



Improving Outcomes

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month. Though this is something we see all the time in families with whom we work, CIP using this month's newsletter to shed light on the issue and provide updates in recent legislation addressing domestic violence.

Rebekah Tucci is the Domestic Violence Program Director at the Administrative Office of the Courts. She provides assistance and training to the courts regarding domestic violence. She also worked with domestic violence programs, law enforcement and legislators on the implementation of the new laws. The program's website is <http://www.arcourtsdvp.org>. Rebekah can be reached at Rebekah.tucci@arcourts.gov or (501) 682-9400.

Kate Shufeldt
Court Improvement Program Director



Mark Your Calendars!



October 14-15
AAL/PC Fall Conference
Crowne Plaza, Little Rock

November 11-13
Juvenile Division Judge's
Conference
Red Apple Inn, Heber
Springs

January 5-7
Round 1 of NITA Training
Crowne Plaza, Little Rock

UNDERSTANDING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE & ITS EFFECTS

Candace McCown, ARCIP MSW Intern

Domestic abuse is the “willful intimidation, physical assault, battery, sexual assault, and/or abusive behavior as part of a systematic pattern of power and control perpetrated by one intimate partner against another.” This abuse includes emotional, physical, sexual, and psychological violence as well as economic coercion. Domestic violence is a detrimental issue in our society, as nearly 30% of all women and 10% of all men have suffered physical abuse, rape, and/or stalking by an intimate or former partner.

Domestic Violence often works as a cycle. There are calm periods in the relationship, but these are followed by periods of increasing tension and abuse. Eventually the tension builds up and the abuser and abuse peaks. After this peak, the cycle with continue again, returning to a period of ease. Each time the cycle repeats, the abuse grows increasingly worse.

It is important to understand that domestic violence has NO typical victim. It affects individuals of all genders, races, religions, communities, economic statuses, and ages. It occurs as a result of one partner in the relationship desiring to hold the power in the relationship. It is often accompanied by injury, trauma, and even death. The trauma has lasting effects on the abusers, victims, and even witnesses.

Domestic Violence affects children in a number of ways. Children in abusive households may witness the abuse and violence, they may become accidently injured, or they may become targets of the abuse. Children and teens in homes with an abusive parent are 15 times more likely to experience child abuse and neglect. In a national survey of 6,000 families, half of the men who assaulted their wives regularly also regularly abused the children in the house. In addition to the physical abuse, there is also a prevalence of emotional abuse. The abusive parent often employs emotional abuse in order to maintain a sense of control and power over both their partner and children.

While some believe that witnessing abuse in the household cannot be as bad as receiving the abuse, research shows different. Children will experience various types of negative impacts based on the different forms of violence they are

exposed to. When a child suffers from sexual abuse, he or she may suffer from PTSD, depression, eating disorders, increased chance of suicide and/or suicidal ideations, sleep disorders, substance abuse, and deviant sexual behavior. If a child experiences physical abuse, he or she may have developmental and cognitive impairments, increased isolation or aggression due to feeling powerless, impaired problem solving, memory processing, PTSD, eating disorders, deviant sexual behavior, substance abuse, or suicide. Similarly, research shows that if a child witnesses Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) in the household, he or she may suffer from extreme guilt for not saving one or more family members, disruptive behavior, decreased relationships, and poor mental and physical health.

According to the Department of Justice and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s National Survey of Children’s Exposure to Violence (NatSCEV), around 10% of children in the U.S. are considered polyvictims. Polyvictims are victims who experience a combination of community violence, IPV, physical abuse, and/or sexual abuse. Polyvictims are especially at-risk, as this combination increases the severity and risk of “posttraumatic injuries and mental health disorders by at least twofold and up to as much as tenfold.”

National Coalition Against Domestic Violence. <http://www.ncadv.org/need-help/what-is-domestic-violence>

“In the United States, 13.6 million children have been exposed to physical Intimate Partner Violence and 19.4 million children have been exposed to violence involving an adult.”

Hamby, S, Finkelhor, D., Turner, H., & Ormrod, R. (2011). Children’s Exposure to Intimate Partner Violence and Other Family Violence, Juvenile Justice Bulletin – NCJ 232272. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office. Retrieved at : <http://www.unh.edu/ccrc/pdf/jvq/NatSCEVChildren's%20Exposure-Family%20Violence%20final.pdf>

WHAT CAN WE DO FOR YOUTH WITNESSING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE?

