victims of Domestic Violence', *Aboriginal and Islander Health Worker Journal*, 14, 1, 24-27.
- Aron, L.Y. and Olson, K.K. 1997, 'Efforts by Child Welfare Agencies to Address Domestic Violence', *Public Welfare*, Summer, 4-13.
- Atkins, P. 1999, *Supporting Children and Young People Affected by Family Violence: Berry St*, Victorian Government Department of Human Services, Melbourne.
- Australian Bureau of Statistics 1996, *Women's Safety Australia: Cat. 4128.0*, Australian Bureau of Statistics, Canberra.
- Bagshaw, D. and Chung, D. 2000, *Women, Men and Domestic Violence*, Partnerships Against Domestic Violence, Canberra.
- Bagshaw, D., Chung, D., Couch, M., Lilburn, S. and Wadham, B. 2000, *Reshaping Responses to Domestic Violence: Final Report*, University of South Australia, Adelaide.
- Baker, P.L. 1997, 'And I went back: battered women's negotiation of choice', *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, 26, 1, 55-74.
- Berliner, L. 1998, 'Introduction to the Commentary: Battered Women and Abused Children: The Question of Responsibility', *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 13, 2, 287-88.
- Berry Street 1997, *Shaping a New Future: Evaluation Document*, Berry Street Inc., Melbourne.
- Blanchard, A. 1993, 'Violence in Families', *Family Matters*, 34, May, 31-36.
- Blanchard, A., Molloy, F. and Brown, L. 1992, *"I Just Couldn't Stop Them". Western Australian Children Living with Domestic Violence: A study of children's experiences and service provision*, The Curtin University School of Social Work for the WA Government Office of the Family, Perth.
- Bookless-Pratz, C. and Mertin, P. 1990, 'The Behavioural and Social Functioning of Children Exposed to Domestic Violence: A Pilot Study', *Children Australia*, 15, 3, 4-7.
- Bowker, L.H., Arbitell, M. and McFerron, J.R. 1990, 'On the Relationship Between Wife Beating and Child Abuse', in K. Yllo and M. Bograd (eds.), *Feminist Perspectives on Wife Abuse*, Sage Publications, California.
- Brandwein, R.A. and Filiano, D.M. 2000, 'Toward Real Welfare Reform: The Voice of Battered Women', *Affilia*, 15, 2, 224-243.
- Bunston, W. and Crean, H. 1999, *Supporting Children and Young People Affected by Family Violence: Parents Accepting Responsibility-Kids are Safe (PARKAS)*, Victorian Government Department of Human Services, Melbourne.
- Burke, C. 1994, 'Being an Effective Advocate for the Child', in NSW Child Protection Council (ed.), *Children who Experience Domestic Violence: Seminar No. 7*, NSW Child Protection Council, Sydney.
- Burke, C. 1999, 'Redressing the balance: child protection intervention in the context of domestic violence', in J. Breckenridge and L. Laing (eds.), *Challenging Silence: Innovative responses to sexual and domestic violence*, Allen and Unwin, Sydney.
- Cadzow, S.P., Armstrong, K.L. and Fraser, H. 1999, 'Stressed Parents with Infants: Reassessing Physical Abuse Risk Factors', *Child Abuse and Neglect*, 23, 9, 845-853.
- Cashmore, J. 2000, 'Pathways to Prevention: National Crime Prevention', in Partnerships Against Domestic Violence (ed.), *National forum: the way forward: children young people and domestic violence: proceedings*, Office of the Status of Women, Canberra.
- Cavanagh, J., Hewitt, L. and Anderson, D. 1999, *Southern Family Life STAR (Safe Talk About Rights) Program*, Victorian Government Publishing Service, Melbourne.
- Centacare Geraldton 2000, *Living With Love?*, Centacare, Geraldton.
- Child Support Workers Brisbane 1999, 'Child Support Workers, Brisbane', in Families Youth and Community Care Queensland (ed.), *Models of Service for Working with Children and Young People who have Lived with Domestic Violence*, Families Youth and Community Care Queensland, Brisbane.
- Christian, C.W., Scribano, P., Seidl, T. and Pinto-Martin, J.A. 1997, 'Pediatric Injury Resulting from Family Violence', *Pediatrics*, 99, 2, 81-84.
- Clark, A.H. and Foy, D.W. 2000, 'Trauma Exposure and Alcohol Use in Battered Women', *Violence Against Women*, 6, 1, 37-48.
- Cultural Perspectives 2000, *Attitudes to domestic and family violence in the diverse Australian community*, Partnerships Against Domestic Violence; Cultural Perspectives Pty Ltd; Phoenix Projects; University of Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies Unit, Canberra.

