New Domestic Violence Policies: Implications for Social Work Practice

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This presentation will examine the implications and opportunities for social work practice, advocacy, and research in domestic violence through new and reauthorized policies in the areas of health, criminal justice and social services.
Presentation Objectives

- To learn about key federal programs that improve the health, mental health, social service, and school sectors response to address domestic violence and abuse
- To discuss implications for social work knowledge and practice to inform a comprehensive approach in addressing domestic violence
Scope of Problem

• Estimates of domestic violence range from 960,000 incidents to upwards of 4 million incidents annually.
• According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics, 85% of victim/survivors are women and 15% of victim/survivors are men.
• Violence by an intimate partner accounts for about 21% of violent crime experienced by women and about 2% of the violence experienced by men.
• Every 9 seconds in the US a woman experiences physical violence in her intimate relationship.
• Females between the ages of 16 – 24 are at the greatest risk of non-fatal domestic violence.
• 1 out of 4 teens report experiencing some form of intimate partner or teen dating violence.
2010 Family Violence Prevention & Services Act

• The FVPSA bill is the only federal funding source dedicated to helping victims of domestic violence and their children
• The FVPSA funds emergency shelters and related services and programs for domestic violence victims and their children
• The bill creates grant funding for states, territories, tribes, domestic violence coalitions, and special –issue resource centers
Administration

The Family Violence Prevention and Service Program is the administrator of the FVPSA and are dedicated to:

• Providing shelter and other supportive services for victims of domestic violence and their children

• Addressing improvements in states and tribes, local communities, social service systems, and programming concerning the prevention and intervention of domestic violence through guidance provided by State Domestic Violence Coalitions and FVPSA State Administrators
Administration (continued)

• Enhancing public awareness about the prevalence of domestic violence
• Strengthening local and community-based domestic violence programs by supporting specialized technical assistance addressing emerging issues such as trauma-informed care; the co-occurrence of domestic violence and child maltreatment; culturally specific domestic violence services; and effective interventions for children exposed to domestic violence

(Family Violence Prevention and Service Program/ Family and Youth Services Bureau)
Some Provisions Added to the 2010 FVPSA Reauthorization

• The bill supports the needs of children exposed to violence in their homes
• The bill addresses prevention of children from victimization and the elimination of the intergeneration cycle of domestic violence
• The bill maintains special issue resource centers to provide support to domestic violence intervention and prevention efforts related to:
  ➢ Health care response
  ➢ Child protection and child custody issues
Some Provisions Added to the 2010 FVPSA Reauthorization (continued)

- Criminal and civil justice response
- **Adds** mental health care response as an area of focus

- The bill recognizes findings related to the under reporting of domestic violence in underserved communities and the need to facilitate improved outreach, information gathering, and service response.
Data and the ACE Research findings can promote policies, programs and practices to identify and intervene with domestic violence victims and their children:

• Data reports indicate: 2 million women and children are killed each year due to domestic violence.
• Of the 76 million children living in the U.S., approximately 15 million children witness domestic violence each year.
• Research, such as, The Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) Study which is one of the largest retrospective ongoing cohort studies following 17,000 adult patients receiving health care at a major health organization.
• The ACE Study examines the link between traumatic childhood experiences, such as domestic violence in the home, and current adult health and well-being.
Data and the ACE Research findings can promote policies, programs and practices to identify and intervene with domestic violence victims and their children (continued):

• Further findings from the ACE Study found that trauma experienced during childhood is correlated with a wide range of later mental health conditions, substance abuse conditions, risk taking behaviors, adult intimate partner violence, negative health and disease outcomes, and even early death.

• The ACE Study makes it clear that when issues are identified and treated in early childhood, intervention is most effective.

• Social workers with their prevention and intervention knowledge are positioned to inform and lead a comprehensive response to mothers and children affected by domestic violence as well as other experiences identified in this study.
Affordable Care Act Provisions

- The Affordable Care Act was signed into law on March 23, 2010. It prohibits health insurance companies from imposing restrictions on coverage of pre-existing conditions associated with domestic violence.
- The Maternal, Infant and Early Childhood Home Visitation Program provides coordinated and comprehensive services to communities identified as at risk of domestic violence.
- The Pregnancy Prevention Fund will provide support to women who are pregnant and survivors of domestic violence.
Affordable Care Act Provisions (continued)

- Head Start programs will be given support to offer curricula that prevent and respond to domestic violence.
- The Defending Childhood Initiative’s support for child witnesses of domestic violence.
- The institution of patient navigators or persons designated to guide patients as part of the Affordable Care Act can provide victims with support navigating the health system for domestic violence related care.
Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2013

- VAWA supports the investigation and prosecution of crimes associated with domestic violence and other forms of violence against women. It was reauthorized on March 7, 2013.
- The bill removes barriers faced by lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) victims based on their sexual orientation.
- The bill maintained protections for battered immigrants and took the important step of also reauthorizing the Trafficking Victims Protection Act.
- The bill provides support to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the tribal justice system and bring perpetrators (both native and non-native) of violence to justice.
VAWA (continued)

• The bill creates state grant funding for law enforcement, prosecutors, and victim services to work together to respond to sexual assault and helps law enforcement agencies tackle their backlog of rape kits.
• Expands safe housing program protections to include victims of sexual assault and emergency housing transfers.
• The Campus SAVE Act is part of the 2013 reauthorization and will require colleges and universities to provide information to students and employees about dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking and improve data collection about these crimes.
• Dear Colleague letter for schools to promote education, awareness and policy and protocol development for teen dating violence.
Implications for Social Work Practice

- Social workers must be aware of how these provisions impact their clients
- Social workers will be called to be advocates in the implementation of this legislation, particularly as it relates to health care provisions, same-sex relationships, and immigrant populations
- Social workers can apply to serve in the role of patient navigators
- Social workers can inform communities of these provisions
Implications continued

- Social workers can work with local providers, such as head start programs and colleges/universities, to provide education and awareness.
- Social workers can work towards addressing the direct and macro level needs of child witnesses of domestic violence.
- Social workers can create and provide feedback on institutional policies and protocols to implement new programs.
- Social workers can assist with and provide timely feedback on policy implementation.
Our voices…the social work presence is so important to furthering the impact of the legislation we discussed today.

Make your voices heard and get involved.

Questions????

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References


Resources