Children are heavily influenced by the environments in which they are raised. While witnessing or experiencing abuse does not necessarily mean that these children will abuse when they become adults, it does have some correlation. 85% of adult abusers witnessed abuse as a child and 50% of domestic abuse victims were raised in abusive homes. So what can we do? Studies have shown that when a child has a supportive adult or a supportive environment, they are more likely to be able to cope with intense anxiety and stress from the exposure to violence. Choosing appropriate interventions and supports are also able to decrease to negative impact of violence.

“Resilience can be supported by decreasing risk factors and by supporting protective factors or assets”

- Decreasing Risk Factors: safety planning, appropriate interventions based on the type of abuse, victims, and abuser, and identifying additionally adverse childhood experiences that may need addressed
- Increasing Protective Factors: supportive and caring adults within the family and community, positive views of self, healthy self-regulation and cognitive skills, and support based on the developmental age for the child
 - For young children, assist to provide support for developing secure attachment (this may involve not only skills with the child but parenting classes/skills for the parents)
 - For older children, assist to connect them to social circles outside of their home. Community and school environments, neighborhoods, and extended families can provide positive relationships, connections, and resources. Healthy cognitive skills, positive social skills, and views of self can be further developed outside of the home.

Futures Without Violence. “The Facts of Children’s Exposure to Intimate Partner Violence” <https://www.futureswithoutviolence.org/userfiles/file/Fact%20sheet%20on%20Children%20Exposed%20to%20IPV%202013.pdf>

RED FLAGS THAT A CHILD IS WITNESSING VIOLENCE IN THE HOME

- ◇ Aggressive: attacking others, destroying property, cruelty to animals, verbal attacks.
- ◇ Passive/ withdrawn: avoids conflict, internalizes feelings, becomes the perfect child.
- ◇ Manipulative: extreme jealousy, sulking, “getting sick.”
- ◇ Rebellious/Acts out: challenges authority, smokes/ drinks/drugs, skips school, runs away, steals.
- ◇ Psychological cues: suicidal ideations/behaviors, depression, self-mutilation, phobias, eating disorders, nightmares.
- ◇ Health problems (relating to stress): headaches, stomach aches, irritable bowels, bedwetting, backaches, skin rashes, mouth ulcers/cold sores, earaches



RECENT DOMESTIC VIOLENCE LEGISLATION IN ARKANSAS

Rebekah Tucci, Domestic Violence Program Director

Recently enacted, Laura's Card and Laura's Law requires Arkansas law enforcement responding to domestic abuse incidents to provide victim's with notice of their rights and to complete a set of questions meant to evaluate the victim's risk of death. Both laws encourage collaborative and coordinated efforts from domestic violence service providers and law enforcement agencies.

Laura's Card was inspired by victim's rights advocate and domestic violence survivor, Laura Webb, who was nearly killed by her husband in 2012. She found that navigating the court and legal system as a victim was difficult and information was not readily available or easily accessible. The law requires law enforcement officers responding to domestic abuse calls inform victims in writing of the rights afforded to them under §§ 16-90-1101-1115. This card also includes information regarding local help with - medical, housing, counseling, financial, social, legal and emergency services. It also includes information regarding obtaining orders of protection, accessing public records related to the case, and contacting the Arkansas Crime Victims Reparations Board.

Laura's Law was inspired by Laura Aceves, who was murdered by her ex-boyfriend in 2012 and survived by her mother, Laura Ponce, and her three children. Laura's Law requires law enforcement responding to a domestic abuse call to ask the victim a list of questions that indicate the level of lethality in the relationship. Affirmative responses indicating an increased level of lethality prompt law enforcement officers to call their local domestic violence providers and offer the victim an opportunity to seek services.

When law enforcement and domestic violence service providers work together in collaborative coordinated efforts, victims are more likely to leave, survive and stabilize. Ultimately, moving domestic abuse victims from helplessness to hopefulness.

More information on the new laws can be found at <http://www.cji.edu/resources/lauras-law/>.



THE BEHAVIOR AND TRAUMA CONNECTION

Joy Pemberton, Ph.D. & Robyn Rektor, M.A.



The mission of ARBEST is to improve outcomes for traumatized children and their families in Arkansas through excellence in clinical care, training, advocacy, research, and evaluation.