- DeKeseredy, W.S. 1990, 'Woman Abuse in Dating Relationships: The Contribution of Male Peer Support', *Sociological Inquiry*, 60, 3, 236-243.
- DePanfilis, D. and Zuravin, S. 1999, 'Predicting Child Maltreatment Recurrences During Treatment', *Child Abuse and Neglect*, 23, 8, 729-743.
- Department of Education Training and Youth Affairs 2000, *Young People Say "DV - No Way": Evaluation of the National Domestic Violence Prevention Workshops for Young People*, Canberra.
- Domestic Violence Resource Centre 1998, *Everybody's Business: 2nd National Conference on Children, Young People and Domestic Violence - Conference Proceedings*, Domestic Violence Resource Centre, Brisbane.
- Eckenrode, J., Ganzel, B., Henderson, C.R., Smith, E., Olds, D.L., Powers, J., Cole, R., Kitzman, H. and Sidora, K. 2000, 'Preventing child abuse and neglect with a program of home nurse visitation - The limiting effects of domestic violence', *Journal of the American Medical Association*, 284, 11, 1385-1391.
- Edleson, J.L. 1998, 'Responsible Mothers and Invisible Men: Child Protection in the Case of Adult Domestic Violence', *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 13, 2, 294-298.
- Edleson, J.L. 1999a, 'Children's Witnessing of Adult Domestic Violence', *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 14, 8, 839-870.
- Edleson, J.L. 1999b, 'The overlap between child maltreatment and woman battering', *Violence Against Women*, 5, 2, 134-154.
- Eisikovits, Z., Winstok, Z. and Enosh, G. 1998, 'Children's Experience of Interpersonal Violence; A Heuristic Model', *Children and Youth Services Review*, 20, 6, 547-568.
- Emergency Accommodation and Support Enterprise Inc. 2000, 'Solving the Jigsaw: Changing the Culture of Violence', unpublished, Victoria.
- Falshaw, L., Browne, K.D. and Hollin, C.R. 1996, 'Victim to Offender: A review', *Aggression and Violent Behaviour*, 1, 4, 389-404.
- Families Youth and Community Care Queensland 1999a, *Evaluating Service Delivery: Handbook for Evaluating Service Delivery for Services Working with Children and Young People Who have Lived with Domestic Violence*, Families, Youth and Community Care, Queensland, Brisbane.
- Families Youth and Community Care Queensland 1999b, *Models of Service for Working with Children and Young People who have Lived with Domestic Violence*, Families, Youth and Community Care, Queensland, Brisbane.
- Families Youth and Community Care Queensland 1999c, *Practice Standards for Working with Children and Young People who have Lived with Domestic Violence*, Families, Youth and Community Care, Queensland, Brisbane.
- Fantuzzo, J., Boruch, R., Beriama, A., Atkins, M. and Marcus, S. 1997, 'Domestic violence and children: Prevalence and Risk in five major U.S. cities', *Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry*, 36, 1, 116-122.
- Fantuzzo, J.W. and Mohr, W.K. 1999, 'Prevalence and Effects of Child Exposure to Domestic Violence', *The Future of Children*, 9, 3, 21-32.
- Ferrante, A., Morgan, F., Indermaur, D. and Harding, R. 1996, *Measuring the Extent of Domestic Violence*, The Hawkins Press, Sydney.
- Findlater, J.E. and Kelly, S. 1999, 'Child Protective Services and Domestic Violence', *The Future of Children*, 9, 3, 84-96.
- Fleck-Henderson, A. 2000, 'Domestic Violence in the Child Protection System: Seeing Double', *Children and Youth Services Review*, 22, 5, 333-354.
- Fraser, H. 1999, 'Considering the needs of children', *Women against Violence*, 6, 34-40.
- Friedman, B. 1999, *Relationship Violence: No Way! Young Men and Relationship Violence Prevention Project*, South Australia Department of Human Services, Adelaide.
- Gamache, D. and Snapp, S. 1995, 'Teach Your Children Well: Elementary Schools and Violence Prevention', in E. Peled, P. Jaffe and J.L. Edleson (eds.), *Ending the Cycle of Violence: Community Responses to Children of Battered Women*, Sage Publications Inc, California.
- Goddard, C. and Hiller, P. 1993, 'Child Sexual Assault in a Violent Context', *Australian Journal of Social Issues*, 28, 20-33.
- Graham-Bermann, S.A. and Levendosky, A.A. 1998, 'Traumatic stress symptoms in children of battered women', *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 13, 1.
- Gulbin, M. 1996, *Respect Yourself, Protect Yourself Training Manual: Promoting Anti-Violence Strategies to Young Women*, Women's Health in the South East, Melbourne.
- Hansen, D. and Le Sueur, M. 1996, 'Separating mothers and children: Australia's gendered immigration policy', *Alternative Law Journal*, 21, 5.
- Harrison, M. and Graycar, R. 1997, 'The Family Law Reform Act: metamorphosis or more of the same?', *Australian Journal of Family Law*, 11, 3, 327-342.
- Hastie, C. 1998, 'Parental abuse and its links to domestic violence', in Domestic Violence Resource Centre (ed.), *Everybody's Business: 2nd National Conference on Children, Young People and Domestic Violence - Conference Proceedings*, Domestic Violence Resource Centre, Brisbane.
- Healy, K. 1995, 'Care and connection: Responding to young mothers' experiences of violence', *Youth Studies Australia*, Autumn, 46-51.
- Hedin, L.W. 2000, 'Postpartum, also a risk period for domestic violence', *European Journal of Obstetrics and Reproductive Biology*, 89, 41-45.
- Herman, J.L. 1981, *Father-Daughter Incest*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts.
- Herman, J.L. 1992, *Trauma and Recovery*, Basic Books, USA.

