

Stopping Family Violence Training Summary

7 September 2018

Strangulation & Intimate Partner Violence

- strangulation is a red flag for death and is one of the Risk Tool Assessment criteria
- sexual violence leads to homicide
- it is imperative to get the victim's voice into the process by asking her questions at the scene (recanting, not being able to remember if asked later mean her voice is lost), first response police officers need training in asking the right questions
- first response is critical in the first hour
- Factors indicating IPV: controlling partner, strangulation, victim minimisation by the partner, planning separation, increase in sexual violence as well as physical, easy access to firearms, involvement of the Police & the Court, the bad feeling gut reaction of friends and family
- the Death Reviews have ascertained predictable flags of strangulation: is part of abuse history(past as well as current relationships), is always men who do it, only 50% of strangulations have visible marks & only 15% able to be photographed, women afraid of "the look" (I'll get you later)
- Strangulation is minimised by everyone
- it is not choking (this is an obstruction in the airway)
- the new Family/Whanau Violence Bill is taking it seriously with a maximum 7 year prison sentence when convicted
- Strangulation is an attack on the brain ie/ traumatic brain injury
- symptoms of TBI may be delayed many years
- the TBI causes changes in cognition and behaviour
- death can be up to 36 hrs later due to swelling of damaged tissue
- signs of significant brain injuries: "she remembers things out of order," "she appeared confused," "she couldn't remember."
- signs often appear stoke-like eg/ droopy eyelid
- a group of these symptoms indicate a pattern which isn't necessarily identifiable as strangulation when there is only one symptom
- symptoms are often hidden by hair or makeup eg/ tiny little pin pricks of burst blood vessels all over head and in the eyes
- as the woman is being strangled she experiences the 4 stages of victim experience ie/ denial, realization, primal & resignation (I'm going to die)
- there is no such thing as attempted strangulation
- erotic strangulation may be very common in young people's sexual relationships
- 90% of female assaults are headshots

Information Sharing

- don't make the decision to share information in isolation, talk to your manager
- document everything
- follow the 12 principles of the privacy code
- verbal consent is OK but record it
- you need good evidence to disclose
- dishonest disclosure is done in bad faith or malicious
- requests have to be in writing
- MOUs can't breach the Act
- some requests are mandatory to give eg/ MSD, Police and others are discretionary eg/ DHB to DHB

Death Review Committee Findings

- look at systems failure
- focus on prevention
- 98% of IPV deaths and women
- men plan, plan, plan; women defend themselves
- DRC is looking at gendered patterns of harm
- they don't mutualise to neutralise
- there has not been any initial predominant aggressor or primary victim analysis done
- asking why women "provoking" men into violence is still OK in IPV but not anywhere else
- the focus is still on the mother and none on the non-involved father
- geographical distance does not make women safer
- DRC aims to respectfully challenge behaviour
- not enough research has gone into the male partner's history of abuse
- the system doesn't encourage compliance of the abusive partner but is quick to punish the victims when noncompliant
- perpetrators are invisible with not much violence history recorded by the IPD review
- DRC case studies look back as far as possible re abuse history
- child killers have a history of beating their intimate partners
- DRC challenges the idea of the disengaged victim
- the context of the act is everything
- there is a need to triangulate information
- accurate language is a prerequisite for safety
- there is an indifference of powerful institutions to the suffering of victims
- *victims repeatedly ask for help in subtle ways and meet with a lack of response*
- there is intergenerational trauma

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