Why Does Trauma Cause Behavior Problems?

The children you encounter in court are likely to have had a number of stressful or traumatic experiences, such as abuse or separation from parents. Children respond to stressful experiences in many different ways. Some children do not have the skills needed to process intense feelings in healthy ways and may cope by acting out. These behaviors can become habits that continue even after a trauma has ended. Some children have witnessed adults involved in domestic violence or other frightening behavior and may copy this behavior, just as children often copy other behaviors they observe. In addition, some traumatic experiences affect brain development, making children more likely to act without thinking or have difficulty controlling their anger and other emotions.

Are These Children Being Manipulative?

It can seem as though children with behavior problems are deliberately being manipulative or are sabotaging relationships or placements on purpose. All children use coping skills to meet their needs, including “invisible” ones such as emotional needs. Children labeled with “behavior problems” may in actuality be coping with circumstances using the only skills they have, which, unfortunately, are sometimes unhelpful or even harmful.

Children with trauma histories may not have had the chance to learn healthy coping skills, so their attempts to cope can look very inappropriate or disruptive. Plus, these children may have more intense emotional needs than other kids, so they may use more extreme behaviors to try to get those needs met. Finally, many children who have experienced trauma are used to a chaotic lifestyle, including angry behavior from adults. These experiences may feel “normal” to them even if they did not enjoy them. Without meaning to, they may act in ways that could re-create these “familiar” chaotic or angry environments.

Do All Children with Behavior Problems Have a Trauma History?

Many children can develop behavior problems without going through a trauma. Some may have experienced a stressful event, such as the birth of a sibling, which is not a trauma but may still contribute to distress. Others may have developed behavior problems for other reasons. However, all children with significant behavior problems should be screened for a trauma history. It should never be assumed that any child is simply “bad.”

THE BEHAVIOR AND TRAUMA CONNECTION, CONT.

Perhaps These Children Just Need Love?

All children need loving, stable relationships. Children with trauma histories, though, may have more difficulty adjusting to new relationships or stable environments. In order to help them adjust and begin accepting the love they need, they and their family may need specialized treatment. Getting the appropriate services can be one of the most loving things to do for that child.

Maybe These Children Just Need Discipline?

All children need consistent, appropriate discipline. Children with trauma histories may have special needs when it comes to discipline techniques. Some types of discipline may actually make things worse by reminding them of previous traumas (e.g., spanking or yelling). They may have a more difficult time accepting discipline, and they may also need a higher level of consistency than children with no trauma history. Again, they and their family may need specialized treatment to find safe and effective discipline techniques.

How Can I Help These Children?

Children with behavior problems and trauma need all the support they can get. First, all of the professionals working with these children should keep their trauma histories in mind. This includes being aware of what kinds of situations might remind them of their traumas and make them more likely to act out. This also includes keeping voice, face, and body calm when working with them, especially if they are agitated. In addition, it is important to give them as much positive attention as possible, such as taking every opportunity to praise them, even for very small behaviors. It is also important to remember that they may continue to have behavior problems, even when these techniques are being used. This does not mean that the techniques are not working; it just means that the child is still learning how to respond to positive, calm adults.

Finally, the most important way to aid children with trauma is doing anything you can to help keep them in a loving, stable, consistent relationship with an adult caregiver. To maintain this type of relationship or placement, many of these children will need specialized treatment. Fortunately, many evidence-based treatments for trauma have been developed to help these children and can be used by biological, foster, or adoptive families, such as Parent-Child Interaction Therapy (PCIT), Child-Parent Psychotherapy (CPP), and Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavior Therapy (TF-CBT).

To find a PCIT or CPP therapist, contact Michelle Gillespie at tmgillespie@uams.edu or 501-400-5865.

To find a TF-CBT therapist, contact Chad Sievers at cmsievers@uams.edu or 501-526-8317, or visit ARBEST's website at arbest.uams.edu for a list of TF-CBT trained clinicians.



RECENT ARCIP TRAININGS THROUGHOUT THE STATE

ARCIP has facilitated and sponsored several trainings at the local level recently. Below is a listing of the trainings from the past few months. The back page has suggestions for trainings, but ARCIP is always willing to help find a speaker who can train on a specific topic regarding families and youth in court. Please contact Kate Shufeldt at kate.shufeldt@arkansas.gov or (501) 410-1955 to schedule a training for your court team or staff.