- Heward-Belle, S. 1996, 'All Care and No Responsibility? A study of the responses of child protection workers to domestic violence in families', University of Sydney, unpublished masters thesis.
- Hewitt, L. and Cavanagh, J. 1998, *Through the Eyes of the Children: families and violence*, Southern Family Life.
- Hilton, Z.N. 1992, 'Battered women's concerns about their children witnessing wife assault', *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 7, 77-86.
- Hird, M.J. 2000, 'An empirical study of adolescent dating aggression in the U.K.', *Journal of Adolescence*, 23, 1, 69-78.
- Holder, R. 1998, "Playing on the football field" - domestic violence, help-seeking & community development', *Domestic violence: current responses, future directions*, Relationships Australia (NSW), Sydney.
- Holtzworth-Munroe, A., Smutzler, N. and Sandin, E. 1997, 'A Brief Review of the Research on Husband Violence. Part II: The Psychological Effects of Husband Violence on Battered Women and their Children', *Aggression and Violent Behaviour*, 2, 2, 179-213.
- Howard, J. 1995, 'Children hit out at parents physically and emotionally', *Community Quarterly*, 34, 38-43.
- Hughes, H.M. 1988, 'Psychological and Behavioural Correlates of Family Violence in Child Witnesses and Victims', *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, 58, 1, 77-90.
- Humphreys, C. 1999a, 'Avoidance and confrontation: social work practice in relation to domestic violence and child abuse', *Child and Family Social Work*, 4, 77-87.
- Humphreys, C. 1999b, 'Judicial Alienation Syndrome - Failures to respond to Post-separation Violence', *Family Law*, 29, May, 313-316.
- Humphreys, C. 2000, *Social Work, Domestic Violence and Child Protection: Challenging Practice*, The Policy Press, Bristol.
- Humphreys, C. and Mullender, A. 2000, *Children and domestic violence: a research overview of the impact on children*, The Policy Press, Devon.
- Indermaur, D., Atkinson, L. and Blagg, H. 1998a, *Working with Adolescents to Prevent Domestic Violence: Indigenous Rural Model*, National Crime Prevention, Canberra.
- Indermaur, D., Atkinson, L. and Blagg, H. 1998b, *Working with Adolescents to Prevent Domestic Violence: Rural Town Model. Full Report*, National Crime Prevention, Canberra.
- Irwin, J. and Wilkinson, M. 1997, 'Women, children and domestic violence', *Women against Violence*, 3, 15-22.
- Jackson, S.M. 1999, 'Issues in the Dating Violence Research: A Review of the Literature', *Aggression and Violent Behaviour*, 4, 2, 233-247.
- Jaffe, P., Wolfe, D. and Wilson, S. 1990, *Children of Battered Women*, Sage, California.
- Jamieson, W. and Hart, L. 1999, *A Handbook for Health and Social Service Professionals Responding to Abuse During Pregnancy*, National Clearinghouse on Family Violence, Health Canada, Canada.
- Johnson, V., Ross, K. and Vinson, T. 1982, 'Domestic Violence: cases before Chamber Magistrates', in C. O'Donnell and J. Craney (eds.), *Family Violence in Australia*, Longman Cheshire, Melbourne.
- Katzen, H. and Kelly, L. 2000, *How do I prove I saw his shadow? Responses to breaches of Apprehended Violence Orders: A consultation with women and police in the Richmond Local Area Command of NSW*, Northern Rivers Community Legal Centre, Lismore.
- Kneale, A. 1999, *Supporting Children and Young People Affected by Family Violence: Annie North Inc.*, Victorian Government Department of Human Services, Melbourne.
- Kolbo, J.R., Blakely, E.H. and Engleman, D. 1996, 'Children Who Witness Domestic Violence; A review of the Empirical Literature', *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 11, 2, 281-293.
- Laing, L. 2000, 'Politics or Pathology?', in Partnerships Against Domestic Violence (ed.), *National forum: the way forward: children young people and domestic violence: proceedings*, Office of the Status of Women, Canberra.
- Laing, L. and Kamsler, A. 1990, 'Putting an End to Secrecy: Therapy with Mothers and Children Following Disclosure of Child Sexual Assault', in M. Durrant and C. White (eds.), *Ideas for Therapy with Sexual Abuse*, Dulwich Centre Publications, Adelaide.
- Lehman, P. 2000, 'Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and Child Witnesses to Mother-Assault: A Summary and Review', *Children and Youth Services Review*, 22, 3/4, 275-306.
- Levendosky, A.A., Lynch, S.M. and Graham-Bermann, S.A. 2000, 'Mothers' Perceptions of the Impact of Woman Abuse on their Parenting', *Violence Against Women*, 6, 3, 247-271.
- Lowenthal, J.M. 1996, 'Twenty Years Later: We Do Know How To Prevent Child Abuse and Neglect', *Child Abuse and Neglect*, 20, 8, 647-653.
- Magen, R.H. 1999, 'In the Best Interests of Battered Women: Reconceptualizing Allegations of Failure to Protect', *Child Maltreatment*, 4, 2, 127-135.
- Margolin, G. 1998, 'Effects of Domestic Violence on Children', in P.K. Trickett and C.J. Schellenbach (eds.), *Violence Against Children in the Family and the Community*, American Psychological Association, Washington.
- Margolin, G. and Gordis, E.B. 2000, 'The Effects of Family and Community Violence on Children', *Annual Review of Psychology*, 445-479.
- Mathias, J., Mertin, P. and Murray, A. 1995, 'The Psychological Functioning of Children from Backgrounds of Domestic Violence', *Australian Psychologist*, 30, 1, 47-56.
- Maxwell, G. and Carroll-Lind, J. 1998, 'Distorted