July 30: AJOA Conference—Court Through the Eyes of the Parents & Sibling & Peer Influences on Delinquency

October 6: 23rd JD—Recent DCFS Legislation and Policy Updates

October 7: 18E JD—Effects of Domestic Violence on Children

Coming up:

November 6: AJOA Conference— Innovative Programming for Youth

NEW DOMESTIC VIOLENCE BENCHCARDS COMING SOON!

The Arkansas Judicial Council Domestic Violence Advisory Committee in collaboration with the Arkansas Administrative Office of the Courts Domestic Violence Program and several members of the Arkansas District Judges Council Domestic Violence Advisory Committee developed a set of best practices bench cards to guide judges through cases involving domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence and stalking.

These bench cards include guidance in courtroom safety (before, during and after court proceedings); guidance in the dynamics of domestic violence; guidance in assessing risks and screening lethality in the relationship as well as guidance with cases involving orders of protection, custody and visitation, and criminal proceedings. In developing these best practices bench cards, the committee is providing the judiciary with uniform guidance in more effectively holding abusers accountable and supporting victims as they seek safety.

For additional information regarding the Domestic Violence Program and the Arkansas Judiciary's efforts, please visit www.arcourtsdvp.org.

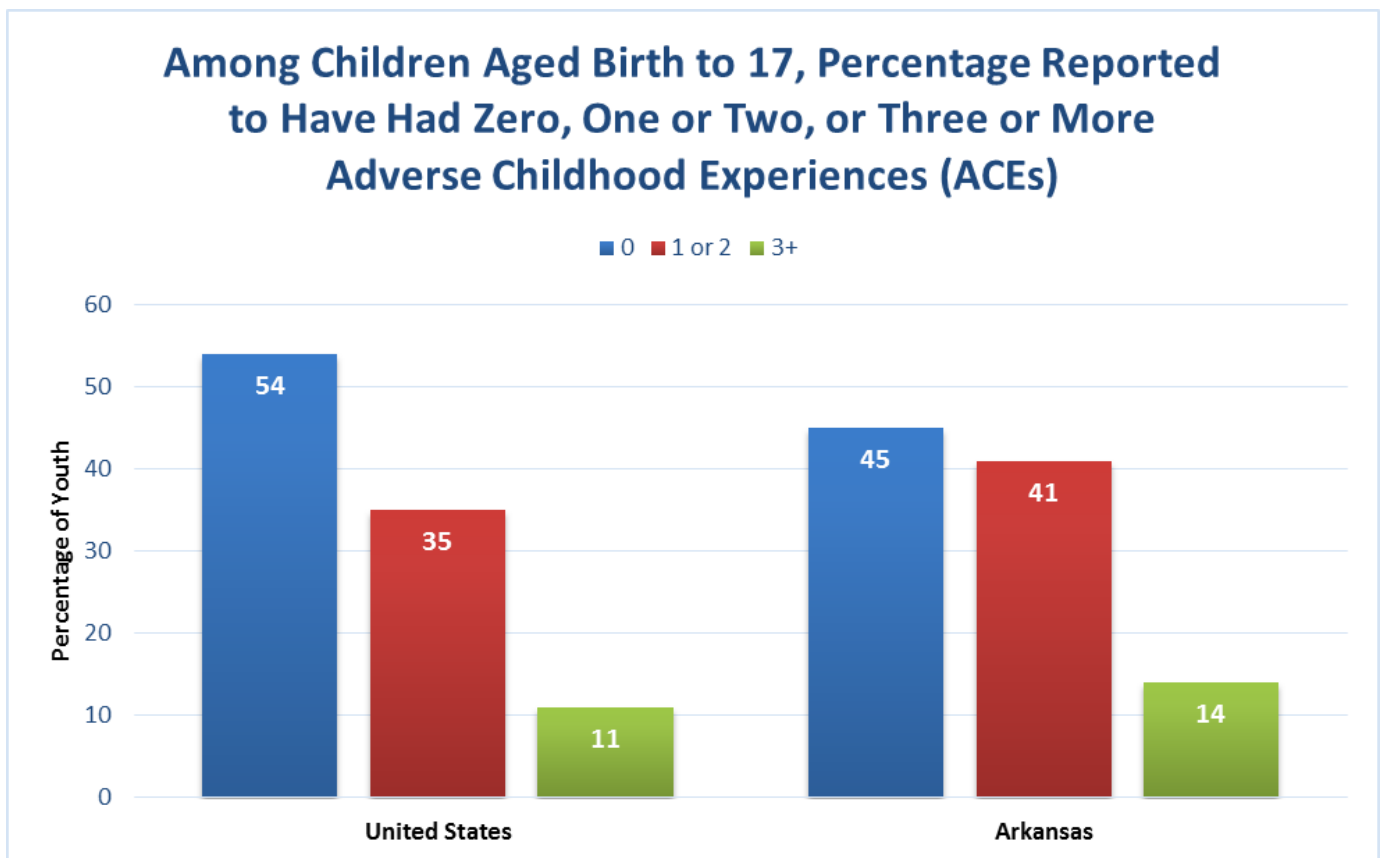


DATA CORNER

Children who witness domestic violence in the home are at risk for future mental health, emotional, and behavioral problems. The impact is so great that it is considered an Adverse Childhood Experience (ACE). ACEs are traumatic experiences that can have lifelong impacts on people. The ACE research looks at the prevalence of 8 types of events in families: divorce, economic hardship, mental health issues, substance abuse issues, domestic violence, child & sexual abuse, death of a parent, witnessing neighborhood violence, and having someone in the family go to prison; and the correlations between experiencing these events and behaviors and health later in life. These events must occur before the age of 18 for them to calculate into a person's ACE Score. The more events the youth has experiences, the higher the risk for negative behaviors.

During a recent national study on ACEs, Arkansas was shown to be in the highest quartiles of prevalence of youth experiencing economic hardship, divorce, incarceration of a family member, and domestic violence.

Overall, youth in Arkansas experience more ACEs than youth nationally. Fifty-five percent of Arkansas' youth have experienced at least one ACE, with 14% of them experiencing 3 or more. Nationally, 44% of youth have experienced at least one ACE.



TRAINING IDEAS

Safety Planning

Use of Technology in the Courtroom

Outcome Measurement

Permanency Planning

DNet Database

Transitional Youth