- Childhoods: The Meaning of Violence for Children', *Social Policy Journal of New Zealand*, 10, 177-189.
- McInnes, J. 1995, *Violence Within Families: The Challenge of Preventing Adolescent Violence Towards Parents*, The Office for Families and Children, Adelaide.
- McIntosh, J. 2000, 'Thought in the Face of Violence: A Child's Need', in *Partnerships Against Domestic Violence* (ed.), *National forum: the way forward: children young people and domestic violence: proceedings*, Office of the Status of Women, Canberra.
- McKenzie, M. 1998, 'When Love Hurts: a website for young women', *Domestic Violence and Incest Resource Centre Newsletter*, 4, 21-23.
- McKernan McKay, M. 1994, 'The Link Between Domestic Violence and Child Abuse: Assessment and Treatment Considerations', *Child Welfare*, 73, 1, 29-39.
- McMahon, M. and Pence, E. 1995, 'Doing More Harm Than Good? Some Cautions on Visitation Centres', in E. Peled, P.G. Jaffe and J.L. Edleson (eds.), *Ending the Cycle of Violence: Community Responses to Children of Battered Women*, Sage Publications, California.
- McNamara, N. and McClelland, D. 1999, *Supporting Children and Young People Affected by Family Violence: Merri Housing Service*, Victorian Government Department of Human Services, Melbourne.
- Miller, B.V., Fox, B.R. and Garcia-Beckwith, L. 1999, 'Intervening in Severe Physical Child Abuse Cases: Mental Health, Legal, and Social Services', *Child Abuse and Neglect*, 23, 9, 905-914.
- Mills, L.G. 2000, 'Woman Abuse and Child Protection: A Tumultuous Marriage (Part 1)', *Children and Youth Services Review*, 22, 3/4, 199-205.
- Mills, L.G., Friend, C., Conroy, K., Fleck-Henderson, A., Krug, S., Magen, R.H., Thomas, R.L. and Trudeau, J.H. 2000, 'Child Protection and Domestic Violence: Training, Practice, and Policy Issues', *Children and Youth Services Review*, 22, 5, 315-332.
- Mullender, A., Kelly, L., Hague, G., Malos, E. and Imam, U. 2000, *Children's Needs, Coping Strategies and Understanding of Woman Abuse*, Economic and Social Research Council, Coventry.
- National Crime Prevention 1999a, *Living Rough: Preventing Crime and Victimization Among Homeless Young People*, Canberra.
- National Crime Prevention 1999b, *Pathways to Prevention: Developmental and early intervention approaches to crime in Australia*, National Crime Prevention, Attorney General's Department, Canberra.
- National Crime Prevention 2000, *Young People and Domestic Violence: National Research on Young People's Attitudes and Experiences of Domestic Violence Fact Sheet*, National Crime Prevention; Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs; Partnerships Against Domestic Violence, Canberra.
- Northern Territory Office of Women's Policy 1999, *Report to the Commonwealth: Captain Harley's Be cool...not cruel community education campaign*, Northern Territory Office of Women's Policy, Darwin.
- NSW Department of School Education 1997, *Child Protection Education: Curriculum materials to support teaching and learning in Personal Development, Health and Physical Education (Stages 1-5)*, NSW Department of School Education, Student Welfare Directorate, Sydney.
- Office of the Status of Women 1995, *Community attitudes to violence against women: detailed report*, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra.
- Office of the Status of Women 1998, *Against the Odds: How Women Survive Domestic Violence*, OSW, Canberra.
- Office of the Status of Women 2000, *National forum: the way forward: children young people and domestic violence: proceedings: Melbourne, 26 and 27 April*, Office of the Status of Women, Canberra.
- O'Keefe, M. 1995, 'Predictors of Child Abuse in Maritally Violent Families', *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 10, 1, 3-25.
- O'Keefe, M. 1996, 'The differential effects of family violence on adolescent adjustment', *Child and Adolescent Social Work Journal*, 13, 3-25.
- Pagelow, M.D. 1993, 'Justice for Victims of Spouse Abuse in Divorce and Child Custody cases', *Violence and Victims*, 8, 1, 69-83.
- Parkinson, P. 1996, *Children, Domestic Violence and Child Protection*, Office of Women's Policy, NT Government, Darwin.
- Parkinson, P. and Humphreys, C. 1998, 'Children who witness domestic violence - the implications for child protection', *Child and Family Law Quarterly*, 10, 2, 147-159.
- Peled, E. 1996, "Secondary" Victims No More: Refocusing Intervention with Children', in J.L. Edleson and Z. Eisikovits (eds.), *Future Interventions with battered Women and their Families*, Sage Publications, Thousand Oaks.
- Peled, E. 1997, 'Intervention with Children of Battered Women: A Review of the Current Literature', *Children and Youth Services Review*, 19, 4, 277-299.
- Peled, E. 1998, 'The experience of living with violence for preadolescent children of battered women', *Youth and Society*, 29, 395-430.
- Peled, E. 2000, 'Parenting by Men who abuse Women: Issues and Dilemmas', *British Journal of Social Work*, 30, 1, 25-36.
- Peled, E. and Davis, D. 1995a, 'Current Knowledge about Children of Battered Women', in E. Peled and D. Davis (eds.), *Groupwork With Children of Battered Women: A Practitioner's Manual*, Sage, California.
- Peled, E. and Davis, D. 1995b, *Groupwork With Children of Battered Women: A Practitioner's Manual*, Sage, California.