Education Stability

Sibling Connections

Caseflow Management

Adolescent Development

Adolescent Mental Health

Engaging Schools and Other Stakeholders

Effects of Poverty on Families

Strategies for Timely Orders and Hearings

The Importance of Visitation

Matching Families with Appropriate Services

The Court Process Through the Parents' Eyes

Effects of Domestic Violence on Children

Using Courtroom Time Efficiently

Building on a Family's Strengths

Collective Impact Model for Multi-Disciplinary Teams

Improving Organizational Efficiency to Improve Outcomes

And many more!

ARCIP TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE OFFERINGS

Training

ARCIP can assist with all of your training needs! From our in-house speakers to our collection of past conference and training speakers, we can find the right person for your training. We can facilitate small trainings of district personnel to large multi-disciplinary meetings for the region. Those requesting training technical assistance through ARCIP can apply for training funds to help cover costs of speaker travel, meals/refreshments for attendees, and printed materials.

Capacity Building

ARCIP encourages every district to have court improvement or judicial leadership teams to are focused on addressing issues that arise in the court processes and develop programming and solutions surrounding them. These meetings are not for staffing cases, but rather looking at the big picture of the court system and its effects on youth and families. ARCIP can help facilitate strategic planning sessions where teams set goals for their courts and develop a plan to tackle them.

Program Planning

Juvenile court can vary from other types of court, in that it requires multi-disciplinary teams thinking outside the box in order to address many issues that marginally have anything to do with the law. ARCIP works with court teams and multi-disciplinary teams to develop and implement programming that is tailored to their needs. We research programming in other states and collect best practices for programming. We can facilitate planning meetings and establish project/work plans. ARCIP can assist in writing grant applications for projects or programming. Funding may be available to districts to help offset some programming costs such as printing and technology.

Assessment & Evaluation

Assessment & evaluation is how we know what we need to work on and if our efforts are making a difference. ARCIP can help plan and conduct sound assessments and evaluations of court processes and programs. We can develop surveys, focus group questions, stakeholder interview questions, and court observation and case review guides. ARCIP will assist court improvement teams/judicial leadership teams in setting goals and measuring their outcomes. Depending on the size of the project, funding may be available for data collection and entry, analysis, and reporting.

**HOW CAN WE
HELP YOU?**