- Peled, E. and Edleson, J.L. 1995, 'Process and Outcome in Small Groups for Children of Battered Women', in E. Peled, P. Jaffe and J.L. Edleson (eds.), *Ending the Cycle of Violence: Community Responses to Children of Battered Women*, Sage Publications, California.
- Peled, E. and Edleson, J.L. 1999, 'Barriers to Children's Domestic Violence Counselling: A Qualitative Study', *Families in Society*, 80, 6, 578-586.
- Peled, E., Jaffe, P.G. and Edleson, J.L. 1995, 'Conclusion', in E. Peled, P.G. Jaffe and J.L. Edleson (eds.), *Ending the Cycle of Violence: Community Responses to Children of Battered Women*, Sage Publications, Thousand Oaks.
- Perry, B.D. 1997, 'Incubated in Terror: Neurodevelopmental Factors in the "Cycle of Violence"', in J.D. Osofsky (ed.), *Children in a Violent Society*, Guilford Publications, NY.
- Perry, B.D., Pollard, R.D., Blakley, T.L., Baker, W.L. and Vigilante, D. 1995, 'Childhood Trauma, the Neurobiology of Adaptation, and "Use-dependent" Development of the Brain: How "States" Become "Traits"', *Infant Mental Health Journal*, 16, 4, 271-291.
- Queensland Domestic Violence Task Force 1988, *Beyond These Walls: Report of the Queensland Domestic Violence Task Force*, Queensland Department of Family Services
- Quinlivan, J. 2000, 'Study of Adolescent Pregnancy in Western Australia', in Partnerships Against Domestic Violence (ed.), *The Way Forward: Children, Young People and Domestic Violence: conference proceedings*, Office of the Status of Women, Canberra.
- Radford, L., Hester, M., Humphries, J. and Woodfield, K. 1997, 'For the Sake of the Children: The Law, Domestic Violence and Child Contact in England', *Women's Studies International Forum*, 20, 4, 471-482.
- Rathus, Z., Lynch, A. and Finn, K. 1998, 'The relationship ends but the abuse goes on: The Effect on Women of the 1995 Reforms to the Family Law Act and the Recent Cuts to Legal Aid', in Domestic Violence Resource Centre (ed.), *Everybody's Business: 2nd National Conference on Children, Young People and Domestic Violence - Conference Proceedings*, Domestic Violence Resource Centre, Brisbane.
- Relationships Australia South Australia 1999, *Free?*, Relationships Australia South Australia, Adelaide.
- Rendell, K. 1998, 'Current Responses to Children and Young People Affected by Domestic Violence: Beyond Dichotomies', *Everybody's Business: 2nd National Conference on Children, Young People and Domestic Violence*, Domestic Violence Resource Centre, Brisbane.
- Rendell, K. 2000, 'Context and Relationships: working with young children and young people affected by domestic violence', in Partnerships Against Domestic Violence (ed.), *National forum: the way forward: children young people and domestic violence: proceedings*, Office of the Status of Women, Canberra.
- Rhoades, H. 2000, 'Child law reforms in Australia - a shifting landscape', *Child and Family Law Quarterly*, 12, 2, 117-133.
- Rhoades, H., Graycar, R. and Harrison, M. 1999, *The Family Law Reform Act: Can Changing Legislation change legal culture, legal practice and community expectations? Interim Report*, The Family Court of Australia; The University of Sydney
- Roberts, G.L., Lawrence, J.M., Williams, G.M. and Raphael, B. 1988, 'The impact of domestic violence on women's mental health', *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health*, 22, 7, 796-801.
- Rosenbaum, A. and O'Leary, K.D. 1981, 'Children: The unintended victims of marital violence', *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, 51, 4, 692-699.
- Sable, M.R., Libbus, M.K., Huneke, D. and Anger, K. 1999, 'Domestic Violence Among AFDC Recipients: Implications for Welfare-to-Work Programs', *Affilia*, 14, 2, 199-216.
- Schwarz, E.D. and Perry, B.D. 1994, 'The Post-Traumatic Response in Children and Adolescents', *The Psychiatric Clinics of North America*, 17, 2, 311-326.
- Sheehan, M. 1997, 'Adolescent Violence-Strategies, Outcomes and Dilemmas in Working with Young People and their Families', *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Family Therapy*, 18, 2, 80-91.
- Shepherd, P. and Maxwell, G. 2000, 'Do programmes for children who experience family violence work?', *Criminology Aotearoa / New Zealand*, 13, 13-15.
- Shiner, M. 1999, 'Defining peer education', *Journal of Adolescence*, 22, 555-566.
- Silver, B. 1999, *Supporting Children and Young People Affected by Family Violence: Emergency Accommodation and Support Enterprise (EASE)*, Victorian Government Department of Human Services, Melbourne.
- Smith, J., O'Connor, I. and Bethelsen, D. 1996, 'The Effects of Witnessing Domestic Violence on Young Children's Psycho-social Adjustment', *Australian Social Work*, 49, 3-10.
- Somer, E. and Braunstein, A. 1999, 'Are Children Exposed to Interparental Violence Being Psychologically Maltreated?', *Aggression and Violent Behaviour*, 4, 4, 449-456.
- Stanley, J. and Goddard, C. 1993, 'The Association Between Child Abuse and Family Violence', *Australian Social Work*, 46, 2, 3-8.
- Stanley, N. 1997, 'Domestic violence and child abuse: developing social work practice', *Child and Family Social Work*, 2, 135-145.
- Stark, E. and Flitcraft, A. 1988, 'Women and Children at Risk: A Feminist Perspective on Child Abuse', *International Journal of Health Services*, 18, 1, 97-118.
- Stark, E. and Flitcraft, A. 1995, 'Killing the Beast Within: Woman Battering and Female Suicidality',

- International Journal of Health Services*, 25, 1, 43-64.
- Steele, S. 1994, 'Children: The Silent Victims', in NSW Child Protection Council (ed.), *Children Who Experience Domestic Violence: Seminar No. 7*, NSW Child Protection Council, Sydney.
- Strategic Partners 1998, *Contact Services in Australia Research and Evaluation Project*, Legal Aid and Family Services; Attorney-General's Department, Canberra.
- Strategic Partners 2000, *Domestic Violence Prevention: strategies and resources for working with young people*, Partnerships Against Domestic Violence, Canberra.
- Sudermann, M. and Jaffe, P. 1999, *A Handbook for Health and Social Service Providers and Educators on Children Exposed to Women Abuse / Family Violence*, Health Canada.
- Sudermann, M., Jaffe, P.G. and Hastings, E. 1995, 'Violence Prevention in Secondary (High) Schools', in E. Peled, P. Jaffe and J.L. Edleson (eds.), *Ending the Cycle of Violence: Community Responses to Children of Battered Women*, Sage Publications, California.
- Sullivan, C.M., Juras, J., Bybee, D., Nguyen, H. and Allen, N. 2000, 'How Children's Adjustment is Affected by Their Relationships to Their Mothers' Abusers', *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 15, 6, 587-602.
- Szirom, T. 2000, 'Overview of Findings From Partnerships Projects', in Partnerships Against Domestic Violence (ed.), *National forum: the way forward: children young people and domestic violence: proceedings*, Office of the Status of Women, Canberra.
- Tomison, A. 1995, 'Child Abuse and Other Family Violence: Findings From a Case Tracking Study', *Family Matters*, 41, 33-38.
- Victoria Police 2000, 'Family Incidents 1997/98', Victoria Police, Place.
- Wattenberg, E. 1985, 'In a Different Light: A Feminist Perspective on the Role of Mothers in Father-Daughter Incest', *Child Welfare*, 64, 203-211.
- Wearing, B. 1984, *The Ideology of Motherhood*, George Allen and Unwin, Sydney.
- Wilczynski, A. 1996, 'Risk Factors for Child and Spousal Homicide', *Psychiatric and Behavioural Disorders: Family Law Issues*, LAAMS Publications, Bondi Junction.
- Wilson, C. 1998, 'Are Battered Women Responsible for Protection of Their Children in Domestic Violence Cases?', *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 13, 2, 289-293.
- Wolfe, D. and Jaffe, P. 1999, 'Emerging Strategies in the Prevention of Domestic Violence', *The Future of Children*, 9, 3.
- Women's Services Network 2000, *Domestic violence in regional Australia: a literature review*, Partnerships Against Domestic Violence, Canberra.
- Worth, N. and Mertin, P. 1997, 'Child's Play: Rebuilding attachment between mother and children following domestic violence', *Children Australia*, 22, 2, 35-37.
- Yoshihama, M. 2000, 'Reinterpreting Strength and Safety in a Socio-Cultural Context: Dynamics of Domestic Violence and Experiences of Women of Japanese Descent', *Children and Youth Services Review*, 22, 3/4, 207-229.
- Young Mothers for Young Women 1999, *Getting what you want: a peer guide into healthy relationships*, Micah Inc., Brisbane.
- Zuchowski, I. 1999, 'Catching a Dream and Letting Pigs Fly: Schools respond to domestic violence', *Domestic Violence and Incest Resource Centre Newsletter*, 4, 25-27.

Endnotes

- 1 As with the other statistics presented from this study, these figures are population projections from the sample.
- 2 All publications produced under *Partnerships Against Domestic Violence* can be obtained at no cost from DAS Distributions, phone: (02) 6202 5736 and many are online at the *Partnerships Against Domestic Violence* web site:
<http://www.padv.dpmc.gov.au/publicat.htm>
- 3 <http://home.vicnet.net.au/~girlsown/>

Acknowledgments

The assistance of Clearinghouse Advisory Committee members who commented on drafts of this paper is gratefully acknowledged: Ms Chris Burke, Jannawi Family Centre; Assoc. Professor Jude Irwin, University of Sydney; Ms Sally Steele, Essie Women's Refuge; Emeritus Professor Tony Vinson, UNSW.

ISSN: 1443-8496

Published by the Australian Domestic and Family Violence Clearinghouse UNSW Sydney NSW 2052

Ph: (02) 9385 2990 • TTY: 02 9385 2995

Fax: (02) 9385 2993

Email: clearinghouse@unsw.edu.au

Website:

<http://www.austdvclearinghouse.unsw.edu.au>

The Clearinghouse is linked to the Centre for Gender-Related Violence Studies, based in the University of New South Wales School of Social Work.

This work is copyright. Organisations have permission to reproduce parts or whole of this publication, as long as the original meaning is retained and proper credit given.

The views expressed in this Issues Paper do not necessarily represent the views of the Commonwealth of Australia or the *Partnerships Against Domestic Violence* Taskforce.

Whilst all reasonable care has been taken in the preparation of this publication, no liability is assumed for any errors or omissions.

Funded by *Partnerships Against Domestic Violence*, a Commonwealth Government initiative.